

# LASER ILLUMINATIONS OF AIRCRAFT - A GROWING THREAT



## Lasers Strike Working Groups

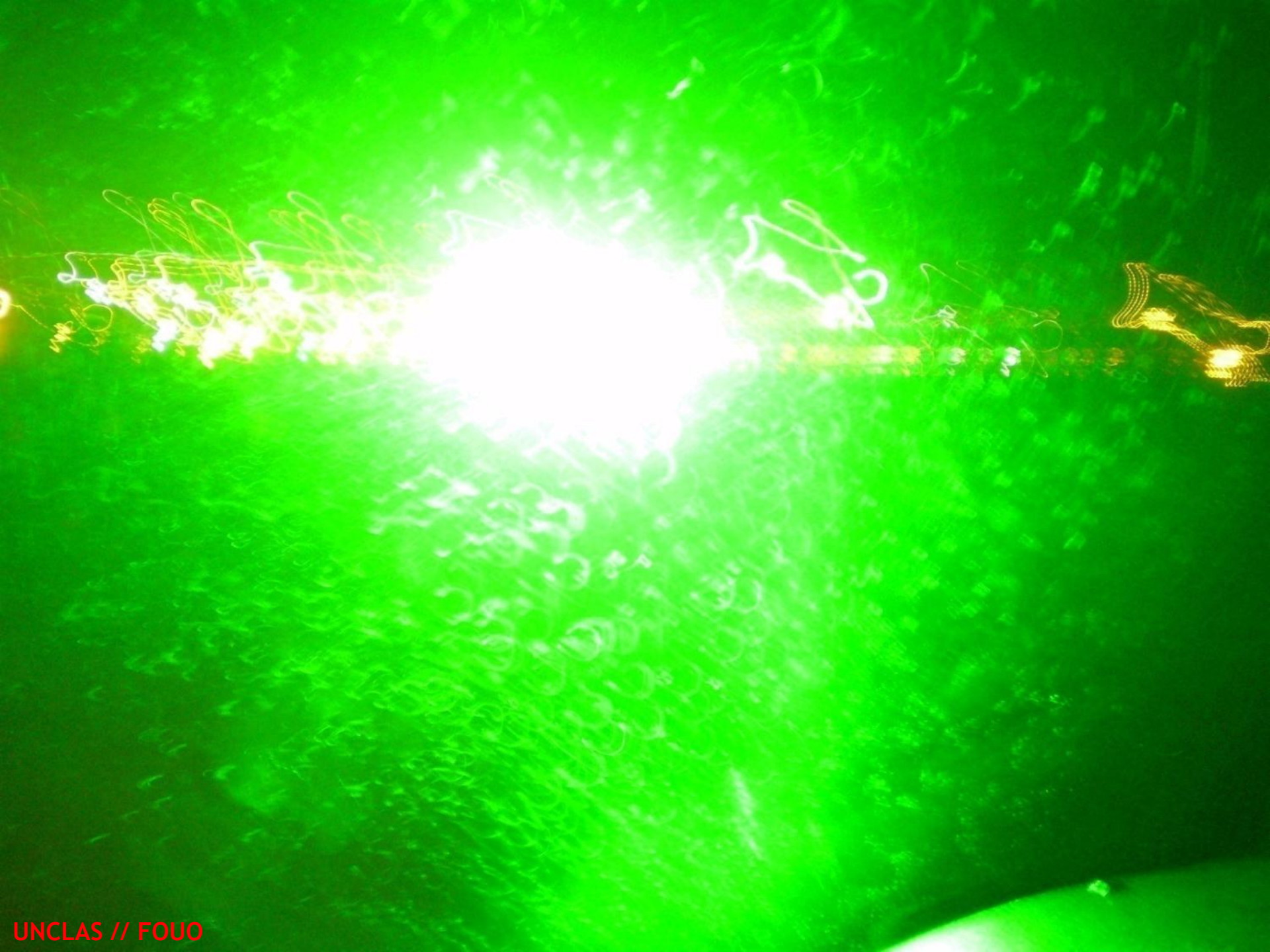
### Dangers of Handheld Lasers to Aircraft



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- TOPLASER series FOCUSABLE 500mW Green Laser. Its bright beam can reach up to 150 miles in darkness and emits a very bright beam at daylight.
- These power levels can burn, cut and fabricate most materials including metals.
- These higher powered laser systems are the candidates for directed energy beam weapons.

