



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.*

Suspicious Holiday Mail

(Sources: DHS and U.S. Postal Service)

During this holiday season, some Emergency Service Sector (ESS) departments and agencies may receive cards, letters, and packages recognizing the service and sacrifices of local emergency responders. Unfortunately, the possibility exists that the mail could contain explosives, chemicals, or biological agents. Although there is no known threat against ESS organizations, the [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) shares the following [typical characteristics](#) of mail and packages that should raise suspicion:

- Sent by an unexpected or an unknown person or source.
- Contain no return address or an address that cannot be verified as legitimate.
- Have protruding wires or aluminum foil, strange odors, or stains.
- Show a city or state in the postmark that does not match the return address.
- Are of unusual weight given their size, appear lopsided, or oddly shaped.
- Marked with threatening language.
- Labeled in an inappropriate or unusual manner.
- Include excessive postage or packaging material, such as masking tape and string.
- Contain misspellings of common words.
- Addressed to someone no longer with the organization or used other outdated information.
- Titled incorrectly or without a name.
- Are not addressed to a specific person.
- Have hand-written or poorly typed addresses.

See the [Suspicious Mail Alert](#) (PDF, 319 Kb) for additional information to assist personnel in implementing protected mail handling at ESS facilities.

Critical Infrastructure Protection Month

(Source: DHS)

Last week, President Obama declared December [National Critical Infrastructure Protection Month](#). The [National Infrastructure Protection Plan](#) (NIPP) defines national critical infrastructure as those assets, systems, and networks, whether physical or virtual, so vital to the United States that their incapacitation or destruction would have a debilitating effect on security, national economic security, public health or safety, or any combination thereof. The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) confirmed that this includes everything from power plants, chemical facilities, emergency services, water, and cyber networks to bridges, highways, stadiums, shopping malls, and federal buildings where millions of Americans work and visit each day.

As required by the NIPP, the [Department of Homeland Security](#) (DHS) leads the infrastructure protection effort through a framework of public and private partnerships in close collaboration with the 18 critical infrastructure sectors, which include federal, state, and local governments as well as private sector infrastructure owners and operators. Throughout this month, DHS will reach out to public and private partners to raise awareness of what can be done to protect and improve the resiliency of the nation's vast array of critical assets and systems.

See DHS infrastructure protection and resilience [programs](#) to acquire insights for emergency services departments and agencies.

Heart Fit for Duty

(Source: Homeland Security NewsWire)

[Homeland Security NewsWire](#) recently reported that the fire and police departments of three Arizona cities are taking part in the new pilot program, [Heart Fit for Duty](#), which is dedicated to heart disease and stroke early detection, prevention, and education. The Heart Fit for Duty Program partners with medical practitioners by providing education and screenings beyond the basics of care in 5 major areas: lipids (cholesterol screening and management), obesity, hypertension, diabetes, and tobacco cessation.

The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) learned from the [National Fire Data Center](#) that cardiac arrest has been the leading cause of firefighter fatalities for many years. According to an article in the [New England Journal of Medicine](#), heart disease causes 45% of the deaths that occur among U.S. firefighters while they are on duty.

Also committed to decreasing the number of cardiovascular-related diseases among first responders, the National Volunteer Fire Council offers assistance through its [Heart Healthy Firefighter Program](#). Multiple [resources and risk-assessment tools](#) for personal evaluation and application by first responder organizations can be found in this program.

Safer Ambulance Designs

(Source: National Institute of Standards and Technology)

The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) received information that the [National Institute of Standards and Technology](#) (NIST) is seeking input from paramedics, emergency medical technicians, and other interested emergency medical services (EMS) personnel regarding the development of new design guidelines for ambulances to reduce the crash risk to emergency responders working inside the vehicles.

According to the [NIST press release](#), EMS workers riding in the back of ambulances are at high risk of suffering injuries during a crash or a maneuver to avoid a crash if they are not using restraints. However, many of these workers complain that restraints make it difficult to access and treat patients while in route to a hospital. Therefore, to meet the challenge of finding an acceptable solution, NIST, the Department of Homeland Security, and the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health are developing design guidelines for ambulance patient compartments that maximize safety without compromising effectiveness.

To gather recommendations for the guidelines from a broad cross-section of the key stakeholders in the EMS community, NIST is leading the effort to conduct an anonymous [web survey](#) from November 28 to December 28, 2011. For more information, or to get actively involved in the effort to improve safety in ambulance patient compartments, contact Jennifer Marshall at jennifer.marshall@nist.gov or call (301) 975-3396.

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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. FBI phone numbers can be found online at <http://www.fbi.gov/contact/fo/fo.htm>. Fusion Center information can be seen at <http://www.dhs.gov/contact-fusion-centers>.

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.

When available, each report submitted should include the date, time, location, type of activity, number of people, equipment used for the activity, name of submitting person and organization, and a designated point of contact.