

Police Commissioner's Special Order

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SUBJECT: RULE 335, ASSOCIATIVE VIOLENCE INFORMATION SYSTEM -- REVISED

Rule 335, Associative Violence Information System (formerly Gang Assessment Database), is hereby amended and reissued superseding all previous rules, special orders, memos and directives on this subject and is effective May 1, 2025.

Changes to this Rule include:

- Adjust the name of the System to better reflect the types of information stored and functionality.
- General Considerations / Purpose (Sec. 1) created and combined previous General Considerations and Purpose (Sec. 3); deleted previous Sections 1 and 2.
- Definition of “Violent Group” (Sec. 2.1) – Formerly “Gang” (Sec. 4.1) updated to reflect the nature of the criminal activity is “violent.”
- Added definition for “Point-Based Verification Criteria” (Sec. 2.12) to clarify that accumulation of points makes an individual eligible for consideration to be entered in the System.
- Added definition of “Reasonable Suspicion” (Sec. 2.13) to clarify the role and use of this standard as basis for determining whether an individual is involved in a Violent Group.
- “Review for Entry in the Associative Violence Information System” (Sec. 3) – Formerly “Gang Associate Verification” (Sec. 5) and “Submission to the Gang Assessment Database” (Sec. 7) revised to clarify process and approval necessary for an individual to be entered into the System.
- Addition of audit procedures in “Audit and Review of Associative Violence Information System Entries” (Sec. 6).
- Addition of “Juveniles” (Sec. 7) and requirement that all juveniles in the System will be reviewed at least annually to determine if the individual should be deleted from the System.

- Addition of “Partnerships” (Sec. 8) to recognize and to clarify how and when information is shared with various public safety partners and how the information can aid their mission; and to recognize the BRIC will consider input from program personnel when removal is requested.
- Addition of “Redress” (Sec. 9) to provide contact information for complaints and requests for redress with reference to the BRIC Privacy, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties Protection Policy, Section K.
- Addition of “Public Reporting” (Sec. 10) which provides for additional data and information to be released publicly annually.

Commanding Officers shall ensure that this order and the attached Rule are posted on Department bulletin boards.

Michael A. Cox
Police Commissioner

RULE 335: ASSOCIATIVE VIOLENCE INFORMATION SYSTEM**Section 1. General Considerations / Purpose**

The purpose of the Associative Violence Information System (System) is to:

1. Provide law enforcement a consistent citywide framework for identifying individuals and groups that are reasonably suspected of engaging in criminal activity in furtherance of the criminal group, which includes targeted and/or retaliatory violence; and
2. Assist in the investigation of group related criminal activity in the City of Boston; and
3. Through community-based partnerships, assist in the identification of individuals to be referred to social service partners and offered a variety of opportunities as a pathway out of criminal involvement.

The System is only used for valid law enforcement purposes, including enhanced officer safety and awareness, suspect identification, witness and victim identification, identification of individuals for referral to social service partners, resource deployment, investigative support, and to aid in the prosecution of group related crimes.

Section 2. Definitions

Sec. 2.1 Violent Group: An ongoing criminal organization, gang, association, or group, whether formal or informal, which meets the following criteria:

1. Consists of three or more persons; and
2. Has a common name or common identifying signs or colors or symbols, or frequent a specific area or location and may claim it as their territory; and
3. Has associates who, individually or collectively, engage in or have engaged in violent criminal activity which includes incidents or threats of targeted violence perpetrated against rival associates.

When a group no longer meets the above criteria for a Violent Group, they will be deleted from the System. Deleted records cannot be recovered from the System.

Sec. 2.2 Associate: Any person, whether juvenile or adult, who has obtained at least ten (10) points using the Point-Based Verification Criteria defined by this Rule, has been manually reviewed by Boston Regional Intelligence Center (BRIC) Personnel and approved by a BRIC Supervisor, and is reasonably suspected of participating in Violent Group related criminal activity within the past five years.

Sec. 2.3 Associative Violence Information System: Electronic records system maintained by the BRIC that includes information relating to Associates and Violent Groups in accordance with this Rule.

Sec. 2.4 Active Status: A label applied to an individual who has met the point criteria to be considered an Associate, has been manually reviewed by BRIC personnel, and approved by a BRIC Supervisor, and is reasonably suspected of participating in Violent Group related criminal activity within the past five years.

