



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

INFOGRAM 9-09

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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@dhs.gov.*

Update on Suspicious Activity

According to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), reporting the “gathering, processing, reporting, analyzing, and sharing of suspicious activity is critical to preventing crimes, including those associated with domestic and international terrorism.” Accumulating incident and suspicious activity reports in order to analyze and share information is a key function of DHS, and is the best line of defense in these uncertain times. During the past four years, this DHS message has been repeated by the Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) for the benefit of Emergency Services Sector (ESS) departments and agencies.

The EMR-ISAC continues to receive occasional requests for information regarding the identification of suspicious activity. More recently, DHS and the Colorado Information Analysis Center Terrorism Liaison Officer Handbook offered the following indicators of individuals known to have engaged in terrorist attacks or were arrested on terrorism charges. This list is not complete, but can help explain suspicious activity:

- Taking notes, measurements, or drawings of locations.
- Photographing sensitive sites from vehicles.
- Driving away when being approached by an official such as a police officer.
- Returning to the same location to photograph the same site.
- Engaging sector personnel in questions focused on sensitive subjects.
- Providing weak cover stories that fall apart under scrutiny.
- Loitering near or in a facility for extended periods.
- Wearing clothing (e.g., contractors and visitors) unsuitable for the season.

More information regarding suspicious activity and awareness can be seen at <http://www.pa-aware.org/protecting-your-community/suspicious-activity.asp>.

Suspicious activity should be reported to the local law enforcement agency, but also to the NICC: voice: 202-282-9201; Fax: 703-487-3570; E-mail: nicc@dhs.gov.

2010 Decennial Census Canvassing

The U.S. Census Bureau will conduct address canvassing from 6 April to 31 July 2009, to ensure the address list for the 2010 Decennial Census is as accurate as possible. Address canvassing involves Census Bureau personnel canvassing neighborhoods to update the Bureau’s address list and maps using hand-held computers. This operation will occur in all areas of the country, except for portions of Maine and Alaska.

The Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) learned that approximately 140,000 census employees will saturate communities across the United States during this massive operation. Therefore, local law enforcement and 911 centers may be contacted by residents with concerns about strangers in their neighborhoods who are perceived as threats. Considering this possibility, it would be prudent for local police and sheriff's departments to familiarize with the valid identification cards issued by the Bureau for employee identification.

The EMR-ISAC substantiated that early this month, the Office of Security at the U.S. Department of Commerce distributed posters to area law enforcement agencies to assist with recognizing official identification cards carried by permanent and temporary census personnel. However, law enforcement organizations should phone their Regional Census Center with questions about the census effort or an employee's identity. Information about the posters, regional centers, etc., can be obtained by calling the Decennial Security Branch at 301-763-9393. Some additional information is available at the 2010 Census web site at <http://2010.census.gov/2010census>.

PSAP Staffing Trends and Issues

The Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) International released a follow-up report to its Project RETAINS (Responsive Efforts to Assure Integral Needs in Staffing), which found the national telecommunicator turnover rate is 19 percent, a 3 percent increase since the initial study, conducted in 2005. The report also examined issues and trends that could further support Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), an integral component of the Emergency Services Sector (ESS).

The Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) examined the APCO's Next Generation Project RETAINS study regarding communications centers' retention rates, employees' organizational commitment, and employees' psychological distress. A number of patterns emerged despite differences between centers in terms of size, location, and type. The majority (83 percent) of centers experienced an increase in the number of dispatched calls in the last three years. Work schedule flexibility and the hourly pay of starting employees significantly affected rates of retention. Also, PSAP employees seek greater support, recognition, and appreciation, whether from their supervisors and center directors or from the public at large.

"Too often it takes catastrophic events to shed light on the urgent contributions public safety communications work makes to our nation's well being," said APCO International President Chris Fischer. "During more routine moments, public safety professionals labor well out of the public eye and, often, with limited resources and insufficient support."

The EMR-ISAC noted among the additional trends and findings in the study's summary report that small and medium size agencies appear to be vulnerable to low retention rates, and meeting authorized staffing levels is substantially more challenging for medium and large centers. The summary report can be seen at http://www.apcointl.com/new/commcenter911/retains_at_a_glance.php. For more information on Project RETAINS, visit <http://www.apcointl.com/new/commcenter911/retains.php>.

Wildland Fire Skills

The U.S. Fire Administration's (USFA) National Preparedness Network (PREPnet) offers "Crosswalk: Bridging the Skills Gap," a webcast that explains the requirements, availability, and distribution of newly packaged wildland skills training for structural firefighters. As a seasonal surge in wildland fires begins, and increasing numbers of structural firefighters are challenged to assume expanding wildland responsibilities, upgrading skill sets can increase survivability among Emergency Services Sector (ESS) members. The Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) acknowledges that when structural firefighters receive wildland training, local departments can protect their communities more effectively, and work cooperatively with mutual aid partners as well as with state and federal wildland firefighters.

Safe and successful initial response to wildland fires requires basic training in wildland fire behavior, suppression methods, tools, safety, and communications. Crosswalk was developed by analyzing and comparing National Fire Protection Association structural firefighting standards with National Wildfire Coordinating Group wildland firefighting Position Task Books. The resulting Crosswalk identifies wildland skills and knowledge that qualified and experienced firefighters would not already have acquired through their structural firefighting training.

By incorporating a structural firefighter's existing fire suppression knowledge and skills, Crosswalk reduces required classroom hours, minimizes curriculum redundancies, and makes efficient use of limited training hours. Currently the Crosswalk is limited to Wildland Firefighter 2, Wildland Firefighter 1, Engine Boss, and Strike Team Leader (Engines).

The EMR-ISAC verified the following as new Gap courses:

- G-130, Wildland Training (FFT2) for Structural Firefighters
- G-131, Wildland Training (FFT1) for Structural Firefighters
- G-231, Wildland Training (ENGB) for Structural Firefighters
- G-330, Wildland Training (STEN) for Structural Firefighters

The courses are in a modular format available on CD-ROM. To view the webcast, and link to the courses, visit http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/fireservice/subjects/wildfire/gap_courses.shtm. For additional information, see the Frequently Asked Questions at http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/fireservice/subjects/wildfire/crosswalk_faqs.shtm.

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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
- 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, fax: 301-447- 1034, Web: www.usfa.dhs.gov/subjects/emr-isac, Mail: J-247, 16825 South Seton Avenue, Emmitsburg, MD 21727