



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

INFOGRAM 29-09

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***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.*

Hot Weather Recommendations

The hazy, hot, and humid days of summer are now occurring in many sections of the United States. With the arrival of the summer equinox, the [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) understands there is increased risk of heat stress, heat exhaustion, or the more serious heat stroke for Emergency Services Sector (ESS) personnel.

According to the [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) (OSHA), working in extreme temperatures is not only uncomfortable, it can be life threatening. An OSHA official stated: "It is important for workers and their employers to minimize the chances of heat-induced illnesses, and imperative that they recognize the signs of heat stress and take proper precautions to reduce the chances of illness or death."

Because first responders must frequently perform duties in extreme heat environments, OSHA advises that proactive and aggressive precautions should be enforced. Therefore, the EMR-ISAC acquired the following recommendations from various sources for the consideration of ESS departments and agencies:

- Urge personnel to drink plenty of water before coming on duty and during duty performance.
- Advise personnel to avoid soft drinks, sugary liquids, or caffeinated beverages.
- Encourage personnel to get plenty of rest while off duty.
- Urge personnel to report any symptoms of dehydration, heat cramps, heat stroke, or heat exhaustion.
- Require the presence of EMS with a transport unit during all training and incident responses.
- Create a rehabilitation center with tents for shaded areas at training and incident sites.
- Provide electrolyte sports drinks and bottled water.
- Set up an extra hose to provide a place for personnel to cool off.
- Set up limb immersion chairs under tents and provide cool towels.
- Monitor temperature and relative humidity continuously.
- Ensure personnel accountability.
- Enforce work-to-rest ratios.
- Bring extra personnel to major events to provide adequate relief for exhausted crews.

More information regarding this subject can be seen at FEMA's [Extreme Heat Backgrounder](#).

IED Safety Update

According to reporting by multiple law enforcement agencies, the use of simplistic or sophisticated improvised explosive devices (IEDs) is slowly increasing throughout the United States. The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) reviewed several reports indicating the devices have been fabricated in an improvised manner by vandals and criminals to harass, harm, or destroy.

After examining multiple documents of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Directorate of Science and Technology, the EMR-ISAC learned that IEDs are constructed from different materials such as commercial and household chemicals. They are generally characterized by four key components: main charge, power source, switch, and container. IEDs can look like anything, including a plastic soda or water bottle.

The Division of Fire Safety, Office of the New Jersey State Fire Marshal recommends that all emergency departments and agencies remain vigilant to the possibility of IEDs (e.g., grenades containing thermally reactive chemicals) at incident scenes. They encourage the following actions if suspected devices or packages are found:

- Never touch or move any device or package that is suspicious.
- Isolate the device or package by evacuating the area.
- Gently set the object down and move away if determined suspicious while handling or carrying.
- Contact the police immediately from a safe location.
- Do not use a radio or cell phone within a minimum of 100 feet from the object.
- Describe to the police both the appearance and location of the suspicious object.
- Avoid complacency when dealing with a suspected IED.

For more information regarding IEDs, see the [Focus Area Documents](#) at the lower right of the DHS, Commercialization Community Page.

First Responder Seat Belt Usage

The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) examined U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) statistics regarding seat belt usage by the personnel of Emergency Services Sector departments and agencies. These statistics revealed the following facts:

- In 2007, 27 firefighters died in vehicle accidents. No seat belt was used in 11 of the 20 cases where seat belts were available and the status of their use was known.
- In 2008, 24 firefighters died in vehicle accidents. No seat belt was used in 7 of the 10 cases where seat belts were available and the status of the use was known.

In its program report, "[Fire Fighter Fatality Investigation and Prevention Program](#)" (PDF, 830 KB) the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) stated that seat belts are the most effective means of reducing injuries in emergency vehicle accidents. The NIOSH document further discussed the adverse effects on response operations caused by the long-term pain, suffering, and expenses to injured accident survivors who were not wearing seat belts.

Additionally, the EMR-ISAC observed in "[Emergency Vehicle Safe Operations for Volunteer and Small Combination Emergency Service Organizations](#)" (PDF, 436 KB) that the USFA, National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) and National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF), reinforced their commitment to mitigating the fatalities, injuries, costs, and reduced efficiency associated with vehicle crashes, particularly those in which seat belts were not used. Within this document, these organizations promote a culture of buckling up seat belts before any vehicle movement occurs in order to prevent death, injury, or property damage.

On a related matter, this week the NFFF released its new [Firefighter Life Safety Resource Kit Volume 4](#), which includes information regarding seat belt safety. The resource kit advocates the NFFF safety position: "Every firefighter shares in taking responsibility not only for themselves, but for those they work alongside of each day. There has never been a more noble cause, a more important mission, nor a more difficult challenge, than having the courage to change the safety culture of the fire service. Simply put, preventable firefighter deaths are unacceptable."

Warren E. Isman Educational Grant

The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) learned about the [Warren E. Isman Educational Grant](#) administered by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). Any established hazardous materials incident response team from a fire department, police department, or other public-funded program may apply.

According to the web page, a minimum of one \$5,000 grant will be award to 1 hazardous materials response team (maximum of 5 members) to attend specialized training at 1 national hazardous materials conference in 2010. The grant application is due by September 15, 2009.

The International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) initiated the grant following the death of Fire Chief Warren Isman in 1991. According to the NFPA web site, the IAFC asked the NFPA to assume administrative responsibilities in 1993. As a leader in the fire service, Chief Isman developed innovative solutions to difficult problems facing the modern fire department. He always sought training and education, and then shared his knowledge with others. This grant was established so that his love for sharing information and the free exchange of innovative ideas could continue.

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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
- 2) Your local FBI office - Web: <http://www.fbi.gov/contact/fo/fo.htm>
- 3) EMR-ISAC - Voice: 301-447-1325, E-Mail: emr-isac@dhs.gov, fax: 301-447- 1034,
Web: www.usfa.dhs.gov/subjects/emr-isac, Mail: E-108, 16825 South Seton Avenue,
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