**Was \$899.00 in 2009**



- Arctic (blue) & Krypton (green)
- **Now \$299.95 (2011)**
- 1 W (1,000 mW)
- Most powerful handheld laser available
- Krypton boasts a Visible beam for 85 miles and to be 8,000 times brighter than the sun.



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# Why A Working Group Model

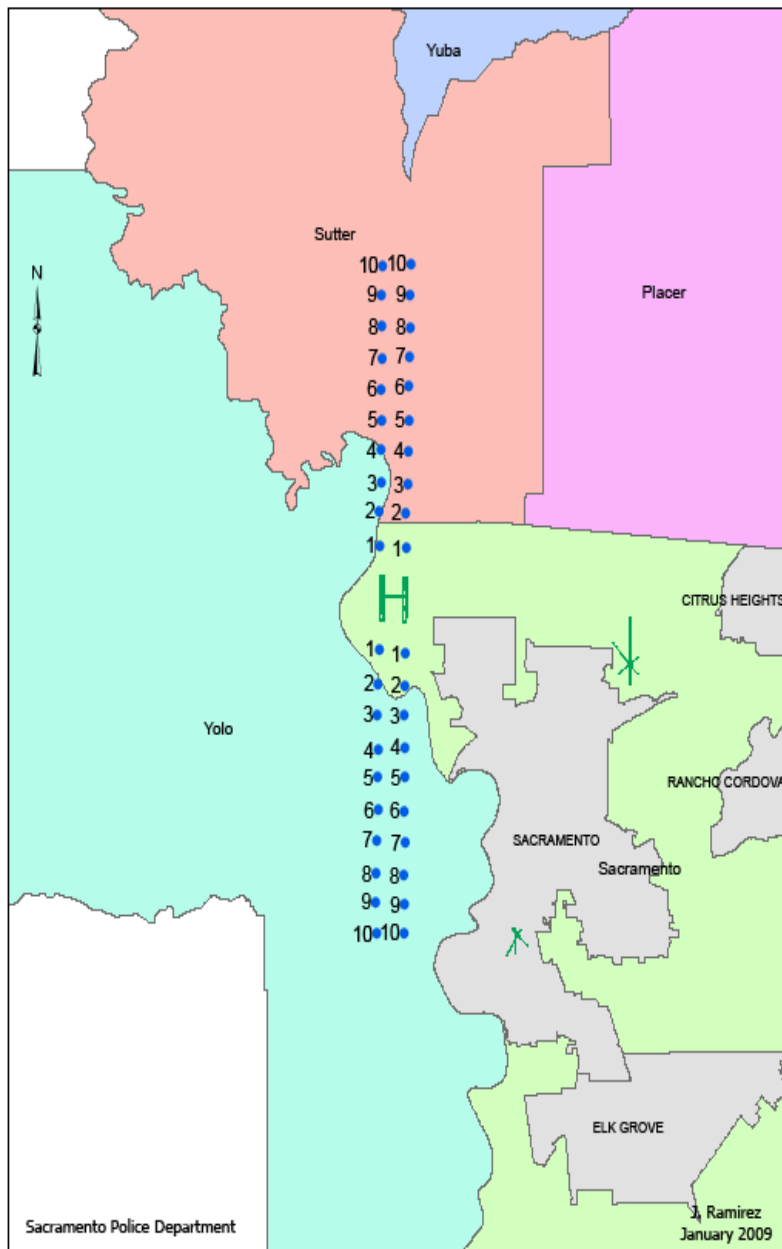
- ▶ Location ... Location ... Location ... of:
  - Victim
  - Subject
  - Jurisdiction
    - ▶ A Multi-Agency Responsibility
- ▶ Communication



