



## Emergency Management and Response Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC)

**INFOGRAM 22-10**

**June 3, 2010**

***NOTE:** This INFOGRAM will be distributed weekly to provide members of the Emergency Services Sector with information concerning the protection of their critical infrastructures. For further information, contact the Emergency Management and Response- Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) at (301) 447-1325 or by e-mail at [emr-isac@dhs.gov](mailto:emr-isac@dhs.gov).*

### Home Drywall Problem

Federal government [action](#) regarding the problem with drywall in homes persuaded the [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) to research the issue as it pertains to the health and safety of Emergency Services Sector (ESS) responders and found information at [www.drywallresopnse.gov](http://www.drywallresopnse.gov). The EMR-ISAC ascertained that the [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) (CPSC) received more than 3,000 complaints from citizens throughout the nation who believe health symptoms and corrosion of certain metal products in their homes are related to the presence of imported drywall.

The CPSC and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issued [joint guidance](#) (PDF, 22.3 KB) last month that recommended the replacement of questionable drywall, fire safety alarm devices, electrical components and wiring, gas service piping, and fire suppression sprinkler systems in homes with problem drywall. Until the substitutions have been made, the [U.S. Fire Administration](#) (PDF, 782.5 KB) recommends homeowners be alert for possible electrical or pipe problems, and take additional precautions to ensure their life safety alarms (i.e., smoke, carbon monoxide, and gas alarms) work properly.

On 25 May, the CPSC released a [statement](#) with the names of foreign manufactures whose drywall emitted high levels of [hydrogen sulfide](#) (PDF, 22.2 KB) in testing conducted by Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL). Testing by LBNL confirmed the strong association between hydrogen sulfide and metal corrosion. The EMR-ISAC verified that hydrogen sulfide is an extremely hazardous gas, which warrants the use of personal protective equipment by ESS personnel when responding to homes with suspected problem drywall.

### Nonresidential Building Fires

According to the [National Fire Protection Association](#) (NFPA), residential fires are the cause of most injuries and deaths at the fireground, while outdoor fires are the majority of fires that occur in the United States. However, “nonresidential fires, by contrast, tend to be the most costly fires per incident.” This fact prompted the [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) to assess the effects of nonresidential fires on critical infrastructures, particularly those of the Emergency Services Sector (ESS).

To ascertain the consequences of nonresidential fires, the EMR-ISAC examined the April 2010 report by the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) titled “[Nonresidential Building Fires](#)” (PDF, 11.4 MB). This document substantiated that nonresidential structure fires represent only 7 percent of all reported fires and are responsible for just 3 percent of fire deaths and 9 percent of fire injuries. Nevertheless, “they account for 23 percent of the dollar losses from fire nationwide.” A small number of responder casualties were in the “line of duty.” Also, some of the lost dollars belonged to ESS departments that responded to these fires.

The USFA report further discusses the causes of nonresidential building fires, time of fire alarm, month, the presence and effectiveness of smoke alarms, and the availability of automatic extinguishment systems (AESs). Where appropriate, findings are given separately for fires and fires with dollar loss, and for confined fires. “An Appendix provides the raw [National Fire Incident Reporting System](#) (NFIRS) numbers for the smoke alarm and AES analyses.”

## More about the 2010 Atlantic Hurricane Season

An “active to extremely active” hurricane season is expected for the Atlantic Basin this year, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) [Climate Prediction Center](#). Considering this information, the [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) recognizes the importance for communities and their emergency services in hurricane-prone areas to have a specific hurricane preparedness plan in place that has been rehearsed and revised as needed.

The 2010 forecast ranges exceed the seasonal average of 11 named storms, 6 hurricanes, and 2 major hurricanes. Across the entire Atlantic Basin for the six-month season, which begins June 1, NOAA projects a 70 percent probability of the following ranges:

- 14 to 23 named storms (top winds of 39 mph or higher), including:
- 8 to 14 hurricanes (top winds of 74 mph or higher), of which:
- 3 to 7 could be major hurricanes (category 3, 4 or 5; winds of at least 111 mph).

“The main uncertainty in this outlook is how much above normal the season will be. Whether or not we approach the high end of the predicted ranges depends partly on whether or not La Niña develops this summer,” said Gerry Bell, Ph.D., lead seasonal hurricane forecaster at the Climate Prediction Center. “At present we are in a neutral state, but conditions are becoming increasingly favorable for La Niña to develop.”

See the [NOAA news release](#) to learn more about the 2010 Atlantic Hurricane Season Outlook, and consider taking another look at the best practices gleaned from multiple sources as seen in [EMR-ISAC INFOGRAM 18-10 \(6 May 2010\)](#).

## Private Sector Resources Catalog

The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) learned that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Private Sector Office announced this week the release of the first [Private Sector Resources Catalog](#). The DHS Assistant Secretary for the Private Sector stated: “The DHS Private Sector Resources Catalog allows our partners to access the resources they need to help keep our country secure.”

Targeted specifically toward the private sector, this document collects the training, publications, guidance, alerts, newsletters, programs, and services accessible across DHS for the private sector. The EMR-ISAC observed that the catalog is organized by component and resource type. A comprehensive index is included to facilitate the location of resources. Additionally, Appendix A contains information for key DHS points of contact.

“Recognizing the diversity of the available resources as well as the continually evolving work of the department, this catalog will be updated regularly to publicize new resources and to increase private sector awareness.”

The new catalog can be downloaded and opened [here](#) (PDF, 852.8 KB) for the benefit of Emergency Services Sector departments and agencies.

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## **REPORTING NOTICE**

The National Infrastructure Coordinating Center (NICC) within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Infrastructure Protection is the central point for notifications regarding infrastructure threats, disruptions, intrusions, and suspicious activities. Emergency Services Sector personnel are requested to report any incidents or attacks involving their infrastructures using at least the first and second points of contact seen below:

- 1) NICC - Voice: 202-282-9201, Fax: 703-487-3570, E-Mail: [nicc@dhs.gov](mailto:nicc@dhs.gov)
- 2) Your local FBI office - Web: [www.fbi.gov/contact/fo/fo.htm](http://www.fbi.gov/contact/fo/fo.htm)
- 3) EMR-ISAC - Voice: 301-447-1325, E-Mail: [emr-isac@dhs.gov](mailto:emr-isac@dhs.gov), fax: 301-447- 1034, Web: [www.usfa.dhs.gov/emr-isac](http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/emr-isac), Mail: E-108, 16825 South Seton Avenue, Emmitsburg, MD 21727