EMR-ISAC
Emergency Management & Response-Information Sharing & Analysis Center

The InfoGram

Volume 12 – Issue 28 *July 12, 2012*

Highlights:

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** or contact the EMR-ISAC office at: **(301) 447-1325 and/or emr-isac@fema.dhs.gov**.

Rethinking Tactics for Residential Fires

A series of controlled burns is taking place this week in New York City as the Fire Department of New York, Underwriters Laboratories Inc., and the National Institute of Science and Technology test different approaches to fight residential fires. Two key things are being studied: ventilation and the flammability of plastic materials in modern furniture.

Twenty row homes have been filled with hotel furniture to mimic the furnishings of a typical home. Each dwelling will be burned as scientists study how the fire is affected by various changes in conditions and how different firefighting techniques work against those conditions.

An article in The New York Times states "Plastics, like the polyurethane foam used as filling in furniture, have drastically reduced the time it takes for a fire to heat a room above 1,100 degrees." Plastic fuels combined with the influx of fresh oxygen to a structure when firefighters break open a door or window can make the fire spread much more quickly, affecting how the fire is fought.

Fire protection engineering scientists are especially interested to be working with the fire service directly on this project, as residential fires cannot truly be replicated in a lab. Sensors, cameras, and other equipment will capture real-time data for future study.

(Source: New York Times)

Security and 1st Amendment-Protected Events

Most Americans feel that one of the most important rights guaranteed under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution is the right to peaceably assemble, whether to demonstrate, support a cause, or counterprotest. The responsibility to defend that right while protecting the safety and privacy of all individuals gathering can be challenging for law enforcement agencies.

A document published by the Criminal Intelligence Coordinating Council (CICC) presents law enforcement agencies and officers with guidance on how to accomplish all these tasks. "Recommendations for First Amendment-Protected Events for State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies" (PDF, 3.45 Mb) covers pre-event planning, operational event response planning, and how any information obtained during the event will be handled.

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

"The Role of State and Local Law Enforcement at First Amendment Events" (PDF, 477.1 Kb) is a small, double-sided reference card officers can carry with them. The card briefly goes over the protected freedoms of event attendees and officers' roles and responsibilities while working such events.

(Source: U.S. DOJ Justice Information Sharing)

EMS Lessons Learned from Joplin Tornado

EMS World ran an article about the medical response to the Joplin, MO, tornado. Written by the EMS medical director, it details his first-hand account of how the disaster directly impacted the EMS and public health systems, how Joplin dealt with the total loss of one of its two hospitals, and what lessons should be taken and applied to other communities to help them prepare for disasters.

Descriptions of the days after the tornado show how quickly a working system can be overwhelmed by a large disaster. Communications down, medical resources halved, storms continuing to roll in, roads blocked, and the initial response happening at night with no electricity added more layers of complexity to an already difficult situation. "Although local EMS agencies had participated in numerous exercises and drills over the years, no one had practiced for all the challenges this disaster brought."

A second article discusses eight lessons learned based on the experiences of the author during the response. The suggestions include regular drills and exercises, incorporating the Incident Command System (ICS) into plans, and making sure EMS has a presence in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

Patient triage and tracking should also be evaluated. Joplin responders quickly ran out of triage tags and had to make do with other ways to document information. In addition, tracking patients became an issue as people were moved from the ruined hospital to other locations by any means necessary, including pickup trucks.

(Source: EMS World)

Cybersecurity Tool for Energy Utilities

The U.S. Department of Energy has partnered with the Department of Homeland Security to develop and publish the Electric Subsector Cybersecurity Capability Maturity Model in support of a White House initiative. Aimed at strengthening protection of the national electric grid, the initiative is based on the best practices generated jointly through public/private sector working groups and revised through feedback from industry experts and pilot evaluations.

Part of the initiative is the Cybersecurity Self-Evaluation Survey Tool, which enables utilities to identify their vulnerabilities, evaluate their plans, and develop cybersecurity capabilities that work. The tool helps utilities focus on threat management and be more attentive to situational awareness of their computer systems to fortify them.

Utilities can request the Cybersecurity Self-Evaluation Survey Tool by contacting the Energy Department at ES-C2M2@hq.doe.gov. The Department of Energy also will do facilitated evaluations on request.

(Source: Department of Energy)

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*.

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**.