Sec. 2.5 Deceased Status: A label applied to an individual who is no longer living, but met the criteria to be an Associate while they were living. Individuals with this status will be reviewed in accordance with this Rule, and the record may be retained if their death may result in the potential for retaliatory violence or criminal activity.

Sec. 2.6. Long Term Incarceration Status: A label applied to an individual who has been verified as an Associate in accordance with this Rule, who is currently incarcerated and serving a sentence of 2 or more years.

Sec. 2.7 Primary Affiliation: The Violent Group with which an individual is associated. In cases where an individual associates with more than 1 group, the Primary Affiliation should be considered the group in which Law Enforcement can most clearly articulate the individual having the strongest ties. This affiliation will have at least 10 points under the verification criteria. All individuals in the System shall have a Primary Affiliation.

Sec. 2.8 Secondary Affiliation: A secondary group that an individual could be verified as being associated with by at least 6 points under the verification criteria. This is in addition to their Primary Affiliation.

Sec. 2.9 Profile Page / Face Sheet: A summary webpage detailing an Associate's key identifiers and all items used to verify an individual as an Associate. The webpage may not contain all documentation regarding an individual or their group affiliation(s).

Sec. 2.10 Authorized User: All sworn Boston Police Officers and other individuals designated by the Bureau Chief of the Bureau of Intelligence and Analysis (BIA) or his/her designee shall be granted access to the Associative Violence Information System in accordance with this Rule.

Sec 2.11 Juvenile: An individual who has not attained the age of 18.

Sec 2.12 Point-Based Verification Criteria: List of items and activities which, when met, make an individual eligible for consideration to be entered into the Associative Violence Information System.

Sec 2.13 Reasonable Suspicion: Information exists which establishes sufficient facts to give a trained law enforcement or criminal investigative agency officer, investigator, or employee a basis to believe that there is a reasonable basis to suspect that an individual is involved in a Violent Group.

Section 3. Review for Entry in the Associative Violence Information System

To be entered in the Associative Violence Information System, an individual must:

- (a) have a minimum of ten (10) points from the Point-Based Verification Criteria; and
- (b) have been manually reviewed by BRIC personnel, and approved by a BRIC Supervisor; and
- (c) is reasonably suspected of participating in Violent Group related criminal activity within the past five years.

Authorized Users can propose an individual for consideration for entry into the System. Proposals can be made to the Bureau Chief of the BIA or his/her designee. All proposals for entry will be manually reviewed by BRIC Personnel to determine compliance with this Rule prior to entry into the System.

BRIC Personnel will conduct a qualitative analysis of the individual's background and criminal history to determine whether the individual is reasonably suspected of participating in Violent Group related criminal activity within the past five years.

A quantitative assessment utilizing the Point-Based Verification Criteria is conducted as part of this review. The following list of items and activities will be considered in the quantitative review for entry into the Associative Violence Information System:

- Contact with Known Group Associate (Field Interaction/Observation/Encounter Report (FIOE Report)) (2 points per interaction)
 - FIOE Reports shall not be used as the sole verification criteria for any individual.
- Court Documents, i.e. affidavit, indictment (9 points)
- Documented Association (Police Offense/Incident Report) (4 points per interaction)
- Identified in Group Related Photograph (2 points)
- Information Developed During Investigation and/or Surveillance (5 points)
- Information from Anonymous Informant or Tipster (1 point)
- Information from Reliable, Confidential Informant (5 points)
- Known Group Tattoo or Marking (8 points)
- Membership Documents (9 points)
- Named in Documents as an Associate / Member (8 points)
- Participation in Group Publications (8 points)
- Possession of Group related Documents, i.e. prison gang newsletter (8 points if not in custody or incarcerated; 3 points if in custody or incarcerated)
- Possession of Group Publications (2 points)
- Prior Validation by a Law Enforcement Agency (9 points)
 - The Law Enforcement Agencies validation process must be at least as rigorous as that used by the Boston Police Department.
- Published News Accounts (1 point)
- Self Admission (8 points)
- Use and or Possession of Group Paraphernalia or Identifiers (4 points)
- Victim/Target Affiliated with Associate of Rival Group (8 points if not in custody or incarcerated; 3 points if in custody or incarcerated)

The BRIC will maintain copies of supporting documentation for all Criteria used to verify an individual.

