



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

**INFOGRAM 27-09**

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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](mailto:emr-isac@dhs.gov).*

### Laboratory Response Network

From national news sources during the last few years, the [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center \(EMR-ISAC\)](#) observed that first responders frequently have been placed in the difficult position of trying to identify various unknown powders or substances. When researching further into this matter, the EMR-ISAC learned these situations are complicated occasionally by the numerous portable devices that promise to identify the unknowns.

The EMR-ISAC ascertained that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) established the [Laboratory Response Network \(LRN\)](#) in 1999 to manage a network of labs that are fully equipped to respond rapidly to acts of biological and chemical terrorism, emerging infectious diseases, and other public health emergencies. This national network of about 150 labs can provide guidance needed on the operation of the many different field instruments used to identify powders or substances.

According to the CDC, emergency responders play a valuable role in coping with a biological or chemical incident. "They will, more often than not, be the first ones on the scene and will have to make a number of quick decisions about what they find." Therefore, a primary purpose of the LRN is to help response personnel make those decisions from a scientific point of view so that individuals at or close to the incident scene are safe. "The ultimate goal of the network is the protection of the first responders themselves as well as anyone else coming into contact with suspicious substances."

Additional information about the LRN can be obtained by contacting your [state public health laboratory](#) or the [Association of Public Health Laboratories](#) at [info@aphl.org](mailto:info@aphl.org) or by calling 240-485-2745.

### Severe Space Weather

The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center \(EMR-ISAC\)](#) reviewed a report ("[Severe Space Weather Events—Understanding Societal and Economic Impacts](#)") released earlier this year by the U.S. National Academy of Sciences (NAS). This report examined the effects of the extremes of space weather, which are major disturbances of the upper atmosphere (i.e., magnetosphere) and of the near-earth space environment that are driven by magnetic activity of the sun.

In their document, the NAS explained that the adverse effects of severe space weather on modern technology (e.g., power grid outages, high-frequency communication blackouts, spacecraft anomalies) are fairly well known, and the physical processes underlying space weather are generally understood. The authors caution, however, that the potential economic and societal impacts of the disruption of critical technological systems caused by extreme space weather are not well known and understood.

The report acknowledged that "our modern technological society is characterized by a complex interweave of dependencies and interdependencies among its critical infrastructures." Therefore, because of a significant reliance on technology, "western civilizations have unwittingly exposed themselves to an extraordinary danger: plasma balls spewed from the surface of the sun that could wipe out our power grids with catastrophic consequences." If the "cataclysmic storm" occurs, systems supporting life that depend on electricity would cease to operate for an indefinite period of time.

From this document, the EMR-ISAC learned that the NAS intended to enhance comprehension of the matter and to spark conversation about what should be done to protect against and recover from the probable degradation of critical infrastructures by a geomagnetic storm. The report noted, "It is terribly difficult to inspire people to prepare for a potential crisis that has never happened before and may not happen for decades to come." However, the following suggestions for long-term power grid failure—an outcome of a severe space weather event—are provided for the consideration of Emergency Services Sector departments and agencies:

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

### Homeland Security Television Returns—HSTV

The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center \(EMR-ISAC\)](#) confirmed that the Homeland Security Television is back online. The [Homeland Security Television Channel \(HSTV\)](#) is the world's first online, on-demand television dedicated to homeland security and global development. It features broadcast-quality video programs that focus on all aspects of homeland security and the role of global development in fighting terrorism.

Viewers can watch a select group of programs that run 24/7 with the daily group of shows looping every 24 hours for free. (There is a minor monthly fee to access all the titles available in their archives.) HSTV in coming months will add new titles and programs, including a training capability featuring some of the nation's leading authorities in homeland security, counterterrorism, information sharing, and disaster response. Titles that might interest first responders include "IEDs in America, Standing Strong, The Resilient Community, and "Ridge on Risk Management."

According to president of HSTV, it is also dedicated to facilitating rapid awareness of new technologies and services, and assisting in the transfer of those technology solutions to the government and critical infrastructure marketplace. The online and on-demand television program contains an interactive component that features a blogging and social networking platform to enable community discussions of security challenges on a global scale.

### Web Page for First Responders

The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center \(EMR-ISAC\)](#) found that Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has a web page dedicated to first responders. As seen at this web page for [First Responders](#), DHS is committed to helping responders nationwide by ensuring that emergency response professionals are prepared, equipped, and trained for any situation, and by bringing together information and resources to prepare for and respond to a terrorist attack, natural disaster or other large-scale emergency.

Updated on an as-needed basis, the information on the web page includes resources from across DHS, as well as quick links developed to address some of the most frequently asked questions by emergency personnel. The web page also has information regarding standards and guidelines, grants, training and exercises, and local resources. Some of the quick links include [National Exercise Schedule \(NEXS\)](#), [Lessons Learned Information Sharing \(LLIS.gov\)](#), and [Target Capabilities List \(TCL\)](#).

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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,  
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