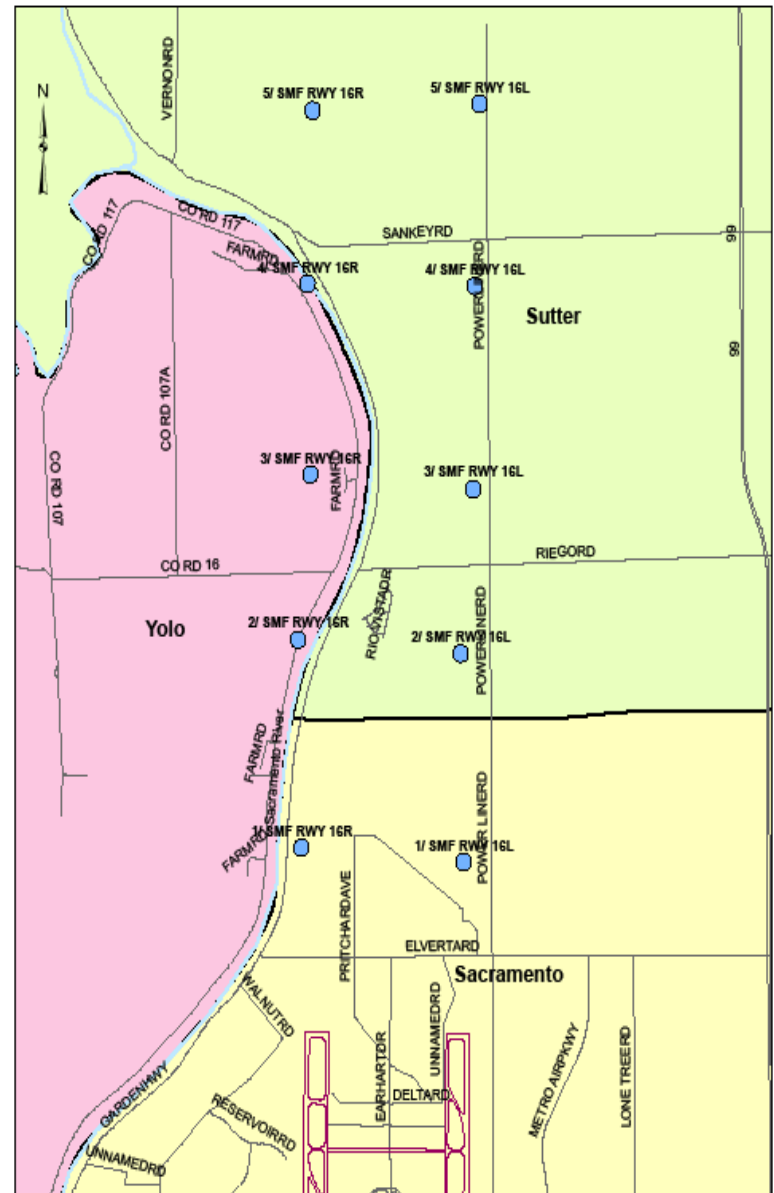
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# SMF Flight Path



# SMF Flight Path



# The FAA Notification Email

PRELIM INFO FROM FAA OPS: MODESTO,  
CA/ LASER EVENT/2245P/SWA 862, B737,  
REPORTED GREEN LASER ILLUMINATED  
LEFT SIDE OF FLT DECK WHILE  
DESCENDING OUT OF FL180 W BOUND 8  
N MODESTO. NO INJURIES REPORTED.  
MODESTO PD NOTIFIED. WOC 7-3333



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# A LSWG Step by Step

- ▶ Identifying the nature and location of your problem
- ▶ Identifying the Stakeholders for your situation
- ▶ Personally meet with, brief and gain agreements with individual partners
- ▶ Partner with your Fusion Center and TLO network
- ▶ Identify your Point of Contacts, both in your core participants and part-time attendees



