



REGION 6 Preparedness, Response, and Prevention Update

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Biodefense, If Risk Communication is the Answer, What is the Question?

Natural Hazards Observer, September 2004

“How will the public react to a biological attack?” is a fundamental question underpinning U.S. policy and practice pertaining to terrorism preparedness and response. In recent years, widely divergent approaches to the issue of mass response to bioterrorism have emerged.

When catastrophic terrorism was a serious but postulated danger, officials often considered public reactions to a biological event as part of the crisis to be contained (e.g., the “worried well” would pour into hospitals, hindering health care workers ability to treat real victims).

The complex realities of September 11, 2001, and the anthrax letter attacks that same year, however, have helped refine the understanding of the public not simply as a problem to be managed, but as a constituency to be served – anxious people in need of good information about the danger and what to do about it.

From Crowd Management to Credible Communication

The attitudes of decision makers and responders toward the public in the context of bioterrorism have shifted from an emphasis on containing disorder to communication information.

In past hypothetical scenarios, members of the public usually surfaced as mass casualties or hysteria-driven mobs that self-evacuate affected areas or resort to violence to gain access to scarce, potentially life-saving antibiotics and vaccines.

Prior to 2001, official response systems were often built around the notion of the public as a problem to be managed during a crisis. This bias, which remains to a certain extent today, precludes consideration of and planning for ways to solicit the cooperation of affected populations.

Communication failures during the serial tragedies of 2001 spurred recognition of the essential role of public outreach in managing the effects of a bioattack.

Following the anthrax crisis, federal health authorities identified risk communication and health information dissemination as one of seven priority areas required to upgrade the ability of state and local health departments to respond to bioterrorism.

Critical reflection on responses to the 2001 terrorist attacks prompted the release of many helpful analyses and guidebooks for officials regarding successful communication with the media and the larger public.

Today, practitioner and policy-maker interest in public communication remains high.

Communication as the Means to an End, Not an End in Itself

As 2001 demonstrated, open and informative relationships among citizens, government, and public health and safety authorities are fundamental to the nation's ability to cope with unconventional terrorism.

U.S. leaders and responders should be lauded for embracing effective crisis and risk communication as remedies for a potentially anxious, skeptical, or resistant public.

However, authorities should be careful not to approach improved communication as a "quick fix" for the more complex underlying tensions that can precede or emerge during bioattacks or other health crises.

Public and risk communication have become code words with which to skirt the multifaceted realities associated with community response to terrorism, bioterrorism in particular.

When authorities say they want better communication with the public, what they tend to mean is they want public buy-in, compliance, and understanding – possibly even absolutism – when tough choices arise (e.g., how to distribute scarce resources in an emergency).

When the public calls for better communication from officials, they are asking for inclusion, consideration, and mutual respect as peer decision makers; expert guidance on which they can act; and proof that their needs have been considered.

As we gravitate toward communication as a key to improved readiness, we need to reflect more thoughtfully on what exactly we want that communication to accomplish.

Leadership, Public Engagement, and Governance Dilemmas

The aim of a bioattack is to create suffering and disruption by introducing an epidemic of infectious disease. Whether natural or deliberate, such an outbreak poses unique dilemmas.

Leaders must tend to immediate life-and-death matters, such as caring for the sick; ward off socially effects, like ostracism of the afflicted; and curtail negative economic effects.

Conflicts of interest, priority, and purpose can emerge in pursuit of these goals. The Center for Biosecurity of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center convened the Working Group on “Governance Dilemmas” in Bioterrorism Response to develop a set of analytic templates for decision makers faced with these difficult situations.

Goals of Bioterrorism Response

A larger focus on strategic goals helps stave off the temptation to focus on managerial and scientific aspects of response while neglecting civic, social, ethical, and economic dimensions.

- Limit death and suffering through preventative, curative, and supportive care; and the physically compromised.
- Use the least restrictive interventions to defend civil liberties while containing infectious agents that cause communicable disease.
- Preserve the economic stability of victims as well as hard-hit industries, cities, and neighborhoods.
- Discourage scapegoating; hate crimes, and the stigmatization of people or places as contaminated or unhealthy.
- Bolster the ability of individuals and communities to rebound from unpredictable and traumatic events; provide mental health support to those who need it.

Novel Dangers Posed by Bioattacks

The premeditated use of bioweapons magnifies the already unfamiliar dangers posed by large disease outbreaks. Epidemics are complicated events due to their biology, but also because they provoke fear, contradictory impulses, and competing social aims.

- An epidemic’s outcomes – suffering, death, lost livelihood, and commerce – are troubling. Leaders and the public may deny that a problem exists, or intervene too quickly without regard to the effects of their actions.

- People need to make sense of random and terrifying events, but epidemics elude quick and easy explanation. The nature of a disease, a population's vitality, and the responsiveness of health institutions affect how an epidemic will unfold.
- A mysterious disease can prompt an individual to isolate oneself and blame others for the tragedy or, in contrast, to care for victims while disregarding one's own safety.

Recurrent Governance Dilemmas during Epidemics

Once acknowledged, an epidemic exerts immense political and social pressure for decisive, visible action – especially when due to a bioattack. Apparent and genuine conflicts among strategic goals can arise, such as balancing disease control imperatives with those of civil liberty, economic stability, and stigma preventions.

The ability to stop disease that spreads person-to-person and uphold individual freedoms rests largely on leaders taking proactive measures.

- Make bioterrorism response plans public before a crisis occurs; a well-informed population is more likely to cooperate with advice for reducing the spread of disease.
- Sketch out the big picture; make it clear that personal actions can affect the safety of others (e.g., staying home from work or school when ill protects others from getting sick).
- Use disease controls that respect ideals of autonomy, self-determination, and equality.
- Provide goods and services that help people comply with health orders (e.g., set up vaccination clinics in locations accessible to people without cars).
- Restrict civil liberties, if necessary, *only* in a transparent and equitable way.

Social Trust and Coping with Crisis

Breaches of social trust are likely during a bioattack. Social and economic fault lines as well as preconceived notions about the government, the public, and the media can alienate leaders and the public from one another. Officials' ability to earn the public's confidence regarding the allocation of scarce resources may hinge on the following steps:

- Account for income disparities in response plans; anticipate the need for free or low-cost prevention and treatment;

- Make planning transparent so that the public sees that access to lifesaving resources is based on medical need and not on wealth or favored items;
- Be open about eligibility criteria for goods and services, especially when tough choices arise unexpectedly; and
- Show thorough preparations to protect vulnerable populations, thus bolstering *everyone's* sense of security.

The collective purpose of the analytic templates highlighted above is to refine leadership skills.

The goal is to create realistic expectations on the part of leaders about the societal challenges posed by large disease outbreaks and bioattacks, so they are better prepared to protect and actively support cooperation and trust between a community and its leaders.

Increasing emphasis upon enhanced public communication is a positive development within biodefense that must be supplemented with robust discussion among leaders, and between leaders and the public, as to what constitutes an optimal response.

Monica Schoch-Spana, Center for Biosecurity, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center

Facts About Railroad Security

E-Plan News, November 2004, Tim Butters, Assistant Fire Chief, Fairfax City Fire Department; Fairfax, VA.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, freight railroads have been on heightened alert.

Under a security plan developed by the industry with the assistance of experts, the freight railroads established a progressive series of measures based on the level of threat against the industry.

The railroad industry is one of the few private sector industries to receive an "A" for its security efforts in a recent independent analysis by The Washington Post.

Some of the actions taken since Sept. 11 include increased cyber security, restricted access to railcar data, spot employee ID checks, increased tracking and inspection of certain shipments, new encryption technology for selected data communications, increased security at physical assets, and increased employee training to ensure that the industry's more than 200,000 employees serve as the "eyes and ears" of the security effort.

