



New Guidelines Expand FBI's Powers to Abuse Citizens' Freedom

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New updates to the FBI's agent manual, the Domestic Investigations and Operations Guide (DIOG), greatly expand the FBI's powers to search for information relating to groups or individuals who are not suspected of wrongdoing. The DIOG, which has been described as a collection of procedures, standards, approval levels, and explanations, to be used by FBI agents, was created in 2008 to help implement new Attorney General's Guidelines that were issued earlier that year. These guidelines reconciled a number of previously separate guidelines, the first of which had been issued in 1976.

Under the 2011 revision to the guide, for example, agents may search the FBI's extensive databases without making a record about why they are doing so. This opens the door for agents to use the databases for their own personal purposes, for reasons ranging from simple curiosity to more nefarious purposes such as targeting an individual against whom an agent has a grudge.

Before this change to the guide, agents were required to open an assessment before searching the databases. This required forming a paper trail and identifying a legitimate purpose for the investigation. Without this requirement, agents will have largely unrestricted access to certain databases. The FBI has justified this by stating that it is too cumbersome for agents to open formal inquiries before running checks.

The new rules also allow agents to administer lie-detector tests and search people's trash without a factual basis to suspect wrongdoing when investigating a potential informant. The FBI's reasoning is that this could be useful in determining whether the subject may pose a potential threat to agents or to put pressure on the potential informant to assist the government.

These new rules expand an already powerful agency's ability to keep tabs on Americans who are not even suspected of wrongdoing. What's more, the lack of oversight and recordkeeping means that we will never know the extent to which this system is misused. The FBI should be held accountable to the American people and should not abuse the freedom of its citizens in the name of protecting it. These changes need to go.

Crime in the Suites is authored by the [Ifrah Law Firm](#), a Washington DC-based law firm specializing in the defense of government investigations and litigation. Our client base spans many regulated industries, particularly e-business, e-commerce, government contracts, gaming and healthcare.

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