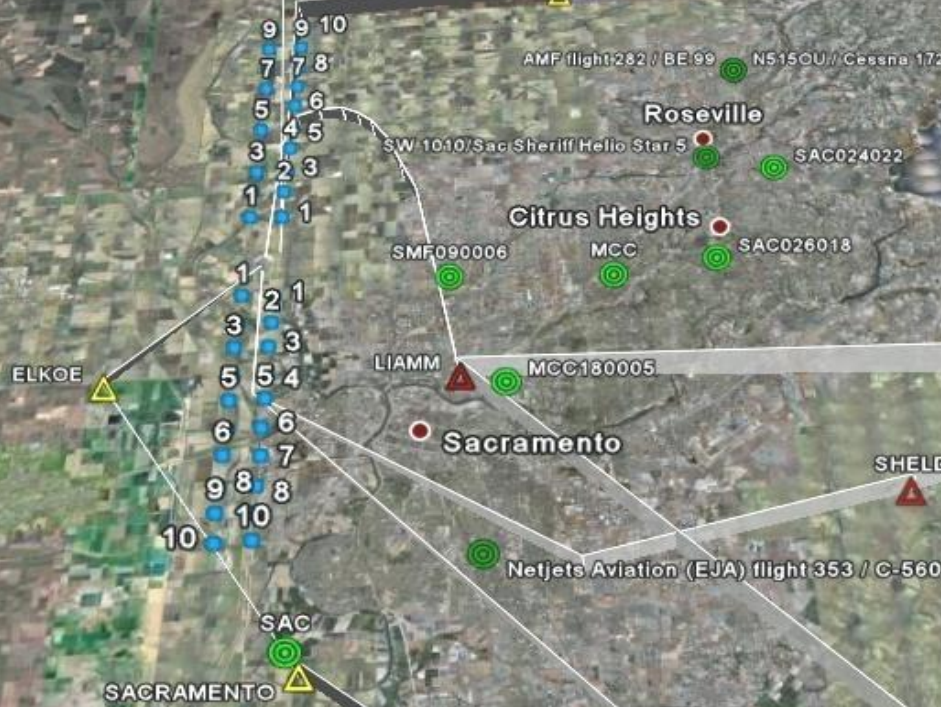
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29 MAR 2007

6 APR 2009



© 2009 Tele Atlas

Image © 2009 DigitalGlobe  
Image U.S. Geological Survey  
Streaming 100%

© 2007 Google™  
**UNCLAS // FOUO**  
Eye alt 46.53 mi

Pointer 38°35'59.05" N 121°18'22.18" W elev 112 ft



# A LSWG Step by Step (cont.)

- ▶ Gain prosecutorial buy in and point of contacts
- ▶ Stream line and bridge communication and reporting gaps
- ▶ Be willing to respond and support all aspects of the case, including state prosecutions
- ▶ Follow up with training and distribution (e.g. Military Partners)



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# Laser Incident Communications and Work Flow Chart

**Airplane**  
Laser incident occurs

## TRACON / Tower

- Receives initial report and contacts Local PD/SO Communications Center

## COMMUNICATONS CENTER

- Receives initial report.
- Keeps log of incident
- Notifies PD of (Flt #, Gate # and arrival time)
- Forwards Information to Federal POC

## PD / SO UNIFORM

- Receives initial report
- Meets plane at gate and interviews pilot(s) as they debark plane using the Laser Incident Questionnaire (**do not delay Pilots - walk & talk**)
- Contact communications with results of interview (location, time of Incident)
- Forwards report to communications

## LOCAL LE GROUND UNITS

Receives call from Air Units

- Locates suspect
  - Arrests, seizes laser, search subsequent to arrest
  - Conducts initial interview utilizing (first responders question guide)
  - Books on felony w/ bail enhancement requested
- If subject In Custody - Federal POC to respond and interviews  
Forward all reports to Federal POC

## Air UNITS

- Receives PD/SO information (location, time)
- Conducts fly over of area
- Coordinates with local LE ground units if a laser incident occurs to them

## COMMUNICATIONS

- Receives PD /SO Vic /Whit report
- Contacts Air Units if available and determines if they are available to conduct a search
- Forward PD/SO Vic /Whit report to Federal POC
- Courtesy notification to local LE of area where incident occurred, if no one is located.

