



NAA RESOURCE

Creating a Relationship with Law Enforcement

The National Aquaculture Association (NAA) recommends that farmers and processors develop proactive discussions with local law enforcement about the threat of animal rights activism. Advance discussions have been shown to make a considerable difference in effectively managing protests or other activist incidents. This resource suggests topics to cover in conversations with local law enforcement

Identify who to connect with.

Determine what law enforcement agency has oversight of the area where your farm or facility is located. Use a non-emergency number or email address to reach out to them giving an overview of your concerns and requesting a meeting. In addition to local agencies, farms and facilities are also encouraged to proactively make contact with the FBI Field Office that oversees your area. Do not be intimidated by the prospect of reaching out to the FBI – the field offices all have weapons of mass destruction (WMD) coordinators who cover agroterrorism and are interested in staying informed about threats to food safety and security. It is important to develop these relationships before they are needed and continually share information.

[Click here to find you're the closest FBI field office.](#)

Farms and businesses may also consider learning about and developing relationships within the Department of Homeland Security's Fusion Centers. Get to know your area's key contact proactively and also share information after an activist incident or suspicious activity.

[Click here for more information on Fusion Centers.](#)

Let them see your operation first-hand.

Bringing law enforcement officers on-site to your farm or plant has several benefits. Knowing the landscape and property layout will be valuable if they ever do have to respond to an incident and helping them understand your commitment to animal care will be helpful if activist groups start making accusations.

Explain the threat.

Be prepared to explain why you are concerned about activist activity. Examples of how similar businesses have been targeted by groups would be helpful to share so law enforcement officers can have an idea of what may happen. Make sure you document any suspicious behavior you have experienced.

Learn local ordinances regarding protests, trespassing, etc.

It's important to know what rights you have as a property owner and what protesters are legally allowed to do. Specific topics to cover include:

- Are permits required for protesters to assemble in your area? If so, is there a way to know in advance who has been given permits?
- What are the local laws regarding drones, divers with cameras or AUVs or ROVs.?
- How can you establish who has proper authority to make decisions?
- In order to enforce some trespass type laws, law enforcement officers need someone on the scene that has proper standing to let them know who is and who is not supposed to be on the property.
- How can you know and document your property boundaries?
- In some instances, activists have disputed where a property owner thinks their private property begins.
- What limits are in place for protests?
- Typically, protesters cannot block public roadways or stop you from entering or exiting your property.

Ask how to protect yourself proactively.

Ask for advice on how you can take proactive steps to avoid being targeted by activist groups, or to mitigate the damage to your business if you do have an issue. This might include "no trespassing" signage, security cameras, gates, locks, etc.

Identify individuals and groups of concern.

If you are already aware of particular activist groups or individuals in your area, share this information. Organizations that are specifically known for unlawful activity such as trespass and protests include [Direct Action Everywhere](#), [Anonymous for the Voiceless](#) and the [Animal Save Movement](#).

Establish a game plan for if you are targeted.

Crisis planning is essential for any business owner. Find out what steps law enforcement would recommend you take if you do have an issue arise.

- What can you do to protect your property before officers arrive?
- Who do you contact if there is a problem – 911 or contact someone directly?
- What about if something suspicious has happened but it is not a current emergency?
- What type of information would be useful to record or document?
- Would it be useful to provide maps of your property for law enforcement to have on file?
- If you have employees that have supervisory authority, clearly establish in writing, both an internal and external communication plan with contact names and numbers. This plan should clarify who communicates what information to which individuals in the event of an incident.

Continue the conversation.

Don't let this be a one-and-done discussion. Stay in touch regularly and notify law enforcement as new trends emerge or if suspicious incidents happen in your area. If there is an agriculture crimes unit in your area, make sure to connect with them as well. The FBI in particular has asked to be kept in the loop of activist incidents and would like to receive the following information: description of the incident, names of activists involved, vehicle information, and the case number or arrest information if local law enforcement were involved. Seeing what is happening at the local level can help them piece together national trends.



Please keep in mind this information is provided for informational purposes only. Seek individualized, professional legal advice prior to implementing these practices to ensure compliance with legal standards and contact local law enforcement if you anticipate protests. Learn your rights and protections under local, state or federal law.

Document created in proud partnership with the [Animal Agriculture Alliance](#).



Do not hesitate to contact the NAA with questions or comments at (251) 504-6995 or naa@nationalaquaculture.org