



## Highlights:

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ESS Webinar: Measuring Readiness

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For information regarding the EMR-ISAC visit [www.usfa.dhs.gov/emr-isac](http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/emr-isac) or contact the EMR-ISAC office at: (301) 447-1325 and/or [emr-isac@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:emr-isac@fema.dhs.gov).

# The InfoGram

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## Chimney Fires Spike as Winter Arrives

The Chimney Safety Institute of America (CSIA) reported [23,100 chimney or fireplace fires in 2013](#) and ten related fatalities. These fires caused \$109 million in property loss. These fires crop up at the beginning of heating season every year, but are almost always preventable with the proper maintenance and cleaning.

Chimney fires can burn explosively and with much noise, but they can also be slow-burning and quiet. Fire departments should be prepared for these calls and understand the different types of chimney fires, know the make-up of chimneys, flues, and all the connections, and be able to determine the best way to attack them.

Three FireRescue1 articles on chimney fires list [common indicators](#), [tactical approaches](#), and [extinguishing and prevention aids](#). The CSIA also has [homeowner resources](#) on this topic and others that could be used in a social media public education campaign. For even more information, see the U.S. Fire Administration's page on [Heating Fire Safety](#).

(Source: [CSIA](#))

## When a Disaster Exceeds Expectations

The [wildfire that hit Tennessee this week](#) is being called the “perfect storm” by many media outlets. Hurricane force winds in excess of 80 mph pushed the fire into heavily-visited tourist areas, forcing the evacuation of over 14,000 people in a life-or-death scramble. The death toll of seven could have been much higher, as could the [number of structures lost](#). This part of Tennessee hadn't seen a fire like this in 100 years.

How can governments, agencies, jurisdictions, and communities prepare for a disaster that is far beyond anything they imagined? One step is to update the risk assessment for your area. If you aren't sure what historical disasters have hit your area, it's a good idea to hit the books and find out just exactly what your region has experienced and what you may have missed in your current plans.

Working with both residents and businesses to make a more resilient community is also important. One available tool is the “[Beyond the Basics: Best Practices in Local Mitigation Planning](#)” website, which is a free online step-by-step guide based on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's [2013 Local Mitigation Planning Handbook](#). The site provides a variety of worksheets, planning guides, samples (surveys, news releases, etc.), and best practices models of nearly 30 county and local hazard mitigation plans from six different states.

*The InfoGram is distributed weekly to provide members of the Emergency Services Sector with information concerning the protection of their critical infrastructures.*

Another key is to establish relationships between government levels, agencies, non-governmental organizations, and major communications outlets well before they are needed in a disaster. This is a crucial step to ensure work is not duplicated, training and exercises are relevant and comprehensive, and communications are effective both within and between the responding agencies as well as between officials and the public.

(Source: [Beyond the Basics](#))

## New Preparedness Rule for Healthcare Providers

A new rule finalized by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is effective as of November 15<sup>th</sup>, [requiring Medicare and Medicaid participating providers and suppliers to meet the following emergency preparedness best practice standards:](#)

- Develop an emergency plan using an all-hazards approach based on a risk assessment of disasters specific to the location of the provider;
- Develop and implement policies and procedures based on the plan and risk assessment;
- Develop and maintain a communication plan that complies with both Federal and State law;
- Develop and maintain training and testing programs, including initial and annual trainings, and conduct drills and exercises or participate in an actual incident that tests the plan.

This final rule was established after careful review of stakeholder comments, and is intended to increase patient safety during emergencies and establish a more coordinated response to natural and man-made disasters.

[These regulations are effective 60 days after publication in the Federal Register.](#)

Health care providers and suppliers affected by this rule must comply and implement all regulations one year after the effective date.

(Source: [Federal Register](#))

## ESS Webinar: Measuring Readiness

The United States has invested billions of dollars toward improving readiness since the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks; has it made a difference? So many things are still handled with paper forms, from first responder credentialing to equipment inventories and maintenance. Often, these forms and associated paperwork disappear into filing cabinets never to be seen again or, worse, the “circular” file.

It’s possible through paperwork digitization we can keep better records, access them easily when necessary, and share information more easily with partners and officials when time is short.

Join the Emergency Services Sector – Resilience Development Webinar Series on Thursday, December 8th from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. Eastern for “Preparedness Can Be Measured,” which will describe the benefits of a digitized inspection and credentialing system. Connection details:

- To join: <https://share.dhs.gov/essrdwsdec2016/>
- Conference Number: 855-852-7677
- Participant Code: 999963986509

(Source: [ESS](#))

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