



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

INFOGRAM 14-08

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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.*

COOP Planning for a Pandemic

Specialists from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) assert that the possibility of an influenza pandemic in the United States is not remote. The Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) recognizes that a pandemic is abundantly challenging because of its uncertainty. No doubt, it can potentially overwhelm any Emergency Services Sector (ESS) department or agency.

If a pandemic were to afflict a region of the nation, how would ESS organizations continue to operate in the affected area when telecommuting is not an option for first responders? Would ESS entities be able to complete mission essential tasks when numerous employees cannot physically report to work? Finally, what are the continuity of operations (COOP) planning considerations to ensure operational sustainability during a pandemic?

The EMR-ISAC agrees with the recommendation that the most urgent and important action of any ESS department or agency should be to guarantee the health, survival, and performance of its own personnel. Without healthy and available first responders, police vehicles, fire apparatus, and ambulances just sit in their stations unused. This is why the highest COOP priority of any emergency response organization must be vaccinations and any other prophylaxis that provide essential force protection. The following are other suggestions for effective pandemic COOP planning abridged from multiple sources:

- Prepare to operate as a single organization without any assistance.
- Integrate organizational planning with the community-wide emergency management effort.
- Conclude arrangements for regional mutual aid to supplement personnel and equipment.
- Coordinate planning elements with other local first responder departments or agencies.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities of the response triangle: police, fire, and EMS.
- Stockpile survival items or ensure their availability for when normal resupply is interrupted.
- Arrange for temporary funding to make purchases when alternative vendors must be used.
- Develop a personnel augmentation plan that may include volunteers from among recent retirees.
- Determine appropriate communications with media, which seek to probe and question.
- Delineate a chain of succession of authority to ensure command integrity at all times.

For more planning information, see the Pandemic Influenza Emergency Response Manual developed for King County, Washington: http://www.metrokc.gov/prepare/docs/Eric_Corner/HRDManual.pdf.

Indoor Firing Range Hazards

More than a million Emergency Services Sector (ESS) personnel who train regularly at indoor firing ranges are exposed to dangerous noise levels and potentially hazardous lead concentrations. The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) posted an alert this week that lists recommended practices to mitigate these risks to responders.

The alert examines documented cases of hearing loss and elevated blood lead levels among indoor range users, particularly instructors and employees. In addition to inhalation exposure, lead from contaminated surfaces and firearms discharges can be transferred to skin and contribute to ingestion via contaminated hands. It recommends that users and employees educate themselves about safety issues and health hazards, follow safety practices, participate in all safety training and health monitoring offered, adhere to personal protection guidelines (e.g., double hearing protection, changing clothing before leaving the range, and washing the clothing separately from that of family members), and know and report symptoms of lead poisoning and exposure to high levels of noise.

Important employer practices include establishing effective indoor engineering and administrative controls, providing appropriate personal protection equipment, and health and medical monitoring such as audiometric evaluations, controlling workers' schedules to limit exposure time, and ensuring that all range users and workers receive hazard information and training to prevent exposure to noise, lead, and other contaminants. The draft of "Preventing Occupational Exposure to Lead and Noise at Indoor Firing Ranges" (32 pp., 2.43 MB) can be viewed and downloaded at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/review/public/128/pdfs/DRAFTAlertFiringRanges.pdf>.

The Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) reviewed the NIOSH Alert at Occupational Health and Safety Online. The web site is a repository of personnel protection information on more than 20 topics from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and other federal agencies. Visitors to the site can subscribe to three free electronic newsletters and special topic newsletters. Information about upcoming webinars and ESS-related events (e.g., current Union Pacific and Dow Chemical Safety Train Tour Schedule) is also posted at <http://www.ohsonline.com/index.aspx>.

Critical Incident Field Guides

The wide range of incidents to which the Emergency Services Sector (ESS) responds is replete with many known and anticipated hazards, yet less frequent and emerging types of incidents can present unanticipated dangers to personnel, equipment, and communication/cyber systems, the most critical infrastructure assets. The Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) found that information in the 2008 First Responder Critical Incident Field Guides can alert responders to potential situational hazards during the initial minutes of response, and for planning, training, and exercises.

The field guides, which are reviewed and updated regularly, are presented in a two-sided format to be printed off, laminated and placed in vehicles or go-bags. While not intended to supersede local guidelines and procedures, the cards list situational indicators and identifiers, and group guidelines by response phases. Available now are guides for 11 incident types, including mass shootings, civil unrest, suicide bombers, clandestine drug labs, indoor marijuana grow houses, suspicious powder awareness, and operations security.

Drafted by August Vernon of the Forsyth (NC) County Office of Emergency Management, the guides are downloadable pdf documents that are available at the web site of the Wisconsin Chapter of the International Association of Arson Investigators (<http://www.wiaai.com/news.htm>).

Online Operations Security Course for ESS

Sensitive Emergency Services Sector (ESS) information generally consists of data about the personnel, equipment, structures, operations, plans, and training of emergency departments and agencies (e.g., fire, EMS, police, emergency management, and 9-1-1 call centers). Information of this type is particularly susceptible to adversary intelligence collection because it can be used to weaken or destroy the survivability, continuity, and response-ability of ESS organizations.

The information that domestic and transnational terrorists need to disrupt or incapacitate emergency operations is exactly the information that must be protected through the practice of Operations Security (OPSEC). To augment responders' awareness and knowledge of OPSEC, the Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center reviewed an online course on the topic offered by the Homeland Security Institute (HSI). The Institute is a Washington state training resource site that offers no-cost, Department of Homeland Security-approved courses, many of which are online independent study.

The OPSEC course defines operations security and explains its value to ESS agencies. Major adversarial groups, such as extremist groups and cults, and international terrorist groups, are listed along with methods they use to collect intelligence against responder organizations. OPSEC is a risk management tool that has a primary goal of eliminating loss of life and injuries to emergency responders. The course guides participants through the five steps of the OPSEC process: identifying critical information; conducting a threat analysis; performing a vulnerability analysis; assessing risks; and, applying countermeasures. Public safety agencies can apply the process immediately in planning, training, and day-to-day operations.

“Operations Security and Safety” and nine additional independent study courses can be accessed at <http://www.hsi.wa.gov>.

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The FBI regional phone numbers can be found online at www.fbi.gov/contact/fo/fo.htm.

For information affecting the private sector and critical infrastructure, contact the National Infrastructure Coordinating Center (NICC), a sub-element of the NOC. The NICC can be reached by telephone at 202-282-9201 or by e-mail at NICC@dhs.gov.

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