The industry also created a DOD-certified, 24/7 operations center that links the railroads with the appropriate national security intelligence officials.

This allows the railroad industry and the intelligence community to immediately share information and respond to threats.

The industry has taken additional security steps including real-time monitoring and additional surveillance of designated trains, increased security at certain rail yards, increased inspection of priority track, tunnels and bridges, and working with customers to tighten control of supply chain logistics.

Rail is the Safest Mode for Hazardous Materials Transportation

According to the September 1, 2004 issue of "Railway Age". Railcars pose 16 times less of an accident risk than trucks.

The cars used to haul Hazardous Materials are specially designed to minimize the possible release of these commodities, undergo rigorous assurance programs, testing and fall under stringent U.S. DOT regulations.

Training for emergency responders and employees handling Hazmat and its transport is comprehensive.

DOT's Research and Special Programs Administration requires in-depth security training for Hazmat handlers.

Shortly after 9/11 rail carriers implemented a Terrorism Analysis and Security Management Plan to evaluate the potential impacts of terrorist attacks and vulnerabilities of railroads.

As a result, they developed a set of actions to be applied based on the threat level, which includes the Railroad Alert Network to share intelligence from government sources to the railroads and vice-versa.

Finding Hazards at the Home

article obtained from the FEMA website, www.fema.gov

During and right after a disaster, any household item that can move, fall, break, or cause a fire is a home hazard. At least once each year, inspect your home to find and correct potential hazards.

IDENTIFYING HAZARDS

Check for Electrical Hazards

- Replace frayed or cracked appliance cords, loose prongs and plugs.
- Make sure there is only one plug per outlet. Avoid using cube-taps or overloading outlets. If you must use an extension cord, use a cord that's rated for the electrical load and is no longer than really needed.
- Remove electrical cords that run under rugs or over nails, heaters, or pipes.
- Cover exposed outlets and wiring.
- Repair or replace appliances that overheat, short out, smoke or spark.

Check for Chemical Hazards

- Store flammable liquids such as gasoline, acetone, benzene, and lacquer thinner in approved safety cans, away from the home. Place containers in a well-ventilated area and close the lids tightly. Secure the containers to prevent spills.
- If flammable materials must be stored in the home, use a storage can with an Underwriter's Laboratories (UL) or Factory Mutual (FM) approved label. Move materials away from heat sources, open flames, gas appliances, and children.
- Keep combustible liquids such as paint thinner, kerosene, charcoal lighter fluid, and turpentine away from heat sources.
- Store oily waste and polishing rags in covered metal cans.
- Instruct family not to use gasoline, benzene, or other flammable fluids for starting fires or cleaning indoors.

Check for Fire Hazards

- Clear out old rags, papers, mattresses, broken furniture and other combustible materials.
- Move clothes, curtains, and paper goods away from electrical or gas equipment or flammable materials.
- Remove dried grass cuttings, tree trimmings and weeds from the property.
- Clean and repair chimneys, flue pipes, vent connectors, and gas vents.
- Keep heaters and candles away from curtains and furniture.
- Place portable heaters on a level surface, away from high traffic areas. (Purchase portable heaters that are equipped with automatic shut-off switches and avoid the use of extension cords.)

SAFETY EQUIPMENT

Check Fire Safety Equipment

- Install at least one smoke detector on each level of the home, especially near the bedrooms. Test every month and change batteries at least once a year.
- Keep at least one fire extinguisher (A-B-C type). Maintain and recharge according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Show all family members where it's kept and how to use it.

SECURE ITEMS

Check Items That Can Shift or Fall

- Anchor water heater, large appliances, bookcases, other tall or heavy furniture, shelves, mirrors, and pictures to wall studs.
- Fit water heater with a flexible gas supply line.
- Place large or heavy objects on lower shelves.

- Install clips, latches, or other locking devices on cabinet doors.
- Provide strong support and flexible connections on gas appliances.
- Brace overhead light fixtures.
- Hang heavy items such as pictures and mirrors away from beds and places where people sit.
- Repair any deep cracks in ceilings or foundations.

UTILITIES

Check your utilities

- Locate the main electric fuse or circuit breaker box, water service shut-off, and natural gas main shut-off.
- Contact local utility companies for instructions on how to turn the utilities off. Teach family members when and how to turn utilities off.
- Clear area around shut-off switches for easy access.

Gas and Water

- Attach shut-off wrench or specialty tool to a pipe or other location close by the gas and water shut-off valves.
- Paint shut-off valves with white or fluorescent paint to increase visibility.

Home Safety

- Plan how to escape. Identify at least two exits from each room. Clear doors, hallways and stairs of obstructions.
 - Conduct drills. Practice day and night time escapes, and pick a safe meeting place outside the home.
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CAMEO Corner

ALOHA Problem:

A tractor trailer transporting vinyl fluoride overturned on Main Street in Shawnee, OK on October 31, 2004 at 2:34pm.

The businesses in the downtown area are single storied, sheltered buildings.

The National Weather Service measured the atmosphere at 10 meters and reflected readings of wind speed at 13mph from the North with no inversion, humidity at 60%, and air temperature of 65 degrees F.

The ground roughness in the downtown area is urban & the cloud cover is 5.

The damaged tank is 6 feet in diameter, 24 feet long & contains the chemical as a liquid.

When the tank overturned on its side the 4 inch offloading valve on the rear of the vehicle was sheared off; this places the location of the leak about 50% of the way up the tank & the tank was filled to 85% capacity when it left the chemical plant.

What is the downwind distance of the TEEL-3 footprint?

Answer: 655 feet

Basic Search:

How many chemicals have the DOT label "Dangerous When Wet" & the Reactive Hazard "Peroxidizable Compound"?

Answer: 2

Advanced Search:

What chemical has the DOT label "Poison Gas", "cyanosis" in the first aid section of RIDS & the STCC# 4920184?

Answer: Phosgene

Each Day Is a Gift
Author Unknown

The 92-year-old, petite, well-poised and proud lady, who is fully dressed each morning by eight o'clock, with her hair fashionably coifed and makeup perfectly applied, even though she is legally blind, moved to a nursing home today.

Her husband of 70 years recently passed away, making the move necessary.

After many hours of waiting patiently in the lobby of the nursing home, she smiled sweetly when told her room was ready.

As she maneuvered her walker to the elevator, I provided a visual description of her tiny room, including the eyelet sheets that had been hung on her window.

"I love it," she stated with the enthusiasm of an eight-year-old having just been presented with a new puppy.

"Mrs. Jones, you haven't seen the room just wait."

"That doesn't have anything to do with it," she replied.

"Happiness is something you decide on ahead of time. Whether I like my room or not doesn't depend on how the furniture is arranged, it's how I arrange my mind. I already decided to love it. It's a decision I make every morning when I wake up.

'I have a choice; I can spend the day in bed recounting the difficulty I have with the parts of my body that no longer work, or get out of bed and be thankful for the ones that do.

'Each day is a gift, and as long as my eyes open I'll focus on the new day and all the happy memories I've stored away, just for this time in my life."

She went on, "Old age is like a bank account, you withdraw from what you've put in.

'So, my advice to you would be to deposit a lot of happiness in the bank account of memories.

'Thank you for your part in filling my Memory bank. I am still depositing."

And with a smile, she said:

"Remember the five simple rules to be happy:

- 1. Free your heart from hatred.**
 - 2. Free your mind from worries.**
 - 3. Live simply.**
 - 4. Give more.**
 - 5. Expect Less."**
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The National Response Plan: Process, Prospects, and Participation

Natural Hazards Observer, July 2004

The Homeland Security Act of 2002 and Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5) "Management of Domestic Incidents," issued in February 2003, set the wheels in motion for the creation of two essential frameworks that will form the underpinnings of the nation's approach to incident management for the foreseeable future.

