



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

**INFOGRAM 7-09**

**February 19, 2009**

***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).*

### Regionalization Revisited

Some American municipalities and emergency response departments have experienced minor or major weaknesses in their response systems and capabilities for various man-made and natural disasters. Having recognized their shortcomings, many of these communities and their emergency responders initiated corrective action by coordinating resources across local, county, and state lines. Those localities pursuing "regionalization" for disaster planning and execution have accepted that an all-hazards incident would likely overwhelm their existing assets.

The Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) ascertained that "regionalization" may be a superior approach for local, county, and state elected leaders and emergency managers to acquire scarce resources. Joining with other communities to develop regional plans and response packages of personnel and equipment significantly improves the interoperability of mission-essential assets and systems. Additionally, pre-existing agreements and written plans that specify roles, payment, incident command, etc., will enhance thorough collaboration and synchronization among the numerous responding organizations within the region.

In an interview for Federal Computer Week, the director of emergency management for Bridgeport, Connecticut, said that local officials devised new strategies to keep essential services in place. For example, "Bridgeport joined forces in 2007 with first responders and related agencies from 13 surrounding municipalities." "Because regional planning represents a more effective approach to homeland security," the Bridgeport emergency manager stated, "other communities in Connecticut are finding strength in numbers and joining with surrounding jurisdictions and commercial companies for homeland security projects."

According to "Case Studies of Success and Failure in Massachusetts," regionalization frequently provides cost savings and better service for participating municipalities. The case studies verify that an excellent joint plan of action will be regional in nature, but also include sections on each involved community. A reliable plan addresses the protection of citizens and critical infrastructures, and jurisdictional preparedness for myriad catastrophes. Equally as important, the studies indicate that a model regionalization plan will also provide for the resilience and continuity of essential services throughout the region.

The Federal Computer Week interview can be seen at <http://fcw.com/Articles/2009/02/09/Officials-team-up-on-security.aspx>. The "Case Studies of Success and Failure in Massachusetts" can be seen at <http://www.pioneerinstitute.org/pdf/wp43.pdf>.

### Community Continuity Planning

Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) research indicates that continuity planning, also called continuity of operations (COOP) planning, provides a roadmap to initiate the continuation of the vital functions of communities or organizations during and after a disaster. COOP planning specifically addresses the people, assets, and systems necessary for the recovery of mission-essential tasks on a short-term basis (e.g., after a power failure) or for the long term such as after geological, meteorological, biological, and chemical hazards, etc.

A county emergency manager recently wrote that unplanned emergencies continue to take their toll on American communities. However, “localities can limit the impact with continuity planning, which is an integrated process that includes government agencies from all levels, businesses of all sizes, industry, financial institutions, educational facilities, and medical centers to name a few.”

The Department of Emergency Management in Dane County, Wisconsin, offers a step-by-step tool for building a disaster-resistant business community. “Ready Your Business” delivers a 12-point program for successful business continuity planning that can be used by communities, small or large organizations, as well as any type of industry. The EMR-ISAC considers it particularly useful for the planner who may not have an in-depth knowledge of emergency management or COOP planning.

See “Ready Your Business: 12-Point Program for Success to Business Continuity Planning Guidebook” at <http://danedocs.countyofdane.com/webdocs/pdf/ems/RVB2009guidebook.pdf>. (79 pages, 938 KB) COOP Independent Study Courses of the Emergency Management Institute can be seen at <http://training.fema.gov/IS/searchIS.asp?keywords=COOP&Submit=Search>.

## Cross-Sector Cooperation

At least 30 people in Kentucky lost their lives and thousands had no power for days after the 27 January ice storm, reported to be “the worst natural disaster in the state’s history.” The storm also battered Arkansas and caused damage and misery in Missouri, Oklahoma, Indiana, and Ohio. In Kentucky and Arkansas, Emergency Services Sector (ESS) departments and agencies received indispensable response and recovery assistance from public health workers that enabled ESS continuity of operations. The Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) considers the assistance from public health a fine example of cross-sector cooperation during a catastrophe.

“Many people do not think of emergency preparedness and response when they think of public health,” said Kentucky (KY) Department for Public Health (DPH) Commissioner William Hacker, M.D., in a report at BigMedicine.ca. However, since 2001, developing strong relationships with emergency management and key partners, and boosting public health workers’ capabilities to help responders have been areas of intense focus and effort. These endeavors allowed public health at the state and local level to “step up to the plate and provide a wide range of assistance to the primary response agencies,” during and after the ice storm, Hacker stated.

The KY-DPH opened an in-house departmental emergency operations center (EOC) to liaise with state and local agencies, and sent representatives to the state EOC. Health officials arranged equipment loans, including generators for shelters and mobile response trailers, facilitated supplying fuel and other resources to health care facilities and shelters, and worked with the state’s pharmacy association to furnish prescriptions to shelter dwellers via local pharmacies. Health workers counseled emergency officials about food safety and other public health issues related to power outages, and gave medical advice about shelter health issues. At the community level, some local health departments opened shelters at their own locations.

The EMR-ISAC learned that in hard-hit Arkansas, public health workers provided shelters for utility workers, volunteers, and others helping with response, and coordinated requests for oxygen and generators from various hospitals by using Arkansas Wireless Information Network radios. The Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) sent environmental health specialists to inspect the food and water safety and sanitation of shelters. According to ADH Director Paul Halverson, “It is the relationships that have been established with these public and private sectors during other drills, exercises, and real events that have helped us all work efficiently as a team to serve the needs of Arkansans.” ADH had ongoing relationships with the state’s departments of emergency management and human services, and with hospitals and law enforcement agencies from across the state.

## National Exercise Simulation Center

Last month, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) officially opened the National Exercise Simulation Center (NESC), a congressionally mandated training and exercise center located at FEMA headquarters. The Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) was advised that when the center, a key element within the Federal Coordination Center, expands beyond its initial capability, it will offer a mix of live, virtual, and constructive simulations to support improved national preparedness.

Emergency Services Sector (ESS) personnel will be among stakeholders to use center services that include:

- 24-hour support for national-level, federal, state, and local exercises throughout the U.S.
- A forum for interagency planners to test plans using realistic incident scenarios.
- Real-time mock-media capabilities such as the Virtual News Network.
- Links to other centers that provide specialty modeling, simulation, and data services.
- Practical training opportunities to learn exercise design, conduct, and management through individual mentorship.

For additional information about the NESC, see <http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=47280> and <http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=47279>.

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### **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: <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/subjects/emr-isac](http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/subjects/emr-isac), Mail: J-247, 16825 South Seton Avenue, Emmitsburg, MD 21727