



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

**INFOGRAM 31-10**

**August 5, 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).*

### Dam Failures

After the recent dam bursts in [Iowa](#) and [Arizona](#), the [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) researched the current status of American dams to appreciate the potential impact of dam failures on critical infrastructures, particularly those of the Emergency Services Sector (ESS). It is no surprise that numerous ESS organizations could experience some physical destruction and operational degradation depending on proximity to a dam failure.

Hundreds of dam failures have occurred throughout the United States. These events caused immense property and environmental damage and have taken thousands of lives. Furthermore, the potential for deadly dam failures will grow as dams continue to age and the population increases. According to the [Association of State Dam Safety Officials](#), no one knows precisely how many dam failures have occurred, but they have been documented in every state. “From Jan. 1, 2005 through Jan. 1, 2009, state dam safety programs reported 132 dam failures and 434 incidents requiring intervention to prevent failure.”

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) [web site](#) indicates that there are more than 80,000 dams in the nation, according to the 2007 update to the National Inventory of Dams. “Approximately one third of these pose a ‘high’ or ‘significant’ hazard to life and property if failure occurs.” Under FEMA’s leadership, the federal government works to protect Americans from dam failure through the [National Dam Safety Program](#) (NDSP).

The EMR-ISAC recognizes that emergency managers are abundantly challenged to be attentive to all threats to their communities. Awareness of the number and status of dams within their jurisdiction is another of many functions. This task includes the development and implementation of corrective actions to repair weakened dams, as well as emergency plans for possible dam failures. Resources to assist with this planning are available at the NDSP, [FEMA](#), [Association of Dam Safety Officials](#), and the [Dam Safety Coalition](#).

### Planning Guidance for Nuclear Detonation

The Introduction to the “[Planning Guidance for Response to a Nuclear Detonation](#),” (PDF, 2.6 MB) Second Edition (June 2010) states: “The purpose of this guidance is to provide emergency planners with nuclear detonation-specific response recommendations to maximize the preservation of life in the event of an urban nuclear detonation.” Upon review of this document, the [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) observed that the contents address the unique effects and results of a nuclear detonation such as scale of destruction, shelter and evacuation strategies, unparalleled medical demands, management of nuclear casualties, and radiation dose management concepts.

This planning guide is aimed at response activities in an environment with a severely compromised infrastructure for the first few days when it is likely that many federal resources will still be en route to the incident. Its recommendations are focused on providing express consideration of the following topics relevant to emergency planners within the first few days of a nuclear detonation: shelter and evacuation, medical care, population monitoring and decontamination, and public preparedness.

The target audiences for this document are response planners, exercise designers, and their leadership. However, the EMR-ISAC understands that emergency responders at local, regional, state, and tribal levels should also benefit in comprehending and applying this guidance.

## Interim Planning Guidance for Mass Casualty Events

The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) received and reviewed the interim guidance recently released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): "[Preparedness and Response to a Mass Casualty Event Resulting from Terrorist Use of Explosives](#)" (PDF, 1.2 MB). The document reflects the opinions and recommendations of a panel of experts. It includes a description of system-wide and discipline-specific challenges as well as recommended solutions to address these challenges.

According to the [CDC](#), the purpose of this interim planning guidance is to provide valuable information and insight to help public policy and health system leaders at all levels prepare for and respond to a mass casualty event caused by terrorist use of explosives. It delivers practical information to promote comprehensive mass casualty care and offers options to consider when planning responses to disasters involving mass casualties.

"This guidance recognizes the critical role that strategic leadership can have on the success or failure of preparing for and responding to a terrorist bombing. It outlines important leadership strategies for successfully preparing for and managing incidents resulting from the terrorist use of explosives."

## National Fire Incident Reporting System

The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) was notified that the United States Fire Administration (USFA) recently made available a new [National Fire Incident Reporting System](#) (NFIRS) web-based data entry tool known as the Data Entry Browser Interface (DEBI). It enables total web-based data entry into NFIRS, eliminating the need to download and install client software on the NFIRS user's computer. DEBI will run using standard web browsers that provide access to the application from any computer that has an Internet connection.

In order to use DEBI, which the EMR-ISAC confirmed is free of cost to all users, a fire department must have completed the user [registration](#). Additionally, its NFIRS State Program Manager must have assigned it the necessary permissions to use the new tool and activated its account. A department should contact its NFIRS [State Program Manager](#) if it does not already have an active NFIRS user account.

The Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (PL 93-498) authorized the USFA's National Fire Data Center to gather and analyze information on the magnitude of the nation's fire problem as well as its detailed characteristics and trends. NFIRS was established in order to carry out the intentions of the Act. NFIRS has two objectives: to help state and local government develop fire reporting and analysis capability for their own uses, and to obtain data that can be used to more accurately assess and subsequently combat the fire problem at a national level.

Visit [NFIRS](#) for more information. For technical questions or assistance with NFIRS or DEBI, contact the NFIRS Support Center at 888-383-3827.

## **DISCLAIMER OF ENDORSEMENT**

The U.S. Fire Administration/EMR-ISAC does not endorse the organizations sponsoring linked web sites, and does not endorse the views they express or the products/services they offer.

## **FAIR USE NOTICE**

This INFOGRAM may contain copyrighted material that was not specifically authorized by the copyright owner. EMR-ISAC personnel believe this constitutes "fair use" of copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the U.S. Copyright Law. If you wish to use copyrighted material contained within this document for your own purposes that go beyond "fair use," you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

## **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