



Trusted Information
Sharing Network
for Critical Infrastructure Protection

FACT SHEET

Critical infrastructure protection: whose responsibility is it?

The Australian Government defines critical infrastructure as:

those physical facilities, supply chains, information technologies and communication networks which, if destroyed, degraded or rendered unavailable for an extended period, would significantly impact on the social or economic well-being of the nation, or affect Australia's ability to conduct national defence and ensure national security.

The responsibility for protecting critical infrastructure is shared between business and the Australian, state and territory governments.

The role of business

Owners and operators of critical infrastructure are primarily responsible for ensuring the security of their assets and accept that security is a valid business cost.

While it is not possible to secure all critical infrastructure from all threats, good business practices, such as applying risk management techniques to their planning processes, conducting regular reviews of risk assessments and plans, and developing and reviewing business continuity plans, will help businesses mitigate potential risks and threats.

Critical infrastructure owners and operators are able to share information on important issues, such as business continuity, consequence management, and threats and vulnerabilities, with other businesses, the Commonwealth Government and state and territory governments through the Trusted Information Sharing Network for Critical Infrastructure Protection.

The role of the National Counter-Terrorism Committee

The National Counter-Terrorism Committee is the national coordinating body for counter-terrorism in Australia. It comprises senior representatives from relevant agencies within the Australian Government, as well as from Premiers' and Chief Ministers' departments and police services.

The Committee has primary responsibility for the oversight of the protection of critical infrastructure from terrorism. It has developed the *National Guidelines for the Protection of Critical Infrastructure* which provides a framework for nationally consistent advice on protecting critical infrastructure from terrorism. The document also suggests actions that critical infrastructure owners and operators need to consider in consultation with law enforcement agencies.



Importantly, the National Guidelines recognise that the treatment of individual critical infrastructure assets will depend on an assessment of the criticality of the asset, the nature of the security environment, and the risk profile for that asset or relevant industry sector. The National Guidelines clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities the various levels of government and industry have to play in protecting critical infrastructure.

The National Guidelines are not a public document. They are distributed by state and territory governments to identified critical infrastructure owners and operators.

The role of state and territory governments

State and territory governments have primary responsibility for managing critical infrastructure protection within their jurisdiction. The National Guidelines outline the roles and responsibilities of state and territory governments and police services. These responsibilities include identifying critical infrastructure, activities in relation to the development of security prevention and response strategies and plans, and the direct engagement of critical infrastructure owners and operators.

Given the States and Territories have primary responsibility for the prevention of and response to potential terrorist incidents involving critical infrastructure, they are the first point of contact for critical infrastructure owners and operators.

The role of the Australian Government

The Australian Government has a coordination role in the development of a nationally consistent approach to the protection of critical infrastructure. In particular, it provides coordination and national leadership in areas of joint responsibility and on international issues, produces and communicates relevant intelligence and information to stakeholders, and promotes critical infrastructure protection as a national research priority.

The Australian Government also has a direct role in ensuring that protective arrangements are in place for defence assets, Parliament House in Canberra, foreign missions and Australian Government-regulated sectors including aviation, maritime and offshore oil and gas facilities.



Critical infrastructure protection: whose responsibility is it?

It is responsible for ensuring that protective arrangements for identified assets and industries are reviewed and updated. This task is undertaken in conjunction with the relevant state and territory government agencies.

The role of the Trusted Information Sharing Network for Critical Infrastructure Protection

The Trusted Information Sharing Network for Critical Infrastructure Protection allows critical infrastructure owners and operators to share information on important issues, such as business continuity, consequence management, and threats and vulnerabilities, at a national level.

The network is made up of Infrastructure Assurance Advisory Groups for a number of different business sectors. These groups are overseen by the Critical Infrastructure Advisory Council, which provides advice to the federal Attorney-General on the national approach to critical infrastructure protection. The Council has also set up Expert Advisory Groups to provide advice on specific areas of interest.

The Council is made up of the representatives of each of the sector groups, representatives from each of the States and Territories, relevant Australian Government agencies and the National Counter-Terrorism Committee.

The role of the Business Government Advisory Group on National Security

The Australian Government has also set up the Business Government Advisory Group on National Security to provide senior business leaders with an opportunity to provide some input into the strategic direction of Australia's national security policy at ministerial level.

Although the Group provides advice on critical infrastructure protection issues, it is not part of the TISN and it addresses a wide range of security issues.

Australia's Critical Infrastructure Protection Arrangements