## FEDERAL POC

- Receives COM or PD/SO reports
- Interviews subject
- Opens 149A Case
- Forwards all reports to State DA POC
- Forwards all reports to AUSA POC
- If AUSA determines case is viable, will have Local LE hold suspect on Fed charges and write complaint.
- If Declined by AUSA Support Local Prosecution

## AUSA

- Receives all reports from Federal POC and determines if facts warrant Federal arrest / prosecution.



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# Tools For Prosecution, Federal

## ► Federal Code(s)

### ■ Destruction of Aircraft or Aircraft Facilities

- 18 USC § 32 (a)(5): Whoever willfully interferes with flight / navigation / operations ...
- 18 USC § 32 (a)(8): Whoever willfully conspires to interfere with flight / navigation / operations ...



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# Coming Soon ... 18 USC § 39 (a) The “Securing Aircraft Cockpits Against Lasers Act of 2011”

## Aiming a laser pointer at an aircraft

- ▶ (a) Whoever knowingly aims the beam of a laser pointer at an aircraft in the special aircraft jurisdiction of the United States, or at the flight path of such an aircraft, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 5 years, or both.
- ▶ (b) As used in this section, the term ‘laser pointer’ means any device designed or used to amplify electromagnetic radiation by stimulated emission that emits a beam designed to be used by the operator as a pointer or highlighter to indicate, mark, or identify a specific position, place, item, or object.



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# Tools For Prosecution, States

**California**, Penal Code 247.5 (etc.) - Willful and malicious discharge of laser at an aircraft, person, law enforcement.

**Arizona**, Revised Statutes Title 13 Criminal Code Section 13-1213 Aiming a laser pointer at a peace officer.

**Florida**, Law enforcement and illuminating vehicles 784.062 Misuse of laser lighting devices.

- ▶ LOUISIANA, city of Baton Rouge
- ▶ MARYLAND, town of Ocean City
- ▶ MICHIGAN, city of Dearborn

A complete listing at:

<http://laserpointersafety.com/rules-general/uslaws/uslaws.html>



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# Suspect Profile # 1

- ▶ Minor
- ▶ No Criminal History
- ▶ High GPA (AP/Early Grad)
- ▶ Sci-Fi Fan/ Gadget Savvy
- ▶ Peer Pressure or Curiosity



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# Suspect Profile # 2



- ▶ Late 30s to early 40s
- ▶ Living at home with mom
- ▶ Criminal history
- ▶ Substance abuse issues
- ▶ Bright shining objects



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# Sacramento LSWG Results Analysis

- ▶ Prior to January 2009, the Sacramento AOR had **1** Federal (Bakersfield) and **2** local in **06** & **08** (both Sacramento County) prosecutions for laser incidents
- ▶ In **2008** the Sacramento AOR averaged **3** laser strikes a month for inbound/outbound commercial aircraft to Sacramento International (SMF) and substantially more for law enforcement helicopters
- ▶ Between January & December of **2009** when the group stood up its response and investigative model, along with our public awareness campaign, we had **10** arrests (**5** minors and **5** adults) that resulted in **9** convictions and **1** declined prosecution
- ▶ 2010 had **11** arrests over **10** events. Only **4** subjects were minors (**1** declined prosecution), **10** convictions



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# Current Numbers for SMF

October	2 (07)	<u>4</u> (08)	3 (09)
November	2 (07)	0 (08)	1 (09)
December	3 (07)	0 (08)	0 (09)
January	4 (08)	3 (09)	<u>0</u> (10)
February	1	1	1
March	0	0	1
April	4	0	1
May	0	1	0
June	4	1	1
July	1	1	1
August	2	0	0
September	3	1	0
October	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>
November	0	1	0
December	0	0	0
Total	23 (30)	12 (15)	06 (10)



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# Additional Trends & Progress

- ✓ 2011 = Start of the Bell Curve (20s)
- ✓ LSWG's Up to 15 nationwide
- ✓ Integration of FAA Inspectors and Database
- ✓ FBI Lab, Operational Technologies Support



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# Questions?



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