These documents are the National Response Plan (NRP) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

In a few months, NRP will be approved by the Homeland Security Council and 180 days later it will become national policy. The NRP and its companion NIMS will fundamentally change how the U.S. prepares for and responds to extreme events.

Impetus

In February 2003, the administration began the process of creating a nationwide template for federal, state, local, and tribal governments and private sector and non-governmental organizations to work together effectively and efficiently to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from domestic incidents regardless of cause, size, or complexity.

The motivating ideas were to focus national incident management policy on terrorism, in particular to integrate emergency management, law enforcement, and public health; to establish the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as the agency responsible for domestic incident management; and to deconflict and integrate existing federal plans.

The NRP creates a new national approach to domestic incident management by merging and integrating key concepts from existing "major" federal response plans, such as the FRP, the NCP, and the U.S. Government Domestic Terrorism Concept of Operations Plan (CON-PLAN).

In addition, through the implementation of NIMS, NRP embodies an all-hazards perspective that provides the structure and mechanisms for national-level policy and operational direction for incident management.

The NRP is intended to be a truly national, comprehensive preparedness and response system that will govern federal response to a wide range of “incidents of national significance” and provide a policy framework for coordination of federal, state, and local governments; non-governmental organizations; and private sector resources.

Stakeholder Involvement

Both NRP and NIMS have been developed in a top down manner, centrally coordinated by DHS.

Views differ on the scope and intent of stakeholder involvement in developing NRP and NIMS, and the authors of this article represent diverging perspectives.

Charlie Hess, DHS, states that the development process included extensive reviews and participation by a broad range of partners and stakeholders. It involved all of the federal departments and agencies; state, local, and tribal government stakeholders; and the private sector.

While acknowledging this, Jack Harrald, The George Washington University, notes that development of NRP, like all policy development, was not a pretty process.

When President Bush signed HSPS-5, DHS faced impossible deadlines driven by a perceived immediate terrorism threat. An Interim NRP was to be issued by April 1, 2003; NIMS by June 1, 2003; and a fully implemented NRP by September 2003.

These deadlines proved to be counterproductive, and the initial documents released for review were woefully inadequate.

They ignored or eliminated critical elements of the current system, most notably disaster mitigation, FRP emergency support function structure, and the process and structure of the NCP as it pertained to oil and hazardous substance releases.

Harrald notes that the academic hazards community was largely absent and uninvolved during the development of this critical national policy framework.

Social scientists have examined organizational responses to large, complex events and know that open, adaptive, organizational systems work best; that emergency organizations always occur; and that most effective immediate responses are taken by those affected by the disaster.

The NRP and NIMS, however, set up a much more formal and structured system for dealing with extreme events. A dangerous sign is the volume of acronyms for organizations (e.g., HSOC, NRCC, JFO, IIMG, JDCC, LEOC) and roles (e.g., PFO, SAC, FOC, FRC, FOSC).

The NRP has a six-page listing of acronyms that enables readers to decode these terms and specifies detailed, complex, organizational relationships. The NRP recognizes and specifies that extensive training is necessary for those who will operate within the system.

This training represents an implicit system boundary. Among the open questions that could concern the hazards research community are:

- Will a centralized, highly structured, closed system entrusted solely to trained professionals work effectively for managing complex events?
- Will the hazards research community be able to evaluate and assist in the evolution of this system?
- Was such a sweeping change necessary to achieve immediate policy goals?
- What will be the unintended consequences of this policy initiative?

The authors agree that the final product was much improved after state and local review, extensive comment from within the federal government, and a restructuring of the drafting process. However, the resulting patchwork of plans and changes is dauntingly complex.

The NRP, for example, will maintain and expand the Emergency Support Function (ESF) structure (to include an economic stabilization, community recovery, and mitigation (ESF) and retain NCP as a supporting plan.

The FRP, CONPLAN, the Interim NRP, and FRERP will be superseded by the final NRP.

The NRP provides additional incident annexes that address cyber, nuclear, biological, and other terrorism incidents.

Its structure preserves the separate roles and responsibilities of the U.S. Department of Justice's Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, while defining relationships and coordinating mechanisms.

Next Steps: Challenges and Opportunities

Developing standards and a new approach to incident management presents numerous challenges, such as:

- *Creating a New Way of Doing Business While Keeping What Works:* Early feedback on NRP stressed the need to preserve and reinforce what works well in the creation of a new approach to incident management. The challenge is to build on the multitude of existing authorities and processes, span the gaps between them, and establish a new, comprehensive system.
- *Combining Multiple Approaches into a Single System:* Creating a single framework flexible enough to encompass the role of the federal government and adequately support state and local incident managers, while also accounting for situations where the federal government exercises direct incident management authorities and responsibilities (such as the FBI's role in countering terrorists and the federal on-scene coordinator's role under the NCP in responding to pollution incidents) will require significant communication and relationship building.
- *Shifting the Traditional Focus on Response and Recovery:* The majority of existing incident management plans focus on response and recovery. As NRP expands beyond this traditional function to focus on prevention and preparedness, these efforts become major considerations in the domestic terrorism arena.

Expanding into areas with limited legislative authority and funding for pre-incident actions is a challenge.

- *Encouraging Federal-to-Federal Support without Legislation:* HSPD-5 envisions activating and using NRP to guide interagency mutual aid absent a disaster or emergency declaration.

The Stafford Act authorizes the DHS secretary and the emergency preparedness and response undersecretary (FEMA director) to "task" (mission assign) departments and agencies after an emergency or disaster declaration.

This tasking authority does not exist for events of national significance that do not result in a presidential declaration.

Without the Stafford Act authorities, interagency mutual aid is essentially voluntary in nature.

Agencies will need to commit to some type of interagency mutual aid or assistance agreement to execute those interagency activities that do not rise to the level of a presidentially declared disaster.

- *Working with Time Constraints:* Developing a national plan is a collaborative process. Meeting ambitious timelines without hindering collaboration may be difficult.

These are just a few of the challenges associated with the creation of a comprehensive and user-friendly all-Hazards National Response Plan.

Other considerations include developing supporting annexes, identifying the correct emergency support structure and mechanisms, synchronizing terminology and organizational element descriptors so that everyone understands the plan, and deciding who pays and under what circumstances.

Compliance with NRP will be mandatory for all federal agencies and, in order to remain eligible for federal funding, state governments must modify existing incident management and emergency operations plans within a year of policy implementation.

Local governments and nongovernmental and private organizations will also have to adjust plans and procedures to operate within the NRP/NIMS context.

Looking Ahead

Even with the challenges noted above, the NRP represents a significant step forward in achieving a holistic approach to domestic incident prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery – a plan that will be tested, exercised, used, and fine-tuned to retain and enhance its relevance in this increasingly uncertain world.

For it to be truly successful, it is crucial that those outside of government remain actively involved in monitoring the implementation process and helping improve its products.

Charlie Hess, U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Jack Harrald, Institute for Crisis, Disaster, and Risk Management, The George Washington University

Emergency Preparedness Initiative

National Organization on Disability; www.nod.org

The world was awakened to a difficult new era when terrorists struck in September 2001.

Later that fall, N.O.D. commissioned a Harris survey which documented that individuals with disabilities, the very people who most need to be prepared during an emergency, were in fact less ready should disaster strike.

People with disabilities would be the most vulnerable in future terrorist attacks - but equally importantly, with tens of thousands of man-made and natural disasters in our country each year, preparation is always an imperative.

With that in mind, N.O.D. established the **Emergency Preparedness Initiative (EPI)** in late 2001.

The Initiative's mission is two-fold:

- To encourage the emergency management field to take into account the varied needs of people with disabilities in all levels of their planning and response activities, and to actively involve members of this community in their efforts.
- To raise the awareness of people with disabilities of what they can do to prepare for their own safety and survival during times of emergency, and to encourage them to become partners with emergency management personnel.

