



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.*

Future Challenges in Emergency Management

(Source: FEMA)

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recently released its report titled: "[Crisis Response and Disaster Resilience 2030](#)." This report includes an analysis of the future role of emergency and disaster management; strategic needs and gaps the emergency management community will have to address; and insights that provide high-level observations to inform and guide decision makers. It intends to provide emergency planners and managers with insights that can shape a wide range of critical decisions.

To enhance comprehension of future needs, the report presents the following findings from the [Strategic Foresight Initiative](#) (SFI): uncertainties that define and drive the future environment; strategic needs and gaps the community will have to address; a look into the emergency management community of 2030; and suggested next steps for emergency managers to prepare for the future.

Within the introduction to the document, the [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) corroborated that SFI products propose a starting point for dialogue and active consideration throughout the emergency management community. "The thoughts and ideas presented in the report do not encompass all of the nuances and situations we will meet in the future. Rather, they offer a foundation for developing a shared understanding of potential future challenges and how, working together, we may address these challenges."

Abandoned and Vacant Structures

(Sources: U.S. Fire Administration and FireRescue1)

The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) recognizes that the shrinking budgets of many Emergency Services Sector departments and agencies and severely restrained financial status of local communities has prompted more challenges for first responders. For example, home foreclosures are still increasing the number of abandoned properties, which have historically been dangerous environments for emergency personnel.

A 2010 [report](#) (PDF, 743 Kb) by the [U.S. Fire Administration](#) explained that abandoned and vacant structures are problematic because they are rarely maintained and often serve as venues for illicit activity or temporary shelters for homeless people. More recently, an [article](#) in [FireRescue1](#) emphasized that firefighters face enough dangers without needlessly risking their safety in city-owned vacant homes where "thieves might have cut holes in the floor to get to ductwork they could sell as scrap metal."

To tackle the problem, some fire departments conduct annual inspections of all known vacant buildings to check for hazards, have combustibles removed, ensure the structures are secured against illegal entry, and the address posted for responder awareness and tracking. Other departments are considering the categorization of buildings as abandoned and vacant, and arranging for them to be tagged with appropriate signage to deter responder entry unless rescue is necessary.

A free, downloadable training program that includes strategies, sample documents, lesson plans, and additional resources for vacant structures is available at [interFIREonline](#).

Geomagnetic Storms

(Sources: Discovery News and National Academy of Sciences)

As the Earth's magnetic field begins to calm after intense geomagnetic activity this week, scientists at the [Space Weather Prediction Center](#) announced that the planet experienced the largest solar radiation storm since 2003. However, according to an [article](#) in [Discovery News.com](#), the Earth can expect more intense solar storms over the coming months.

The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) learned from the [National Academy of Sciences](#) that solar storms happen when an eruption or explosion on the surface of the sun sends radiation or electrically charged particles toward Earth. A major storm can release enough energy to destroy electrical transformers around the globe leaving nations in the northern latitudes without power, water, heat, air conditioning, communications, transportation, etc. Minor storms are more common and can light up the Earth's northern skies and interfere with radio signals.

America's modern technological society is characterized by a complex interweave of dependencies and interdependencies among national, state, and local critical infrastructures. Because of a significant reliance on technology, critical sectors such as the Emergency Services Sector are vulnerable to a degradation of essential services caused by a major storm. Considering this possibility, the National Academy offers the following recommendations for stakeholders of critical infrastructures:

- Develop a consequence assessment tool to perform planning analysis and training, and to assist in the identification of critical personnel and equipment requirements.
- Establish a program to assess the vulnerability of evolving critical networks and electronics equipment to long-term power grid failure, and to develop a plan for survivability and continuity of operations.

See "[The Catastrophic Potential of Severe Space Weather](#)" and "[Geomagnetic Storm Watch Issued](#)" for more information.

Combating a Complex Threat

(Source: Congressional Research Service)

In late November 2011, the [Congressional Research Service](#) released its report, "[American Jihadist Terrorism: Combating a Complex Threat](#)" (PDF, 1.5 Mb), to describe homegrown violent jihadists and the plots and attacks that have occurred since September 11, 2001.

The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) observed that the report discusses the radicalization process and the forces driving violent extremist activity. It analyzes post-9/11 domestic jihadist terrorism and describes law enforcement and intelligence efforts to combat terrorism and the challenges associated with those efforts. The document also outlines actions ongoing "to build trust and partnership between community groups and government agencies, and the tensions that may occur between law enforcement and engagement activities."

According to the document's Executive Summary, specific plots and attacks are described throughout the report to support analytic findings. "A full description of each of the post-9/11 cases is provided in Appendix A of the report."

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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.