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

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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 Safety Tips
(Source: OSHA)

The hazy, hot, and humid days of summer with excessive heat warnings are now occurring in 34 states including Washington, D.C. Under these circumstances, 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 chance 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 following tips from multiple sources are provided for the consideration of ESS departments and agencies:

- Urge personnel to drink plenty of water before coming on duty and during duty performance.
- Advise responders to avoid soft drinks, sugary liquids, or caffeinated beverages.
- Encourage each individual to get plenty of rest while off duty.
- Urge everyone 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 bottled water and electrolyte sports drinks.
- 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 accurate personnel accountability.
- Enforce work-to-rest ratios.
- Bring extra responders to major events to provide adequate relief for exhausted crews.

More information about hot weather safety can be found at the FEMA and CDC websites.

Preventing Social Engineering
(Source: US-CERT)

According to a U.S. Computer Emergency Readiness Team (US-CERT) Cyber Security Tip, a social engineering attacker uses human interaction (i.e. social skills) to obtain or compromise information about an organization or its computer systems. An attacker may seem unassuming and respectable, possibly claiming to be a new employee, repair person, or researcher, and even offering credentials to support that identity. However, by asking questions, the individual may be able to piece together enough information to infiltrate the networks of any department or agency. If the attacker is not able to gather sufficient

information from one source, he or she may contact another source within the same organization and rely on the information from the first source to add to his or her credibility when speaking with the second.

The Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) acknowledges that the Internet and social media have made it much easier for social engineering attackers for two reasons: 1) People are generally willing to share personal information about themselves online via Facebook, Twitter, etc. 2) Social media platforms encourage a dangerous level of assumed trust. Therefore, the human factor continues to remain the weakest link in the information security chain.

In its 12 July Blog, the Department of Homeland Security recommended the following actions to avoid becoming a victim of social engineering:

- Be suspicious of unsolicited contacts seeking internal organizational data or personal information.
- Do not provide personal information or passwords over email or the phone.
- Do not provide information about your department or agency.
- Pay attention to website URLs using a variation in spelling or a different domain (e.g., .com vs. .net).
- Verify the authenticity of a requester by directly contacting his or her company.
- Install and maintain anti-virus software, firewalls, and email filters.

See Social Engineering Trends and Prevention for more information.

Wildfire Air Medical Evacuation

(Source: WildfireMagazine.com)

In an article titled "Flight Plan," Bill Arsenault indicated that over the last several years wildland fires have seen an increase in air ambulance requests, medical evacuations, and short-haul rescue needs. To generally summarize his premise, the escalation demonstrates the necessity for a thoroughly coordinated air medical evacuation plan to capitalize on the "Golden Hour" of advanced life support for injuries at wildfires requiring air medical evacuation.

The Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) ascertained that it is prudent to consult the Emergency Helicopter Extraction Source List (EHESL) (PDF, 2.7 Mb) when developing the flight plan for wildfire rescues. The EHESL provides Incident Management Teams, Geographic Area Coordination Centers, and the Forest and Fire Services with access to the availability of helicopter resources on a state, geographical, and national basis to conduct human extractions for emergency evacuations. Its goal is to ensure emergency response to the seriously injured and to respond as quickly as possible to life threatening situations occurring on agency and interagency wildland incidents.

Another helpful source to consider is the Helicopter Short-Haul Handbook (PDF, 1.2 Mb), which outlines minimum policies, procedures, qualifications, training requirements, and equipment for helicopter short-haul programs within the Department of the Interior. It is recognized that the handbook may be adopted for use by state or local agencies.

The author also discussed that flight plans should contain provisions to receive private or hospital-based air ambulances instead of EHESL aircraft. It is possible that some non-EHESL aircraft may not have the radio frequencies, required equipment (e.g., hoist), and adequate experience with wildfire air medical evacuation.

Hot Topics Research for Emergency Medical Services

(Source: U.S. Fire Administration)

The Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) was informed that the United States Fire Administration will conduct a newly developed 6-day pilot course ("Hot Topics Research for Emergency Medical Services") at the National Emergency Training Center in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

This course provides the knowledge and skills to identify and research hot topics in Emergency Medical Services to ultimately promote and embrace system or service improvements. It is structured around how to make a persuasive justification through the effective collection and presentation of data with the use of a wide variety of research resources. Students will construct a program proposal and/or progress report for presentation. The course includes research, writing, and presentation elements for successful completion.

The National Fire Academy will deliver two pilot offerings of the course: 30 October to 4 November 2011 and also 29 January to 4 February 2012. The target audience includes Emergency Medical Services middle management personnel (i.e., division/battalion chief, captain, shift supervisor, crew leader, administrator, etc.) with at least 3 to 5 years of experience. Students must complete a General Admissions Application (FEMA Form 119-25-1), which is available as an electronic form.

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