



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@fema.dhs.gov.

Nationwide Test of the Emergency Alert System

(Source: FEMA, Federal Communications Commission)

The first nationwide test of the [Emergency Alert System](#) (EAS) will occur on Wednesday, November 9, 2011, at 2 p.m. eastern standard time. The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) learned that while the EAS is frequently used by state and local governments to send weather alerts and other emergencies, there has never been a national activation of the system.

Although the national EAS test may resemble the periodic EAS tests that most Americans are familiar with, there will be differences in what people will see and hear. During the test, listeners will hear a message indicating that “This is a test.” However, the video test message scroll may not be the same nor use the words “This is a test.” Therefore, it is important for emergency responders to be familiar with the test and review the [EAS Test Toolkit](#) (PDF, 806 Kb).

EAS participants include all broadcasters, satellite and digital radio and television, cable television, and wireline video providers. Future testing of the EAS will assess the effectiveness and reliability of other technologies to achieve the ultimate goal of timely alert and warning to the American public in the preservation of life and property. Two videos about the upcoming test are available on the [FEMA Blog](#).

Marijuana Grow Operations Response Program

(Source: Fire Engineering)

Now available at no cost to all first responders is the newest [training program](#), *Marijuana Grow Operations—Safe Multi-Agency Response*, provided by the [Firefighters Support Foundation](#). The program discusses the nature of these grows and describes the very real but under-appreciated dangers associated with them. It also details the tactics, techniques, equipment, and essential inter-agency cooperation necessary to keep emergency responders safe from any harm when responding to marijuana grow sites.

The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) verified that the training consists of a two-part, 90-minute video presentation of the 170-slide PowerPoint presentation. It contains photographs of actual grows and depicts the real hazards found at these locations. The program can be used by any agency or responder either as it exists or as a basis from which to construct individual training modules.

According to the FireEngineering.com article, the presenter is the commander of a major state police special weapons team and has years of experience working joint grow operations with fire and EMS agencies. “He is intimately familiar with the dangers they pose to all responders.”

Emergency Vehicle Safety Study

(Source: U.S. Fire Administration)

A [U.S. Fire Administration](#) (USFA) [press release](#) announced that the USFA, in partnership with the [U.S. Department of Justice](#) (DOJ), has begun a study of emergent topics in emergency vehicle and roadway operations safety. The [International Fire Service Training Association](#) will conduct the study with the purpose of assisting the development and demonstration of best practices for the emergency services.

Within the announcement, the [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) noted that each year approximately 25 percent of on-duty firefighter fatalities occur while responding to or returning from incidents, with the majority of deaths resulting from vehicle crashes. This is also an issue for the law enforcement community. Data from the [National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund](#) shows that from 2001 to 2010, vehicle-related accidents—including motorcycle crashes and struck while operating on the roadway—were the leading cause of on-duty fatalities for U.S. law enforcement officers.

“USFA is committed to reducing the incidence of vehicle crashes and emergency responders being struck on the roadway as they are a large cause of on-duty fatalities,” said Deputy U.S. Fire Administrator Glenn Gaines. “We are grateful for the U.S. Department of Justice’s support of this important initiative which benefits both the fire service and law enforcement.”

“Increasing safety for our law enforcement officers and firefighters is one of our highest priorities,” said John Laub, Director of the National Institute of Justice. “We are delighted to work with our partners at the USFA to discover what works best to reduce deaths and injuries from vehicles crashes and being struck by vehicles.”

Further information about vehicle and roadway operations safety efforts can be found at the [USFA website](#).

Jamming Devices

(Source: Federal Communications Commission)

A [Federal Communications Commission](#) (FCC) [issue](#) (PDF, 65 Kb) explained that in recent years the number of websites offering “cell jammers” or similar devices designed to block communications and create a “quiet zone” in vehicles, schools, theaters, restaurants, and other places has increased substantially. “While these devices are marketed under different names, such as signal blockers, GPS jammers, or test stoppers, they have the same purpose.”

The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) confirmed that “jammers” are illegal radio frequency transmitters that are designed to block, jam, or otherwise interfere with authorized radio communications. Jamming technology generally does not discriminate between desirable and undesirable communications. A “jammer” can block all radio communications on any device that operates on radio frequencies within its range.

According to the FCC, “jammers” are more than just a nuisance; they pose an unacceptable risk to public safety by potentially preventing the transmission of emergency communications. For example, “jammers” can prevent 9-1-1 and other emergency calls from getting through. These devices can also interfere with police, fire, and emergency medical communications.

Considering their capabilities and menace to public safety communications, federal law prohibits the marketing, sale, or use of “jammers” that intentionally block, jam, or interfere with authorized radio communications such as cell phones, police radar, GPS, Wi-Fi, etc.

The FCC published [Frequently Asked Questions](#) (PDF, 124 Kb), which provides additional detailed information about “jammers.”

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