The BRIC will analyze the validity of the supporting documentation for each Criteria used to verify an Associate and maintain the discretion to decline to use the information towards any criterion.

An individual who does not have a minimum of ten (10) points from the above Criteria will not be entered into the System. Additionally, individuals who have a minimum of ten (10) points from the above Criteria but are determined to not be engaged in group related criminal activity will not be entered in the System.

No individual shall be entered into the System without approval of a BRIC Supervisor.

No individual will be considered for entry to the Associative Violence Information System on the basis of their religious, political, or social views or activities; their participation in a particular noncriminal organization or lawful event; or their protected characteristics, including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, citizenship, place of origin, age, disability, gender, or sexual orientation.

Section 4. Access

The Department will provide access to the Associative Violence Information System to all personnel defined as Authorized Users in Section 2.10. All Authorized Users must acknowledge compliance with this Rule before gaining access. Authorized Users must have a legitimate law enforcement purpose for accessing the System. The BRIC will serve as the administrator of the System.

Authorized Users will have the following access permissions:

- **READ** all entries within the system
- **SEARCH** all entries within the system

Section 5. Dissemination of Associative Violence Information System Information

All data contained in the Associative Violence Information System is considered Law Enforcement Sensitive. Information contained within the System shall only be disseminated for valid law enforcement purposes.

All court ordered or public record requested production of information contained in the system should be directed to the Boston Police Department's Office of the Legal Advisor.

Only specific Authorized Users within the BRIC and selected by the Commander of the BIA or his/her designee will have access to print Profile Pages / Face Sheets for legitimate law enforcement purposes. All printing from the System shall be logged and the reason and recipient noted.

Section 6. Audit and Review of Associative Violence Information System Entries

The Commander of the BIA or his/her designee, in collaboration with the Commander of the YVSF or his/her designee, shall be responsible for ensuring that files are maintained in accordance with the goals and objectives set forth in this Rule.

When an individual no longer meets the criteria to be an Associate, they will be deleted from the System. When a group no longer meets the above criteria for a Violent Group, they will be deleted from the System. Deleted records cannot be recovered from the

System.

Entries for individuals with Deceased Status may be retained if their death may result in the potential for retaliatory violence or criminal activity.

Juveniles in the System will be reviewed at least annually. All other entries shall be reviewed at least once every five years to determine if the individual remains an Associate based on the definitions provided above.

A random subset of Associates and Violent Groups in the System will be audited for compliance with this Rule at least quarterly by the BRIC Privacy, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties Officer or his/her designee.

Section 7. Juveniles

Juveniles in the System will be reviewed at least annually to determine if the individual remains an Associate based on the definitions provided above.

Juveniles will be deleted from the System if no evidence exists of continued involvement.

The BRIC may notify appropriately cleared partners upon the addition of a Juvenile to the System to facilitate social service provisions as a pathway out of criminal involvement.

Section 8. Partnerships

The Boston Police Department is committed to connecting individuals in the Associative Violence Information System with social support services. The Department partners with several organizations to provide services as a pathway out of Violent Group involvement. The Department may notify appropriately cleared partners of individuals in the System to facilitate connecting them with appropriate services. Notifications will be made provided, however, that such release of information will not compromise an ongoing investigation.

The BRIC will consider input from social service program personnel when requested to determine if an individual should be removed from the System.

Section 9. Redress

The BRIC will receive complaints for redress via mail or email at:

Boston Police Department – Boston Regional Intelligence Center
C/O BRIC Privacy Officer
Boston Police Department
One Schroeder Plaza
Boston, MA 02120

PrivacyOfficer.BRIC@pd.boston.gov

In addition, please refer to the BRIC Privacy, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties Protection Policy,

Section K.

Section 10. Public Reporting

The total number of individuals and groups included in the Associate Violence Information System and a summary of audits conducted will be released publicly on the Department's website annually.

By January 31st of each year, the BRIC will report to the Police Commissioner the total number of individuals added to and removed from the System in the previous calendar year. These totals will then be released to the public.

Michael A. Cox
Police Commissioner