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# HUMAN RESOURCES & INSIDER THREAT

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## INTRODUCTION

The Human Resources (HR) department is a key component to any organization and will inherently have the most contact with an individual throughout their lifecycle of employment. HR professionals have a multitude of responsibilities and are trained to bring a more humanitarian approach to the workforce. They hold a unique position in offering support to employees to establish a trustworthy environment between the workforce and the organization. The main goals for Insider Threat Programs are to deter, detect, and mitigate potential insider threats. During this process, HR can be a valuable resource in resolving insider threat matters. HR not only plays a significant role in the prevention of insider threats, but also serves as a pillar of a multidisciplinary team for Insider Threat Programs during mitigation. Additionally, HR can provide valuable deterrence efforts when an employee is terminated to alleviate any potential future harm to an organization.

## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF AN HR DEPARTMENT AND HR PROFESSIONALS?

HR departments and HR professionals are responsible for planning, coordinating, and directing the administrative functions of an organization. The following are a few examples of standard responsibilities of HR departments and HR professionals:

- Recruitment, onboarding, and offboarding
- Maintaining employee records
- Liaison for management on HR policies
- Liaison for Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and sexual harassment complaints
- Executive strategic planning
- Handling staff issues such as mediating disputes, grievance procedures, and disciplinary measures
- Coordinating and supervising support staff
- Education services and training
- Overseeing employee benefit programs

Moreover, HR professionals provide oversight for employee relations, regulatory compliance, and administration of employee-related services such as payroll, training, and retirement services. The unique role HR professionals serve within an organization is what makes HR a valuable resource for Insider Threat Programs.





## MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEAMS AND HR AUTHORITY

Multi-disciplinary teams play a significant role in Insider Threat Programs that typically consist of HR, law enforcement, personnel management, behavioral science, cybersecurity, counterintelligence, and security professionals. Multi-disciplinary teams facilitate timely informed decision-making by ensuring that subject matter expertise are available for conflict resolution regarding individuals that may pose an insider threat.

### Department of Defense (DOD)

DOD has clearly defined HR's role in multi-disciplinary teams. DOD Instruction 5205.16, DOD Insider Threat Program, authorizes Insider Threat Programs to establish and maintain a multi-disciplinary threat management capability that includes the ability to share relevant information with commanders or civilian equivalents component-wide.

### Federal (Non-DOD)

The National Insider Threat Policy and Minimum Standards for Executive Branch Insider Threat Programs, clearly states an agency's responsibilities

are to develop and implement sharing policies and procedures. This allows an organization's Insider Threat Program to access and share data derived integrated information from across the organization. Inherently, this generally includes counterintelligence, security, information assurance, and HR departments. This authority states that agency heads shall direct components of an organization to securely provide Insider Threat Program personnel relevant HR databases and files that may be necessary for resolving insider threat cases.

### Industry

Outside of federal and DOD organizations, a common term used is Insider Risk Management. Insider Risk Management policies can be defined as any policy that protects organizations against insider or internal threats. HR's role may not be as clearly defined in some policies; however, administrative procedures exist for prevention and mitigation of risks associated with employee actions. Measures will be implemented to safeguard sensitive information and resources. Depending on the organization, other federal, state, local laws or regulations may apply.



# HOW CAN HR PLAY A ROLE IN THE PREVENTION OF INSIDER THREATS?

The advantage of HR on multi-disciplinary teams for Insider Threat Programs or Insider Risk Management is the ability to dissect previous issues to gain awareness of the workplace climate. Insider threat cases may reveal toxic work environments, discrimination, harassment, poor management, lack of peer support, controversial policies, lack of training, or other related factors that may cause individuals to go down the wrong path. With this knowledge, HR can implement new ways of addressing these issues on the forefront as a preventative measure. The following are some examples:

- Offering initial or specialized training
- Establishing an open-door policy that encourages a supportive environment

- Offering counseling services and peer support
- Establishing clear expectations of productivity
- Ensuring just and fair disciplinary measures
- Encouraging feedback
- Developing a system for employees to express their opinions and grievances

Creating a more trusting and positive environment can benefit an organization. Some benefits can include increased trust and transparency within an organization which can lead to increases in productivity, team cohesion, and most importantly the prevention of future insider threats.



# HOW CAN HR ASSIST INSIDER THREAT PROGRAMS OR INSIDER RISK MANAGEMENT?

There are multiple touchpoints HR can use to assist Insider Threat Programs or Insider Risk Management. Along with prevention, HR can provide valuable insights in filling in gaps of information by providing the following:

- Personnel records
- Records of previous medical or psychiatric conditions
- Previous rule violations or criminal history
- Indications of workplace hostility, disciplinary records, or concerning incidents
- Anomalies derived from recruitment or the hiring process
- Any indications of personal, professional, or financial stressors

Furthermore, HR can assist insider threat teams during the mitigation process in formulating recommendations and mitigation efforts to reduce the impact of a potential threat. Mitigation itself is a deliberate action or practice that aims to reduce the risk or impact of a harmful or hazardous event. HR can be vital in sharing information with a multidisciplinary team to develop a whole person concept, and provide knowledge of what an organization can offer toward rehabilitation efforts. Some examples are as follows:

- Remedial/specialized training and professional counseling
- Peer support such as assigning a mentor
- Transferring an individual to another department or alternate work location
- Mediation for conflict resolution
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Adjust schedule or reduce work hours
- Recommend leave of absence to handle personal matters

When assessing mitigation strategies, there may be a time when the only resolution is to terminate employment or remove an individual from the workplace. If feasible, notifications of termination should be conducted respectfully and in a manner that minimizes embarrassment to the individual. HR may have the ability to provide valuable deterrence efforts for individuals that may cause harm to an organization. According to workforce trends, understanding some of the dangers of possible future harm to an organization during and after termination can make a difference. Organizations are attempting to take a more humanitarian approach in offering support to individuals during the termination process. Some examples include providing:

- Severance packages
- Career counseling and job placement
- Resume assistance and professional counseling
- Benefits for extended period after termination
- Assistance with unemployment services

By offering a continuation of support, HR can reduce the likelihood of workplace violence, espionage, cyber-attacks, theft of sensitive information and intellectual property, or other harmful effects that may occur. Organizations are responsible for promoting a safe and productive workplace, free from violence and recognized hazards while complying with all laws, policies, and regulations.

When an organization can adequately use their capabilities, it can strengthen organizational culture, safety, and productivity. HR departments efforts in prevention, mitigation, and providing insight to humanitarian approaches, can be valuable in assisting Insider Threat Programs to effectively deter, detect, and mitigate insider threats.



## MORE INFORMATION

### HR and Insider Threat Resources (Short)

[Resources for Human Resources and Insider Threat Short INTS0091 \(cdse.edu\)](#)

### Webinars

[Human Resources and Insider Threat \(cdse.edu\)](#)

[Saying Goodbye – Making Involuntary Separations Easier and Safer \(cdse.edu\)](#)

### eLearning Course

[Developing a Multidisciplinary Insider Threat Capability \(cdse.edu\)](#)

### Job Aids

[Insider Threat Mitigation Responses INT210.16 \(cdse.edu\)](#)

[Insider Threat Workplace Environment Organizational Justice Job Aid \(cdse.edu\)](#)

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