



Financial Crimes Enforcement Network

A bureau of the U.S. Department of the Treasury

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FinCEN Releases 14th SAR Activity Review-By the Numbers Total Filings Fall but Fraud and Terrorist Financing Reports Grow

VIENNA, Va. – The Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) today released its 14th edition of the [SAR Activity Review – By the Numbers](#), which covers suspicious activity reports (SARs) filed in 2009. The report shows that the total number of all SARs filed by financial institutions declined from 1.29 million in 2008 to 1.28 million in 2009. This is the first time since 1996 that the total number of SARs filed declined over a one-year period. SARs filed by depository institutions declined for the first time from 732,563 in 2008 to 720,309 in 2009.

SARs reporting suspicious activity characterized as fraud and those reporting suspected terrorist financing activity grew in 2009. The report shows that SARs indicating terrorist financing filed by depository institutions increased 8 percent in 2009, making it the first such increase since 2004. Depository institution filers submitted 545 SARs indicating terrorist financing in 2009 and 4,914 total terrorist financing SARs since July 2003 when this characterization was added to the SAR.

Reports of the categories of suspected Computer Intrusion, and Counterfeit Check showed double-digit increases from the previous twelve months of reporting, increasing respectively 52 percent and 12 percent.

Other changes where fraud was identified include:

- Depository institution SARs identifying mortgage loan fraud rose 4 percent in 2009 compared to 2008.
- Suspected incidents of credit card fraud increased 5 percent in 2009.
- SARs filed by securities and futures firms, or SAR-SF, and characterizing the suspicious activity type as check fraud increased 15 percent in 2009.
- SAR-SF filings characterizing the suspicious activity type as wire fraud increased 39 percent in 2009 over reports filed in 2008.

- SAR-SFs also identifying mail fraud as the suspicious activity increased 23 percent and significant wire or other transaction without economic purpose increased 41 percent in 2009.

In all, 27 percent of the suspicious activity reported by depository institutions in 2009 was attributed to suspected fraud-related activities including check fraud, commercial loan fraud, consumer loan fraud, credit card fraud, debit card fraud, mortgage loan fraud, and wire transfer fraud. Mortgage loan fraud and check fraud remain the only two SAR characterizations that have experienced an increase every year since 1996.

There were some areas where the reported incidence of suspected fraud fell in 2009.

- The number of reports indicating consumer loan fraud fell in 2009, for the first time since 2000, down nearly 31 percent from the prior year.
- SARs filed citing check kiting fell 23 percent in 2009.

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*F*inCEN's mission is to enhance U.S. national security, deter and detect criminal activity, and safeguard financial systems from abuse by promoting transparency in the U.S. and international financial systems.