Elizabeth Davis, Director of the EPI, brings to the program an exceptional combined background in disability issues and emergency management.

Ms. Davis, who was on hand providing emergency support at the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, is an excellent liaison to both the disability and emergency management communities.

We also reached out to the emergency responders who are on the front lines in any disaster, and need to know how they can best assist persons with disabilities.

We sent our new 28-page Guide on the Special Needs of People with Disabilities for Emergency Managers, Planners and Responders to more than 20,000 such individuals already.

N.O.D. has worked with various emergency management and professional membership associations to further circulate the publication.

The Guide is also posted on N.O.D.'s website, along with a repository of important and germane emergency related information, articles, studies, checklists, contacts, etc. for both the emergency management community and the disability community.

Articles in disability and emergency management periodicals have helped to spread the word about the EPI and its activities, while program director Elizabeth Davis has met with relevant agency heads and taken part in national and regional forums on emergency preparedness, bringing the disability perspective to the discussion.

The rapid launch and critical work of this new department is made possible by generous donations from the The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, The MetLife Foundation, the JM Foundation, Johnson & Johnson, Household International, Inc., and J.C. Penney.

You can contact EPI Director Elizabeth Davis by e-mail at edavis@nod.org, by phone at (718) 330-0034, or by fax at (718) 330-0039.

You can learn more about the Mott Foundation's 3-year grant to the Emergency Preparedness Initiative, and read an April, 2003 interview with Elizabeth Davis about the EPI's mission and activities, in the Mott Foundation newsletter.

2004 New Mexico State HAZMAT CHALLENGE

Angie Mills, Weston Solutions, Inc. EPA-START

”The Challenge is an opportunity to test your skills as well as have fun.”

The 2004 New Mexico State Hazmat Challenge was hosted by Los Alamos National Laboratories in cooperation with the state of New Mexico and other participating agencies and contributors.

Past partners, participants, and contributors to the New Mexico State HAZMAT Challenge include:

- Gallup Fire Department,
- Farmington Fire Department,
- Hobbs Fire Department,
- Sandia National Laboratories-Albuquerque,
- Santa Fe Fire Department,
- Las Cruces Fire Department,
- NASA White Sands Test Facility Fire Department,
- Albuquerque Fire Department,
- Carlsbad Fire Department,
- LANL HAZMAT,
- Espanola Fire Department,
- New Mexico State Police,
- Elephant Butte Irrigation District,
- Navajo Nation BIA,
- FEMA Region VI,
- Environmental Protection Agency,
- U.S. Department of Transportation,
- Intel Corporation (Rio Rancho),
- New Mexico National Guard Civil Support Team,
- University of Oklahoma, and
- New Mexico State University.

The Challenge was held August 10th through the 13th at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). The event allows for HAZMAT teams to network with one another, practice technical skills and learn to communicate under stressful and realistic conditions in a safe environment.

The challenge is an opportunity to test your skills as well as have fun.

Included in this year's event were a biological incident response scenario, a chemical identification exercise, a complex valve leak, a confined space procedure, a compressed liquefied gas leak, an overturned gasoline tanker "stinger" exercise, decontamination procedures, a leaking railcar procedure, and a "gushing" dam and dike (overflow-underflow) exercise from an overturned tanker.

The scenario props are made from scrap materials – old cars, trucks, tankers, railcars, and tanks and they are used to mimic real-life hazardous materials spill events.

Additionally, there was a pie eating contest with the Midwest City, Oklahoma team as this year's champion.

The final event of the competition is the tie-breaking obstacle course; where teams wearing full hazmat protective gear raced the clock and each other through an exciting, fun-filled course.

The 2004 HAZMAT Challenge marked the second time that the traveling trophy left the state.

The Midwest City, Oklahoma Fire Department defended their title and won the overall event for the second year in a row.

Closely following Midwest City was the Hobbs Fire Department in second place and Intel's HAZMAT team took third place.

The other competing teams were:

- Gallup Fire Department,
- Norman Fire Department,
- Las Cruces Fire Department,
- LANL's HAZMAT team,
- Los Alamos Fire Department,
- Harris County HAZMAT team,
- New Mexico State Police,
- Clovis Fire Department, and
- 64th Civil Service team.

All of the team's did a wonderful job on the events; their camaraderie and sportsmanship was fantastic. A truly great display of HAZMAT capabilities was seen by the evaluators. WAY TO GO TEAMS!

CAMEO Corner

ALOHA EXERCISE:

On February 24, 1997 at 1:30pm, a truck with the placard 1744 was involved in an accident on I-25 Northbound in Las Cruces, NM near the University Avenue exit.

The truck is on its side and is releasing the product from a 2 inch bottom valve that has been sheared off during the collision, so now this valve is half way up the side of the tank.

The tank truck has a capacity of 8,500 gallons and is 40 feet long.

The wind is 8 mph from the Northeast with 10% humidity, measured at 3 meters with no inversion.

This intersection has mostly sheltered one-story businesses and a residential subdivision nearby.

It is a clear, sunny day with a temperature of 82 degrees F.

The truck has just been filled to 85% capacity and the product is liquid, not gas.

The spill is causing a puddle of unknown size. What is the chemical? What is the downwind distance for ERPG-3?

Answer: Bromine & 1.1 miles

The Trouble Tree

Author Unknown

The carpenter I hired to help me restore an old farm house had just finished a rough first day on the job.

A flat tire had caused him to miss an hour of work, his electric saw quit, and now his ancient pick-up truck refused to start.

As I drove him home, he sat in stony silence.

When we arrived he invited me in to meet his family. As we walked to the front door, he paused briefly at a small tree, touching the tips of the branches with both hands.

When opening the door he underwent an amazing transformation.

His tanned face was wreathed in smiles; he hugged his two small children and gave his wife a kiss.

Afterward he walked me to the car.

We passed by the tree and my curiosity got the better of me.

I asked him about what I had seen him do earlier.

"Oh, that's my trouble tree," he replied. "I know I can't help having troubles on the job, but one thing's for sure, they don't belong in the house with my wife and children. So, I just hang them on the tree when I come home in the evening and then I just pick them up again in the morning."

"Funny thing, though," he smiled, "when I come out in the morning to pick 'em up, there ain't nearly as many as I remembered hanging there the night before."

Where's The Cavalry?

By Susan Bell Kinsley, U.S. Dept. of Transportation (Retired), Security and Transportation Consultant.

In Westerns, when the going gets tough, settlers send for the cavalry, and troops bring reinforcements for the hometown hero and help save the town. In war movies, the hero calls in the cavalry, too: tanks and aircraft.

Today, the world of emergency preparedness and response is getting more dangerous, demanding, and complex. But where's the cavalry? While you cannot hear the bugles, the local highway, transit, trucking, and rail agencies are rallying to the call.

Preparedness and Response Has Become a Bigger Job

Emergency responders are facing more disasters, more threats, and greater agency involvement than ever before. The wildfires in 2003 were among the largest in U.S. history, and major disaster declarations by FEMA in the last 10 years rose 60% from the previous decade.

And September 11 focused America's attention on international terrorism. Government agencies at every level are now involved in all facets of emergency preparedness and response. New players such as DHS are setting priorities and developing new initiatives that will impact emergency management.

DHS published the NIMS on 1 March 2004. It calls for all levels to plan, prepare, and coordinate within a standardized framework. It appears that local emergency response agencies will have the lead in coordinating many of these efforts. Everyone involved will be able to benefit from the expertise of hazards practitioners and researchers.

As head of safety and security programs for the Federal Administration (FTA) in the U.S. Department of Transportation, I worked with transit agencies and the surface transportation community to respond to new threats after September 11.

By tapping into their incredible commitment and expertise, we made tremendous progress in preparedness issues. The very largest transit agencies know that they are targets for terrorist. Even before September 11, they responded to major accidents, evacuations, and emergency events. The smaller agencies have now recognized their vulnerabilities as well.

The FTA held forums around the country to bring the transit community together with emergency responders to share plans, training, and resources.

We shared intelligence, stepped up training and public awareness, completed vulnerability assessments, dispatched multidisciplinary security/transportation teams to harden transit operations and facilities, and initiated millions of dollars in transportation security research.

Highway, retail, port, pipeline, and trucking agencies have begun preparedness initiatives.

Transportation Is a Big Part of the Problem

The multiple explosions on the Madrid commuter rail system on March 11, 2004, were a horrifying reminder that transportation systems are primary targets and vehicles for terrorist seeking to kill large numbers of people and immobilize economies.

Transit systems in London, Paris, and Tokyo have been the targets of terrorist attacks. Suicide bombers often use crowded city buses or pack trucks with explosives, and the September 11 attackers used airplanes as explosive devices.

In addition, transportation accidents kill and injure hundreds, and transport of damaged hazardous materials containers can create widespread environmental damage. Disruptions in transportation can have disastrous impacts on the economy. Keeping the freight and passenger transportation system working is essential.

Factories stores now rely on “just-in-time deliver” rather than on-site inventory. A major expressway accident can quickly become a six hour traffic jam that disrupts business for a day and causes additional accidents.

Transportation and First Responders

The public agencies and private companies that maintain highways and operate trucks, buses, subways, and trains are critical partners for regional emergency preparedness, response, and recovery.

Transportation workers may be the first on the scene in a disaster and can play an important role in response and recovery. How they react may determine whether people live or die.

On September 11, the operator of a PATH commuter train coming into the World Trade Tower station felt an unusual vibration and did not go into the station.

Thanks to her, no transit passengers were injured. During the blackout last fall, transit operators in the New York subway system safely evacuated thousands of people through dark subway tunnels.

Highway departments have regional operations centers with video and remote sensing that offer real-time information that highway and transit agencies can use.

After any disaster, one of the first priorities is to get the roads open and trucks and buses running. These agencies have resources, experts, and technology that can be invaluable to emergency responders.

What Are Our Options?

One option is to continue the status quo. We could read NIMS and just decide it offers nothing new, meetings continue, and preparedness remains an agency-specific concern.

Nevertheless, many agencies not historically involved in preparedness planning such as transportation, utilities, public works, public health, agriculture, and education are now writing emergency plans. Who will bring them together? Could these agencies benefit from the research and best practices of the hazards community?

Another option is to wait for federal agencies to provide training, resources, and equipment. Grant money is coming, research is underway, and more is planned. However, demand for funds is great, and the bureaucracy is deliberate (Washington-speak for slow!).

It will take time for concepts and organization of NIMS to reach all levels of government. NIMS recognizes that emergency response is first a local responsibility. Can local governments afford to wait and hope that nothing happens in the meantime? Will the people in Washington or state capitals know what is best for a region?

The third option is to start now. Tap into the skills, expertise, and resources of the agencies. Integrating agencies will not be easy. The “transportation community” is not yet a cohesive and well-organized group, operating intermodal highways, trucks, ports, rail, and air as one system. However, the imperative for emergency preparedness can bring them together.

Imagine This

A coordinated response to a major disaster, with transportation agencies as full partners, will be better prepared if a disaster spreads across jurisdictions and affects thousands of people, homes, and businesses.

During such an event:

- The highway department patches through real-time video of the affected areas from their traffic cameras to the command center;
- Variable message signs and highway advisory radio on major routes in the surrounding counties and states immediately direct traffic away from the area;
- Traffic signals are changed from the highway operations center to speed an evacuation;
- Buses are used to block off certain roads, transport responders to the site, and serve as resting areas;
- Subway and commuter rail systems begin the orderly evacuation of thousands of people;
- Trucks and trains move in extra supplies and equipment; and
- The number of emergency response personnel surges as fully trained transit police, highway engineers, and equipment operators report in.

Can't you almost see the Cavalry?

Take Action Now

I come from the transportation community. We have a lot to learn.

But many in transportation are working at national, state, and local levels to bring resources to bear in emergency preparedness and security. We need hazards practitioners and researchers to reach out to the transportation community.

What can you do?

- Look at your emergency response plan. How is transportation addressed? Is there an evacuation plan, joint training and exercises and current points of contact?
- Call the highway department, transit agency, and railroad in your region. Emergency response and homeland security may be "additional assignments" for their staff.

You find relevant personnel in the safety or security department, or in planning or engineering.

Most of the people who have stepped up to these new challenges are innovators and leaders who understand the role that their agency can play in security and emergency preparedness.

- Get to know the emergency response leaders in your county, region, and state. How is the hazards community organized? How does it set plans, priorities, and funding across the region?
- Get involved nationally. What different institutional arrangements work better in other states?
- Contact DHA and share with them how you are leading and implementing NIMS in your area. Don't wait for them to tell you how to start or what to do!
- Look at the National Academy of Sciences Transportation Research Board resources on security. Is the federal level repeating research that has already been done?

Are there areas to partner and leverage research dollars.

We must all work together.

It's no longer business as usual.

We need all the help we can get.

Call the Cavalry!

Region 6 LEPC Website Now Available!!

www.epa.gov/region6/lepc

Yes, just for you, Region 6 has developed an LEPC website loaded with a plethora of information made easily accessible. The following gives a general overview of what you will find when you enter the website.

- **CAMEO and Related Software:**

You can download the new version of CAMEO, ALOHA, and Marplot as well as the updated version of Tier II Submit. The CAMEO site offers training materials for instructors, a support forum to ask questions or review FAQs, updated news and events pertaining to CAMEO, and much, much more.

- **Documents pertinent to LEPCs:**

Here you will find documents that will help you review emergency plans more thoroughly (NRT – 1A), develop a Hazardous Materials Planning Guide (NRT-1), and conduct a Hazard Analysis.

- **E-Plan:**

E-Plan is a secured web-based system that allows emergency responders to quickly access on-site chemical information for a facility.

- **Emergency Response Review:**

EPA will post their final report of various emergency response reviews conducted throughout Region 6. ER Reviews are conducted to help communities learn both the positives and negatives of their response actions after an event has occurred.

Posting them on the website will allow other communities to access the information and use it as a resource for planning/preparation.

- **EPCRA Factsheet:**

The EPCRA factsheet includes all federal, state, local, and tribal requirements regarding emergency planning and reporting of hazardous and toxic chemicals. This information helps increase public knowledge of hazardous chemicals in their community.

- **LEPC Bylaws and Mission Statements:**

Learn more about how various LEPCs conduct their LEPCs by reading their bylaws and mission statements. All you have to do is click the LEPC you want to review, and it will take you to their website.

- **Federal / State Statutes and Regulations for EPCRA / RMP / Notifications / Response:**

What federal and state statutes/regulations deal directly with your state?

Here you can find specific regulation information such as Toxic Release Reporting, ER Response Regulations, Notification Regs. and much more.

If you are interested, you can also educate yourself about other states in your region.

- **Initial National Response Plan (NRP):**

The Initial NRP is a document that implements, on an interim basis, the domestic incident management authorities, roles, and responsibilities of the Secretary of Homeland Security.

It also provides interim guidance on federal coordinating structures and processes for domestic incident management.

- **LEPC Funding Option:**

Learn how other LEPCs throughout Region 6 support their LEPC through various funding.

- **LEPC/EPCRA/RMP Emergency Response Links:**

Find out your state information by just clicking the appropriate link.

- **LEPC Outreach Materials:**

Take a look at the variety of ways LEPCs have offered outreach materials to their communities.

- **NIMS (National Incident Management System):**

Download the complete NIMS document developed by DHS.

- **Region 6 Contacts:**

State contact information in Region 6.

- **Local Government Reimbursement Program (LGR):**

Find out how you can receive up to \$25,000 for temporary emergency response measures due to a release of a hazardous substance.

- **Region 6 Conferences:**

Keep updated on EPA Region 6-hosted conferences by regularly reviewing www.hotzone.org.

- **Region 6 Bimonthly Update:**

The newsletter will be uploaded to the website. We hope you like the changes we have made to the format!

- **Region 6 and Other LEPC Handbooks:**

The LEPC handbook will provide guidance to help make EPCRA work. You will also find handbooks from LEPCs in a few states outside the region.

- **Risk Management Program (RMP):**

The RMP document provides compliance guidance to owners and operators of facilities.

- **State Emergency Plans:**

Download and review your state emergency response plan.

- **Title III List of List:**

This is a consolidated list of chemicals subject to reporting requirements under EPCRA.

ACCIDENT PREVENTION TIPS

Bill McHale, PE and Jennifer Shoemaker; U.S. EPA Region III

In August 2002, approximately 48,000 lbs of chlorine was accidentally released from a railcar during unloading operations at a facility near St. Louis, Missouri.

The root cause was a Flex Line failure.

Emergency response personnel were unable to quickly stop the railcar from emptying its contents through valves located in the railcar valve hood, which increased the extent of the release.

In the end, three workers and 63 residents from the nearby community were sent to the hospital for chlorine exposure.

Railroad cars supplying toxic or flammable materials to stationary facilities face a high risk that the flexible line connecting the car to the process will leak during transfer operations.

During a release event, it can be difficult to access the valves in the railcar valve hood and stop the flow (the excess flow valve in the railroad car usually requires a massive leak to actuate).

A number of facilities in the EPA Region 3 area have installed valve closure systems (some purchased, some homemade) to minimize the amount of released material during an accident.

The valve closure systems are designed to shut off the valves in the railcar valve hood upon receiving a signal from the nearby toxic or flammable sensors.

When the railcar is hooked up, the valve closure system is mounted on the railcar valves located in the railcar valve hood.

Since the sensor signal operates the valve closure system, it is critical that the sensors be accurate.

Also, a check valve in the process line should be installed to prevent back-flow from the process.

In our Risk Management Plan audits, we recommend these valve closure systems.

FEMA Launches Redesign of CHER-CAP Process to Meet All Hazards

Wayne Rickard; DHS

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has initiated a major redesign of the Comprehensive HAZMAT Emergency Response - Capability Assessment Program (CHER-CAP) to expand the scope of the highly successful community-based initiative.

The new CHER-CAP will allow communities to apply the process to any hazards - tornadoes, floods, earthquakes, chemical spills, terrorist incidents and all other types of emergencies and disasters, not just hazardous materials incidents.

"Effective emergency response operations are based on comprehensive, risk-based preparedness programs for all hazards," R. David Paulison, director of FEMA's Preparedness Division, said.

"A philosophy of all-hazards preparedness promotes the efficient use of resources, avoids duplication of effort and recognizes that the same framework can be used for all types of emergencies and disasters."

CHER-CAP is a community-based planning, assessment and exercise program that focused on preparing communities to respond to incidents involving hazardous materials.

Since CHER-CAP was developed by FEMA Region VI in 1989 and expanded to all FEMA regions in 2000, the initiative has helped scores of local communities and tribal governments identify emergency planning deficiencies, update plans, train first responders and test their hazardous materials response systems for strengths and needed improvements.

A pilot project has begun in Caddo-Bossier and St. James Parishes aimed at developing the "all-hazard" methodology and the employment of formal capability assessment tools, increased peer evaluation and facilitated action planning.

"CHER-CAP is a quality program that delivers, at a minimum of cost," said Sandy Davis, assist chief of the Shreveport FD. "It has enhanced our relationships not only with other responders such as hospitals, public works, medical and emergency management, but it has created an open line of communication for us at the state and federal level."

A full-scale CHER-CAP field exercise typically involves a mass casualty scenario that fully involves the local first responder community, including law enforcement, fire services, search and rescue, hospitals and emergency medical systems, HAM operators, and volunteers, as well as elements of the state and federal response structure.

The program has been highly acclaimed for its success in improving a community's ability to prepare for and respond to HAZMAT and mass casualty events.

Community Emergency Response Team

Wayne Rickard; DHS

Community Emergency Response Team Move Forward

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program helps train people to be better prepared to respond to emergency situations in their communities.

When emergencies happen, CERT members can give critical support to first responders, provide immediate assistance to victims, and organize spontaneous volunteers at a disaster site.

CERT members can also help with non-emergency projects that help improve the safety of the community.

The CERT course is taught in the community by a trained team of first responders who have completed a CERT Train-the-Trainer course conducted by their state training office for emergency management, or FEMA's Emergency Management Institute (EMI), located in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

CERT training includes disaster preparedness, disaster fire suppression, basic disaster medical operations, and light search and rescue operations.

The Citizen Corps Program (CCP), which includes CERT is in the process of being transitioned to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Domestic Preparedness (ODP) in the new office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness.

Funding opportunities are listed on the DHS website: www.dhs.gov/grants. Even though the CCP Funding is now issued by ODP, FEMA will continue to support Citizens Corps and CERT activities.

Currently there are 108 Teams and affiliations in Region 6 and Train-the-Trainer sessions are being held in all 6 states as the program continues to expand throughout the United States.

For more information, contact your state CERT representative. To identify the nearest CERT to your community visit

<http://training.fema.gov/emiweb/CERT/dir.asp>

NIMS: National Incident Management System

On March 1, 2004 – U. S. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge announced approval of the National Incident Management System (NIMS), the Nation's first standardized management approach that unifies Federal, State, and Local lines of government for incident response.

The following information was taken from the fact sheet released by the Department of Homeland Security. If you would like a complete copy of the report you can go to www.dhs.gov

NIMS Makes America Safer, From Our Nation To Our Neighborhoods

NIMS establishes standardized incident management processes, protocols, and procedures that all responders-- Federal, State, Tribal, and Local -- will use to coordinate and conduct response actions.

With responders using the same standardized procedures, they will all share a common focus, and will be able to place full emphasis on incident management when a homeland security incident occurs – whether terrorism or natural disaster.

In addition, national preparedness and readiness in responding to and recovering from an incident is enhanced since all of the Nation's emergency teams and authorities are using a common language and set of procedures.

Advantages of NIMS

NIMS incorporates incident management best practices developed and proven by thousands of responders and authorities across America. These practices, coupled with consistency and national standardization, will now be carried forward throughout all incident management processes:

- exercises, qualification and certification,
- communications interoperability, doctrinal changes,
- training, and publications, public affairs, equipping,
- evaluating, and incident management.

All of these measures unify the response community as never before. NIMS was created and vetted by representatives across America including:

- Federal Government
- States
- Territories
- Cities, Counties, Townships
- Tribal Officials
- First Responders

Key Features Of NIMS

ICS (Incident Command System): NIMS establishes ICS as a standard incident organization with five functional areas – command, operations, planning, logistics, and finance / administration – for management of all major incidents.

To ensure further coordination, and during incidents involving multiple jurisdictions or agencies, the principle of unified command has been universally incorporated into NIMS.

This unified command not only coordinates the efforts of many jurisdictions, but provides for and assures joint decisions on objectives, strategies, plans, priorities, and public communications.

Communication and Information Management: Standardized communications during an incident are essential and NIMS prescribes interoperable communications systems for both incident and information management.

Responders and managers across all agencies and jurisdictions must have a common operating picture for a more effective incident response.

Preparedness: Preparedness incorporates a range of measures, actions, and processes accomplished before an incident happens.

NIMS preparedness measures including planning, training, exercises, qualification and certification, equipment acquisition and certification, and publication management.

All of these serve to ensure that pre-incident actions are standardized and consistent with mutually-agreed doctrine.

NIBS further places emphasis on mitigation activities to enhance preparedness.

Mitigation includes public education and outreach, structural modifications to lessen the loss of life or destruction of property, code enforcement in support of zoning rules, land management, building codes, flood insurance and property buy-out for frequently flooded areas.

Joint Information System (JIS): NIMS organizational measures enhance the public communication effort.

The JIS provides the public with timely and accurate incident information and unified public messages.

This system employs Joint Information Centers (JIC) and brings incident communicators together during an incident to develop, coordinate, and deliver a unified message.

This will ensure that Federal, State, and Local levels of government are releasing the same information during an incident.

NIMS Integration Center (NIC): To ensure that NIMS remains an accurate and effective management tool, the NIMS (NIC) will be established by the Secretary of Homeland Security to assess proposed changes to NIMS, capture and evaluate lessons learned, and employ best practices.

The NIC will provide strategic direction and oversight of the NIMS, supporting both routine maintenance and continuous refinement of the system and its components over the long term.

The NIC will develop and facilitate national standards for NIMS education and training, first responder communications, equipment, typing of resources, qualification and credentialing of incident management, personnel, and standardization of equipment maintenance and resources.

The NIC will continue to use the collaborative process of Federal, State, Tribal, Local, and private authorities to assess prospective changes and assure continuity and accuracy.

“Protecting The Public” CD Available Again!

National Institute For Chemical Studies

Once again, NICS (National Institute for Chemical Studies) is making available copies of its popular training program, *Protecting the Public in a Hazardous Materials Emergency*, on compact disk.

The training focuses on decision making for emergency responders and planners who must decide whether to evacuate an area in a chemical emergency or issue a shelter-in-place advisory.

NICS gave its first supply of CDs to emergency management agencies around the nation until the supply ran out in April 2002.

Since then, requests for copies have continued to arrive by phone and email.

“We have a new supply, but we will have to charge a very modest \$20 per disk this time to cover our costs,” said Mark Scott, NICS president.

“As a contribution to the emergency management community, but at considerable expense to the organization. NICS paid to distribute copies, the first time. We are a nonprofit, and we can no longer afford to do that.”

The training is helpful to those who plan emergency responses to chemical accidents and to those who actually respond to them, said Dr. Jan Taylor, NICS vice president and project director.

Taylor said specific groups who would benefit from the training include government officials with public safety responsibilities, local emergency planning committees, state emergency response commissions, and safety staffs from businesses that make, store or transport chemicals.

To order a CD, send a check or money order to NICS (2300 MacCorkle Ave., SE; Charleston, WV 25304).

The price includes shipping and handling to U.S. addresses.

Shipping to non U.S. addresses will be an additional \$5.00.

Credit Cards and purchase orders cannot be accepted.

LEPCs and Deliberate Releases: Addressing Terrorist Activities in the Local Emergency Plan

(U.S. EPA; Chemical Emergency Preparedness and Prevention Office)

In recent years, the threat of terrorist incidents involving chemical and biological materials has increased. Local emergency planning committees (LEPCs) should consider the possibility of terrorist events as they review existing plans and consider how to incorporate counter-terrorism (CT) measures into their plans.

CT planning and preparedness is often an extension of existing activities, rather than a totally new effort. This fact sheet discusses how LEPCs can incorporate CT issues when they review and update their local plans.

This fact sheet builds on the National Response Team's Hazardous Materials Emergency Planning Guide (NRT-1) and supersedes "Thinking about Deliberate Releases: Steps Your Community Can Take."

Build on Current Activities:

Local emergency planning committees (LEPC's) established under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know), prepare and maintain comprehensive emergency plans.

These plans address the extremely hazardous substances listed under EPCRA as well as thousands of hazardous chemicals for which OSHA requires Material Safety Data Sheets.

Many LEPCs are already addressing CT, even if they do not use the word "terrorism." If you have developed a plan for possible accidental releases of chemicals in your community, you can use the same general planning principles for deliberate releases caused by terrorists.

You may need to spend some time considering biological agents.

This fact sheet includes some suggestions for how you can modify your current activities to include deliberate chemical and biological releases.

Maintain Broad-based Membership:

LEPC membership includes a wide variety of stake holders, such as elected State and local officials; police, fire, civil defense, public health, environmental, hospital, and transportation officials; representatives of facilities where chemicals are stored are used; community groups; public works departments; and the media.

Identify any specific roles each of these groups might have in the event of a terrorist attack.

In addition, you might add a few new members who would bring specific expertise during a release involving biological agents (e.g., the coroner, morticians, chemistry and biological labs, university experts)

Update and Revise Your Plans:

LEPCs should review their emergency response plans annually. Before you begin specific consideration of CT issues, ensure that your emergency plan is up-to-date. Simply adding CT materials to an outdated plan will not create an effective emergency plan.

For example, review your plan for outdated contact information, unique hazards presented by facilities that may have been constructed after the emergency response plan was first written, or new public works facilities.

Also review the annual inventory reports filed under EPCRA Section 312 to determine if new chemicals or hazards are present in your community.

In addition, check Risk Management Plans submitted by facilities in your community to ensure that you address the specific hazards identified by each facility.

After you have generally updated your plan, consider adding information and procedures related to potential terrorist incidents involving weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

One overall difference in dealing with the WMD incident is that law enforcement officials will be involved in the response as investigators.

Officials from local, State, and Federal agencies will be on the scene of an incident to collect evidence and interview survivors. Their priorities may create emergency response coordination challenges that your LEPC should address in its plan.

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION SUGGEST CHANGES YOU CAN MAKE TO SPECIFIC SECTIONS OF YOUR EMERGENCY PLAN....

Emergency Contact Information:

In the event of a terrorist incident, rapid and secure communications will be crucial to ensure a prompt and coordinated response.

Your plans should include current contact information for fire, emergency medical services (EMS), law enforcement, medical, and other local departments and supporting organizations.

Contact information for State officials, including those at public health agencies, the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC), State, Police and emergency management agencies also should be included.

The emergency assistance telephone roster in your emergency response plan should include regular phone numbers, cell phone numbers, pager numbers, and other emergency contact information for those individuals (Federal, State, local, and private sector) who have specific CT functions.

The National Response Center (NRC) continues to be the sole Federal point of contact for reporting oil and chemical spills, and now provides the service of the Chemical and Biological Hotline.

The NRC telephone number (800-424-8802) should be part of your emergency plan.

NRC Duty Officers take reports of actual or potential domestic terrorism and link emergency calls with Department of Defense (DOD) for technical advice on dealing with weapons of mass destruction and with the FBI to initiate the Federal response actions.

The NRC also provides reports and notifications to other Federal agencies as necessary. All local plans should also include contact information for the local FBI Field Office.

Response Functions:

Incident Command/Unified Command. Your emergency plan should address direction and control of responders in the event of terrorist attack.

Local responders respond to an incident scene and should notify local, State, and Federal authorities if terrorism appears to be involved.

Local response authorities (such as a senior fire or law enforcement official) should establish control of the incident scene.

The Incident Command System (ICS) that is initially established will likely transition into a Unified Command (UC). The UC structure used at the scene will expand as mutual-aid partners, and State and Federal responders arrive to assist with response operations.

The FBI is the overall Lead Federal Agency (LFA) for a domestic terrorist incident involving WMD and will lead the crisis management activities (including law enforcement activities) of the response.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is the lead agency for coordination of Federal support to State and local responders during consequence management activities of the response.

Although the FBI is always involved in response to a credible terrorist threat or attack, FEMA support is provided only after a Presidential declaration, typically after State and local agencies request their assistance.

Consequence management includes measures to protect public health and safety after an explosion or release; restore essential government services; and provide emergency relief to governments, business, and individuals.

When crisis management activities have been completed, the U.S. Attorney General may transfer the overall Lead Federal Agency role to FEMA. EPA, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and DOD also have specific CT-related functions.

EPA's role in counter-terrorism activities is described in a fact sheet by that name, available at www.epa.gov/ceppo/ct-publ.htm#factsheet.

Public Information. Rapid and secure communications help to ensure a prompt and coordinated response to terrorist activities. Therefore, strengthening communications among emergency responders, law enforcement officials, clinicians, emergency rooms, hospitals, and mass care providers is extremely important.

Your emergency plan should include the use of accurate and timely public notification measures and warning systems in the event of a terrorist attack.

Work in advance with local news media representatives to ensure their cooperation at the time of an incident. Ongoing communication of accurate and up-to-date information will help calm fears and limit the effects of the attack.

The FBI will establish a Joint Information Center (JIC) to coordinate the collection and dissemination of public information.

EPA's Role in the Federal Response Plan:

The multi-agency disaster response program that helps states during and after a disaster is the Federal Response Plan (FRP), which groups Federal assistance into 12 functional areas called Emergency Support Functions (ESF's).

EPA is the primary agency for ESF 10, Hazardous Materials, which provides for a coordinated response to large-scale releases of hazardous materials by incorporating the response mechanisms of the National Contingency Plan (NCP).

EPA assists in determining what sort of hazardous substance may be, or has been, released in a terrorist incident, and follows up with response to the incident, assisting with environmental monitoring, decontamination, and long-term site cleanup.

Activities of human services organizations, such as the Red Cross, should be included in the emergency plan.

Among other activities, these organizations may use public information systems to provide human services information to the community, perform crisis counseling, provide insurance information and assistance, and provide translation services.

Public and First Responder Health and Safety. Your emergency plan should address public health and medical issues as they relate to terrorist events. The plan should include procedures to identify and treat victims, store and distribute antidotes, and handle fatalities.

Mass care issues that may be different during a terrorist WMD event include decontamination, multihazard/multiagent triage, mortuary services, and notifying and working with families of any fatalities.

The emergency plan should be flexible enough to accommodate evacuation or in-place sheltering. Evacuation may be required outside the perimeter of the scene to guard against further casualties from contamination by a released agent or from the possibility of additional WMD.

In-place sheltering may be required if the area must be quarantined or if people are safer in a particular location.

Hazard Analysis:

The hazards analysis section of an emergency plan should identify potential hazards, determine the vulnerability of an area as a result of hazards, and assess the risk of a hazardous materials release or spill.

In the identification step, you should consider explosive, chemical, biological, and nuclear WMD as potential hazards.

As you conduct your hazards analysis, identify potential targets and review their vulnerability to attack. Consider the population, accessibility, impact on daily life, economic impact, and symbolic value of areas at risk.

Terrorist and criminals who want to attack a particular group based on a conflict with their personal beliefs might target Federal, State, or local government offices and facilities, health clinics, or religious structures.

Those who want to cause maximum casualties might target public gathering places (such as sports and entertainment complexes or tourist attractions), modes of transportation (such as buses and trains - including subways), routes of transportation (including bridges), or transportation facilities (such as airport terminals).

In order to damage infrastructure and interrupt day-to-day functions, a terrorist might target utilities or water and wastewater treatment plants.

LEPC's should also consider emergency procedures in the event of multiple, or simultaneous, terrorist attacks. Terrorists might target first responders (e.g., fire houses, police department offices, response vehicles, and individuals) to hinder them from responding to another terrorist incident.

A terrorist may seek to transform a target into a weapon by focusing on facilities that handle explosive, toxic, or volatile chemicals. Because most public buildings and public areas must be accessible to everyone, they are highly vulnerable to attack.

Other facilities, such as water treatment plants and industrial facilities, especially those with chemical or explosive storage, should have site security measures in place.

You may want to discuss site security measures with these facilities to ensure that they are adequately protected. You may want to ask the facility the following questions :

- Is the facility or critical equipment and chemicals protected by fences or buildings?
- Are there systems to detect intruders (e.g., patrols, video surveillance)?
- Are there alarm systems?
- Is access to the critical areas controlled?

Do not, however, include details of the security systems in your emergency plan, because it is available to the general public. Public works facilities and workers will assume a support role, if so requested by State and local agencies. This support role, if so requested by State and local agencies.

This support role might include damage assessment, debris clearance, search and rescue, traffic control, restoration of lifeline systems, building inspection, provision of potable water and sanitation services, and flood control.

Mitigation Procedures and Ongoing Assessment:

Mitigation procedures and ongoing assessment involve consequence management activities to assess and protect the public from further exposure to hazards presented by terrorist activities.

Public health officials, hazmat teams, coroners and/or medical examiners, and criminal investigators should work together to mitigate residual hazards as well as identify potentially large numbers of fatalities.

Federal assistance should be available to support this task. Ongoing assessment activities may include environmental sampling of air, water, and soil, and insect and animal screening for chemical, biological, and radiological agents.

The criminal investigation of a terrorist attack will be a joint effort that includes many agencies. In the event of a biological attack, an epidemiological investigation may also be performed to assess the distribution of cases and sources of outbreak.

The emergency plan could include a checklist of basic questions to ask when conducting interviews with victims in hospitals, sick officers, and other individuals in affected population groups. (It may be necessary to train people in how to ask such questions appropriately in stressful circumstances.)

Equipment:

Your emergency response plan should include standard operating procedures on when to use specialized WMD response equipment. Local responders should be trained to use, maintain, and calibrate this specialized equipment.

The Department of Justice's Office for State and Local Domestic Preparedness Support (OSLDPS) provides equipment grants and technical assistance to eligible communities. Visit their website at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/terrorism/funding.htm> for more information and grant application.

Training:

The 1996 Nunn-Lugar-Domenici (NLD) legislation authorized funding to form a Domestic Preparedness (DP) training initiative.

This initiative was recently transferred from DOD to the Dept. of Justice (DOJ), and includes a range of specialized courses, from basic awareness to discipline-specific advanced level training and exercises.

Training is available for identified cities and is directed at a broad spectrum of emergency responders from a variety of response disciplines, including fire, hazardous materials, law enforcement, emergency medical services, public health, emergency management, and public works.

Additional advanced level courses involving the use of real-time experiences, live agents, and explosives are taught at cutting edge training facilities. The NLD DP Program also includes three exercises: A chemical weapons tabletop, a biological weapons tabletop, and a chemical weapons full-scale exercise.

Both types of exercises allow participants to test their knowledge and training, as well as increase the overall preparedness of responders across the jurisdiction.

FEMA independently offers the following:

- Course materials on WMD and preparedness and response for terrorist incidents that can be downloaded from www.fem.gov/emi/termg.htm.

- A terrorism consequence management course at their Mount Weather Emergency Assistance Center. Contact the training officer in your State Training Office of Emergency Services for information on course schedules and application procedures. A list of offices and contact information is located at www.fema.gov/emi/sttrgo.htm.
- Information on the Incident Command System (ICS) training conducted by each State Training Office of Emergency Services. Visit www.fema.gov/emi/nrcrs.htm for more details.
- In conjunction with the National Fire Academy, an independent study course in emergency response to terrorism, located at www.fema.gov/emi/crslist.htm.

Resources:

LEPC's seeking assistance in terrorism-related emergency planning should begin with their SERC's. The SERC can direct LEPC's to appropriate assistance at the national and State level, and may be able to facilitate LEPCs in a given region working together to address possible terrorist activities.

There are currently many Federal agencies involved in some aspect of counter-terrorism. Many of these agencies support websites.

Because of the continual changes in the world of CT, however, many websites become outdated or are even discontinued without warning.

Therefore, we recommend that LEPCs consult EPA's Chemical Emergency Preparedness and Prevention Office (CEPPO) website at www.epa.gov/ceppo/center.html.

This address is updated every two months and includes the latest links to the following types of information: Federal departments and agencies, health and medical, technical information and resources, and international sources.
