



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

INFOGRAM 12-10

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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.

Emergency Planning Attributes

In an [article](#) posted online by Homeland 1 News, Jeff Rubin discussed the five key qualities of good emergency planning. While acknowledging the coordinated actions at the I-35W bridge collapse (August 2007) in Minneapolis and the effective response to Hurricane Gustav (September 2008) in Louisiana, the author reminded “there is no such thing as a perfect plan.” He confirmed, however, that these plans as well as many prepared for the H1N1 pandemic did what they were supposed to do: “They kept decision-makers from having to make everything up as they went along, as well as from having to make all of the difficult decisions under crisis conditions.”

After reviewing Mr. Rubin’s attributes that give value to emergency plans, the [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) summarized each key quality as follows:

- **Scope:** Plainly define whether the plan stops at coordination or is focused on operations.
- **Realism:** Describe relevant capabilities that actually exist and identify gaps.
- **Flexibility:** Don’t try to list every capability or possible scenario, but design the plan to provide a flexible, scalable response organization, identifying thresholds, and mechanisms for activating or escalating the response.
- **Delineation:** Clearly identify roles and responsibilities within the organization before, during, and after major emergencies and disasters, including any special authorities requiring an internal or external declaration of emergency.
- **Maintenance:** Keep the plan current and relevant, which means testing and updating it based on exercise and actual incident results.

The EMR-ISAC noted that the author ends his article with a quote from the former Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Director James Lee Witt: “In a crisis, you do what you have to do, but it’s better to do what you planned to do.”

For detailed information about other planning principles, see the March 2009 FEMA Comprehensive Preparedness Guide 101, [Developing and Maintaining State, Territorial, Tribal, and Local Government Emergency Plans](#) (PDF, 4.5 MB).

Situational Awareness Perspectives

According to one of [various definitions](#) (PDF, 56 KB), situational awareness is genuinely heightened consciousness or cognizance of what is currently developing or occurring around you. [Stratfor Global Intelligence](#) defines situational awareness as the process of being observant of one’s surroundings and identifying potential threats and dangerous situations to avoid. The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) observed that regardless of the source, most agree situational awareness failures jeopardize personnel, physical assets, and communication/cyber systems (i.e., critical infrastructures).

Over a period of several years, the EMR-ISAC learned that acquiring situational awareness is a daunting challenge for Emergency Services Sector personnel. Duty performance, unfamiliar settings, varied resources, confusing circumstances, time pressures, multiple incidents, the risks of injury or death, etc., are all potential barriers to quality situational awareness.

In his [article](#) at TAK-Response.com, Todd McNeal wrote that situational awareness requires constant maintenance, particularly at the scene of an incident. “The goal for an individual is to accurately and consistently update one’s situational awareness to reflect the ever changing incident around you.” The author further explained that firefighters are task driven “with a proclivity for mission focus and producing results,” which are vital attributes for successful operations that could also be equally detrimental.

To effectively balance achievement-oriented behavior with the possibility of losing situational awareness, Todd McNeal recommended practicing and applying the skill of accurate and frequent updating of your current circumstances when involved in any incident. “The time and effort you spend doing this will never be time wasted, and will result in a safer and more effective emergency responder.”

Copper Theft Prevalence

Skyrocketing prices for copper have made a minor nuisance of past years into a major and costly problem today, according to [“coppertheft.info.”](#) “Pipes, wires, cables, gutters, and flashing are being torn from walls and buildings.” Numerous law enforcement sources also reported that both individuals and organized criminals have targeted telecommunications, electrical substations, and railway lines, as well as wiring and piping in homes and businesses in order to steal copper sections.

The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) verified that copper thefts pose electrical hazards to both the workers of the affected infrastructure and to the perpetrators themselves. Additionally, these thefts create dangers for Emergency Services Sector personnel in the following ways:

- Exposed live electrical wires can compromise safety and operational effectiveness.
- Large-scale ramifications of losing communications and electrical power networks.
- Hazards associated with damaged rail switches and other critical components.

Because of the copper theft prevalence throughout the United States, the EMR-ISAC recognizes that first responders must proceed cautiously at any incident scene where the pilfering of this metal is suspected, alleged, or verified.

More information regarding how copper thefts threaten U.S. critical infrastructures can be seen in an [FBI report](#) on the subject.

CHEMTREC Elaboration

The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) received the following additional information from the [Chemical Transportation Emergency Center](#) (CHEMTREC) for the comprehension and use by Emergency Services Sector departments and agencies.

[CSX](#) Transportation has been providing CHEMTREC® (the Chemical Transportation Emergency Center) access to the CSX Network Operations Workstation (“NOW”) since 2005. This confidential and proprietary information provides CHEMTREC staff, via a secure internet-based system, with the ability to coordinate and communicate any necessary information to emergency responders and other appropriate governmental emergency response or homeland security agencies in the event of a rail incident or accident involving CSXT trains or hazardous material rail cars being transported by CSXT using this highly secure system.

In the case of chemical emergency (spill, leak, fire, exposure, or accident) CHEMTREC's 24-hour HazMat Communications Center can be contacted at 1-800-424-9300 or +1-703-527-3887 (outside the U.S.). For all other non-emergency inquiries, please visit www.chemtrec.com or contact CHEMTREC Customer Service at 1-800-262-8200 or +1-703-741-5500 (outside the U.S.).

CHEMTREC® was established in 1971 by the chemical industry as a public service hotline for emergency responders, such as firefighters and law enforcement, to obtain information and assistance for emergency incidents involving chemicals and hazardous materials.

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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: 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/emr-isac, Mail: E-108, 16825 South Seton Avenue, Emmitsburg, MD 21727