

Subject: Re: Comments pertaining to N1-560-08-3  
From: "Laurence Brewer" <laurence.brewer@nara.gov>  
Date: Wed, January 14, 2009 4:43 pm  
To: info@etspictures.com  
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Dear Mr. Ehling:

Thank you for your January 12, 2009, comments regarding the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) proposed record retention schedule for the Secure Flight program records (Records Disposition Schedule Job No. N1-560-08-03).

With regard to your recommendation to make the records covered by Item A1 (Secure Flight Program-Master File-Government Watch List) permanent, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) maintains they are appropriately scheduled as temporary for the reasons outlined in the appraisal memorandum and the following reasons: the watch list data does not represent a unique compilation of data by the TSA; the original, complete version of these records has already been appropriately scheduled as temporary; and the purpose of making records permanent is not to ensure vital records back-up copies exist.

The TSA uses copies of watch list records maintained by the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) to run its Secure Flight program. (After further research we determined this is the sole source of TSA's watch list data and have corrected our appraisal memorandum so it does not indicate that the TSA also receives watch list data directly from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Defense.) The TSA does not manipulate the data it receives in any way, nor does it consolidate it with any other data. The NCTC is the hub where the Federal Government consolidates all watch list data from a wide range of Federal agencies, such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of State, and the Central Intelligence Agency. The NCTC consolidates the data into the Terrorist Screening Database (TSDB), which consists of multiple sub-databases. The TSA only receives from the NCTC and uses (i.e., matches against) a small portion of these sub-databases to carry out its Secure Flight program. Therefore, the Secure Flight watch list data only represents a copy of a small sub-set of the whole watch list data maintained by the Federal Government. It does not contain any additional potential historical value.