



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

**INFOGRAM 50-10**

**December 23, 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).*

### Suspicious Holiday Cards, Letters, and Packages

(Sources: FEMA and DHS)

During this holiday season, some Emergency Service Sector (ESS) departments and agencies may receive cards, letters, and packages recognizing the service and sacrifices of local emergency responders. