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The U.S. Fire Administration maintains the **Emergency Management and Response – Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC)**.

For information regarding the EMR-ISAC visit [www.usfa.dhs.gov/emr-isac](http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/emr-isac) or contact the EMR-ISAC office at: (301) 447-1325 and/or [emr-isac@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:emr-isac@fema.dhs.gov).

# The InfoGram

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## Protecting U.S. Bridges from Terrorism and Accidents

Many people suspected sabotage in 2007 when the 40-year-old [I-35W bridge in Minneapolis](#) (PDF, 1.79 MB) collapsed, killing 13 and injured 121 of the 160 people that were on the bridge at the time. While it turned out not to be sabotage, the event made officials at all levels of government take a closer look at the state of the bridges and roads in their jurisdictions, as most bridges are owned by state, regional, or private authorities.

A [recent article in the Homeland Security Newswire](#) reports that the Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology Directorate (DHS S&T) has partnered with the Federal Highway Administration and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to run vulnerability experiments on a bridge that was scheduled for demolition to evaluate vulnerabilities of aging steel bridges.

While the aging infrastructure element is of most concern, the [recent arrest of five men in Ohio](#) for planning to blow up a bridge brings back the possibility of attacks on bridges. The ongoing research mentioned in the article addresses both.

The article states that the “research aims to discover how materials, connection details, and designs in aging bridges react to IEDs, other explosives, kinetic impact, intense fires, and other accidents. In addition to vulnerability analysis, DHS S&T says it is funding several complementary efforts that investigate advances in effective and affordable ways to strengthen bridges.”

(Source: [Homeland Security Newswire](#))

## Emergency Services and Water Sector Coordination

The fact sheet [Coordination of the Water and Emergency Services Sector: An Important Step to Better Response](#) (PDF, 1.34 MB) published recently by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) details the importance of good relations between the emergency services sector (ESS) and the water sector. Emergency services and water utilities should be able to support each other during emergency operations by having mechanisms in place before the emergency occurs.

*The InfoGram is distributed weekly to provide members of the Emergency Services Sector with information concerning the protection of their critical infrastructures.*

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DHS and the FBI encourage recipients of this document to report information concerning suspicious or criminal activity to the local [FBI office](#) and also the [State or Major Urban Area Fusion Center](#).

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For information specifically affecting the private sector critical infrastructure contact the **National Infrastructure Coordinating Center** by phone at 202-282-9201, or by email at [nicc@dhs.gov](mailto:nicc@dhs.gov).

The 8-page fact sheet contains suggestions, funding options for security evaluation and improvements, training, exercises, and case studies. Also included is a checklist of important items to discuss between the emergency management agencies (EMA) and utilities:

- Conducting water facility tours and EMA tours.
- Discussing existing and potential emergency alert and notification systems.
- Planning for alternative water sanitation and drinking water access.
- Considering water utility representation at the Emergency Operations Center

The EPA offers extensive resources for [maintaining the water infrastructure](#). They also help support the [Water Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (ISAC), please see their website for more security and infrastructure support resources and information on joining.

(Source: [EPA](#))

## 2012 National Preparedness Report

The first [National Preparedness Report](#) was published recently, showing both the national strengths and the areas that need improvement in order to meet the National Preparedness Goal. Mandated under [Presidential Policy Directive 8](#) (PPD-8), this report is to be a baseline measure of the "core capabilities" needed to prevent, respond to, and recover from disasters.

Areas identified as strong points include a strengthened foundation in all-hazards planning, better training in the National Incident Management System (NIMS), the development of a national network of information sharing and fusion centers, and a highly responsive public health service.

The largest area for improvement was cybersecurity. The Report states "cybersecurity was the single core capability where states had made the least amount of overall progress, with an average capability level of 42 percent." Other areas needing attention include economic recovery, housing, and natural and cultural resources.

(Source: [Disaster Research newsletter](#))

## Wildland Fire Arson Encouraged as Extremist Tactic

The winter edition of Al Qa'ida's English-language online magazine "Inspire" continues to follow trends that recognize wildland arson as a terrorist tactic in the United States and Australia. [Fire Rescue 1 reports](#) that the article entitled "It is of Your Freedom to Ignite a Firebomb" gives detailed instructions on improvised incendiary devices (IIDs) and timing devices.

The instructions on how to make an "ember bomb" could be used as a method of wildfire arson in "lone wolf" attacks by homegrown violent extremists (HVEs). A [2005 article in Wildfire Magazine](#) discusses the historical use of fire in warfare and states: "as more and more folks are moving into the wildland-urban interface, the danger of fire as a weapon is even greater."

While there are no known specific threats, this is not the first time this type of attack has been suggested. Wildfire arson has been reported more in the past few years. Taking into account the large amount of fire and land management staff and resources that are allocated to large wildfires, increased attention to signs of arson should be considered.

(Source: [FireRescue1.com](#))