

Los Angeles, California's Operation Archangel

Sector(s): Commercial Facilities, Emergency Services

Location: Los Angeles, CA

Protection Category(ies): Target Hardening, Resiliency, Redundancy, Passive Countermeasures

Lead Agency(ies): Department of Homeland Security, State of California, City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles Police Department

Description:

The City of Los Angeles launched Operation Archangel to identify and protect critical assets in 2004. Archangel supports the National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP) by building security partnerships, managing risk, and maximizing efficient use of resources. Operation Archangel utilizes the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Automated Critical Asset Management System (ACAMS), a data collection and reporting tool, to track and report CI/KR protection data.



The City establishes relationships with private sector asset managers and conducts extensive site assessments, data collections, and target hardening efforts through the Archangel program. Operation Archangel is managed by Los Angeles Police Department law enforcement personnel working in partnership with the California Office of Homeland Security and DHS. A core group of public and private sector representatives who own critical assets throughout the city advises the Archangel program to ensure input from all relevant agencies and asset owners. This group provides recommendations on the CI/KR protection program's procedures and operational focus.

The City of Los Angeles began program development with an extensive research effort to define the critical assets and infrastructure within its jurisdiction. The CI/KR protection program then conducted an inventory of 481 critical assets, 26 buffer zone plans, and 847 Los Angeles Unified School District facilities from January through March 2005. This inventory provided the basis for Operation Archangel's unique assessment and prioritization methodology. The Archangel personnel separated their critical assets into three categories: critical infrastructure, mass population, and symbolic/psychological targets.

Archangel personnel contact the organizations that own critical infrastructure listed in the initial asset inventory. Archangel personnel have found that assessments are more efficient and effective when a strong relationship exists between the asset manager and the law enforcement department that conducts assessments.

Archangel personnel follow a three-step process to establish a relationship with an asset manager. First, Archangel personnel conduct open-source research on an asset's vulnerabilities, dependencies, and redundancies. They use this information to communicate the specific reasons for and value of conducting an assessment. Second, Archangel personnel send a letter to the asset manager outlining the specific reasons for an assessment and the protections available for sensitive asset information. Finally, they call the asset manager to follow up on the letter and to discuss the next steps in the assessment process.

Archangel personnel recognize that many asset managers may be hesitant to participate and share information. Asset managers may believe that site assessments are required by law or fear the assessment process will result in the release of sensitive information. The CI/KR protection program recommends a number of techniques to overcome this hesitation:

- Ask for information, don't demand it;
- Understand a manager's position and be prepared for skepticism;
- Be honest and answer questions directly;
- Stress public safety as the primary mission and ultimate goal of the assessment; and
- Emphasize the asset's criticality and relationship with local emergency responders.

Trust is a critical component of successful public-private information sharing. The Archangel business model incorporates asset managers into protection and assessment efforts in order to gain their buy-in and build trust between the private sector and emergency responders. For example, sworn law enforcement officers and fire personnel conduct all assessments and emphasize emergency response concerns throughout the visit.