



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

**INFOGRAM 2-10**

**January 14, 2010**

***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).*

### Unexpected Risks to Response Operations

Late last month, one firefighter was killed and six others were injured when responding to a dumpster fire at a manufacturing plant. The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) ascertained from [Fox News Online](#) that something in the dumpster exploded while the firefighters were working to extinguish the fire.

According to numerous reports collected by the EMR-ISAC during the past calendar year, this tragic incident is another of many where seemingly routine operations by Emergency Services Sector (ESS) personnel resulted in the injury or death of first responders. These regrettable events lend credence to the remarks of several ESS chief officers: "There is no such thing as a routine response operation."

When conferring with fire and EMS specialists of the U.S. Fire Administration, the EMR-ISAC was told that no call should be considered routine. "Always expect the unexpected." Therefore, it became quite clear that emergency responders should always be prepared for many unknown hazards regardless of the nature or type of operation. In particular, the program specialists emphasized that because there are risks during any response, firefighters should wear full personal protective equipment and always deploy attack and back-up lines to handle a worst case scenario. "Get back to the basics with regular, meaningful, and documented training."

### Earthquakes

Recognizing that the public relies heavily on first responders during natural disasters, the [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) examined resources available about earthquakes. For example, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) provides [maps and statistics](#) about the probability of earthquakes for each state. Accepting that preparedness begins with an understanding of the potential for a disaster, Emergency Services Sector (ESS) organizations susceptible to an earthquake can use USGS information to assess whether adjustments to their emergency plans and operations are appropriate or necessary.

Numerous research studies consulted by the EMR-ISAC indicate the potential for disruption by earthquakes to local critical infrastructure and ESS operations. One study considered is the "[Impact of Earthquakes on the Central USA](#)" (PDF, 74 Mb), which discusses ten scenarios designed to provide scientifically credible, worst case damage, and loss estimates for the purposes of emergency planning, response, and recovery.

In a previous INFOGRAM, the EMR-ISAC described the U.S Fire Administration "[Special Report: Preparedness for Extreme Weather Emergencies and Natural Disasters](#)." (PDF, 367 Kb) The report states the consequences of earthquakes can include the following:

- Damage to buildings, including those of ESS departments and agencies.
- Damage to roadways and other infrastructure, including power plants, water, and rail systems.
- Fires from ruptured gas lines, downed wires, and collapsed structures.
- Hazardous materials release.
- Mass casualties and fatalities.
- Need for search and rescue operations.

The EMR-ISAC noted that "[Ready to Shake? Lessons from earthquake exercises can be applied to many regions](#)" (PDF, 505 Kb) made recommendations for critical infrastructures based on the 2008 Great Southern California "Shake Out" exercise. To ensure that public needs are met, this document suggests ESS organizations should "review mutual-aid systems and consider strategies that will expedite the response of resources to help fight fires, locate and rescue trapped victims, treat and remove the injured to definitive medical treatment, confine hazardous materials release, and perform other critical post-quake functions."

## Identity Theft Protection

According to the [Federal Trade Commission](#) (FTC), identity theft occurs when someone uses your personally identifying information (e.g., name, social security number, and credit card number) without your permission to commit fraud or other crimes. The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) verified that identity thieves use low-tech methods as well as sophisticated Internet scams to acquire an individual's sensitive personal data.

The insidious frequency of identity theft in the United States necessitates that all citizens closely protect any documents, banking cards, or sensitive numbers that can be used by thieves for their personal gain. The following are the minimum basic guidelines recommended by [Help Net Security](#) to reduce the risk of identity theft:

- Examine your credit reports periodically for unauthorized or criminal activity.
- Review financial statements and transactions regularly for illicit or unknown charges.
- Install security software on business and home computers and keep it current.
- Use an updated web browser to capitalize on its safety features.
- Exercise caution before opening attachments and links in e-mail and instant messages.
- Secure sensitive online data with file encryption software.
- Shred documents containing personal or financial information before discarding.
- Avoid sharing personally identifiable information unless absolutely necessary.
- Remain alert to the preponderance of older and newer scams to counter fraud.

The EMR-ISAC confirmed that identity theft often leads to adverse consequences beyond financial loss. Confronted with inquiries about their reputation, wrongdoings, and no credit rating, many victims displayed tremendous frustration and embarrassment accompanied by diminished morale, emotional distress, clinical depression, and even loss of work.

While steps have been taken at the federal, state, and local level to prevent identity theft, numerous vulnerabilities remain for public and private citizens. Recognizing that first responders can be victimized by this crime, Emergency Services Sector department and agencies can consult the [FTC](#) for suggestions to promote awareness and prevention.

## "Fire in the United States"

The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) reviewed the fifteenth edition of "[Fire in the United States](#)" (PDF, 4.96 Mb) published by the United States Fire Administration (USFA). This edition covers the 5-year period from 2003 to 2007, with a primary focus on 2007.

The purpose of the report is to aid the fire service, local leadership, and serve as a guide for fire data analysts at state and local levels of government. According to the [USFA press release](#), U.S. Fire Administrator Kelvin Cochran explained that this edition will “emphasize the areas which still need improvement so we may continue to reduce the nation’s fire losses, especially deaths and injuries.”

The report focuses on the national fire problem and provides an overview of fires and losses in building, vehicles, and other mobile properties, and other properties. The report also examines fire and fire loss trends, fire casualties by population characteristics, and fire cause profiles by property type.

The EMR-ISAC confirmed that the primary source of data is the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS), along with data from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), State Fire Marshals’ offices, U.S. Census Bureau, and the Consumer Price Index.

## Training Opportunity

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), in conjunction with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and numerous agencies throughout the National Capital Region, will conduct two one-day sessions of the Bomb Making Materials Awareness Program (BMAP). This is a national program sponsored by the DHS Office for Bombing Prevention that provides audience-appropriate awareness about suspicious behavior, hazardous materials, precursor chemicals, and other bomb-making related information.

The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) learned that target personnel for this free course are law enforcement and public safety officials who have community outreach and liaison responsibilities. The one-day session is particularly relevant to officers having contact with point of sale and other retail establishments that sell materials and precursors for homemade explosives and other hazardous materials.

The training date for the first iteration will be Tuesday, 16 February. The second course offering will be Thursday, 18 February. The hours of instruction are from 0800 to 1600 for both sessions, and the location of the program is at the Metropolitan Police Department Training Center, 4660 Blue Plains Drive, Washington, DC 20037. The dress will be the prescribed uniform of the day for the attendee’s organization. Space is limited to 55 attendees per offering on a first-come first-serve basis.

To register for a session, interested personnel should contact Jeremiah Hockman at [Jeremiah.Hockman@vdot.virginia.gov](mailto:Jeremiah.Hockman@vdot.virginia.gov) or at 804-692-1629. E-mails should contain first and last name, department or agency, e-mail address, and telephone number. An alternative POC to answer any questions is Matthew Wombacher at [matthew.wombacher@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:matthew.wombacher@hq.dhs.gov) or at 703-235-5227.

## Technology Alert

While the [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) has not reviewed each application, the EMR-ISAC recognizes that emergency responders may find helpful tips at the “[26 iPhone/iTouch Apps for EMS Personnel](#)” blog or the “[EMS iPhone Apps](#)” blog. These blogs include information on free and non-free applications for cell phones.

## **DISCLAIMER OF ENDORSEMENT**

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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: [www.fbi.gov/contact/fo/fo.htm](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/emr-isac](http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/emr-isac), Mail: E-108, 16825 South Seton Avenue, Emmitsburg, MD 21727