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## Border Safety Initiative

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The Border Safety Initiative (BSI) has two main objectives: the reduction of injuries and the prevention of deaths in the southwest border region.

The BSI was implemented in June 1998 building on the longstanding public safety and humanitarian measures practiced by the United States Border Patrol. The BSI complements the National Border Patrol Strategy. In particular, the BSI is intended to educate and inform potential migrants of the dangers and hazards of crossing the border illegally and to respond to those who are in life-threatening situations. Over the years, cold and unscrupulous smugglers and human traffickers have moved persons into more remote, rugged and hazardous terrain with the purpose of smuggling them into the United States. Through this illicit activity, we have registered many border deaths along the Southwest border. Equally, Border Patrol Agents have rescued over 7,500 persons from the dangerous high-risk areas.

### The Border Safety Initiative is comprised of four elements

**Prevention** – Working together with Mexican officials to identify dangerous crossing points along the entire Southwest border, discouraging illegal crossings, and addressing safety problems.

**Search and Rescue** – Targeting hazardous areas where migrants may become lost, abandoned, or in distress due to difficult terrain and the willingness of alien smugglers to lead them into dangerous territory.

**Identification** – Establishing procedures and deploying resources to help officials identify those who have died attempting to cross the border illegally through our target zones.

**Tracking and Recording** – The BSI Tracking System is the main repository for data collected on BSI related deaths and rescues for reporting and analysis.

Border Management and Security are the foundation for border safety. A secure border is a safe border. The BSI continues to be the conduit through which the humanitarian principles of the United States Government and the Government of Mexico are mutually explored. BSI aids in furthering our efforts and accomplishing the tasks set out under the various bi-national agreements such as the 2004 U.S. – Mexico Action Plan for Cooperation and Border Safety.

### The Helping Hand: Search, Trauma, and Rescue Efforts

Each year, the Border Patrol rescues thousands of people who have been abandoned by alien smugglers in areas such as mountains, deserts, and rivers. A life saving tool in aiding those in distress is the Border Patrol

#### Search Trauma and Rescue Team (BORSTAR)

BORSTAR is an elite unit trained in various facets of search and rescue and capable of responding to emergency situations along our southern border. In addition to focusing on our priority mission of keeping terrorist and terrorist weapons from entering the United States and enforcing U.S. immigration laws, a vital role of the Border Patrol's mission,

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through BSI, is to educate the public in regards to the risks and dangers associated with illegal crossings.

Smugglers and human traffickers are criminals who have no regard for human life. Many efforts have been initiated to assist those persons who do not heed these warnings. Some of those efforts are listed below:

- Incorporating safety into every Border Patrol operational element.
- Working closely with Mexican consulates to discourage illegal crossings and to assist illegal aliens who have been apprehended by Border Patrol.
- Posting warning signs in high-risk crossing areas to warn potential illegal border crossers about the dangers at the border.
- Promoting Border Safety awareness campaigns that warn about the dangers of crossing the desert, the mountains and the rivers along the Southwest border during the hot summer and cold winter months.
- Producing Public Service Announcements (PSAs) on television, radio, and distributing fliers that are used to reach potential migrants entering illegally into the United States. The PSAs are used as an informational tool to educate persons who are contemplating crossing the Southwest border illegally. Through this effort, it informs people of the dangers involved when hiring and trusting smugglers while educating them about the environmental, geographical, and extreme weather conditions that could pose a high risk when crossing the border illegally.
- Since the inception of the BSI, Border Patrol Agents have rescued over 7,500 persons along the southwest border. For more see Notable Rescues.
- Providing agents with emergency medical technician (EMT) training.
- Establishing rescue beacons in the high risk desert areas to assist those individuals in distress that are lost and in need of medical assistance.
- Throughout the Southwest border, emergency vehicles have been equipped with first-aid kits and medical supplies to assist in responding to both cold and hot weather emergencies; and ensuring that the majority of vehicles that patrol waterways are equipped with additional flotation devices.



CBP Border Patrol BORSTAR Agents carry an injured man to safety.

## Binational Training

To date, the Border Patrol has conducted 16 binational training courses (search and rescue, aquatic safety, land navigation, all-terrain vehicle training and medical training). Since 1998, over 1,320 Mexican officials have received training and equipment to enhance their search and rescue capabilities on the Mexican side of the border. In FY 2003 alone, a total of 362 Mexican officials and rescue personnel received this specialized training.

For more information, see Notable Rescues.

( [Border Safety Initiative Notable Rescues](#) )



CBP Border Patrol BORSTAR Agents providing specialized rescue training to Mexican authorities.

## see also:



on [cbp.gov](http://cbp.gov):

[Border Safety Initiative Notable Rescues](#)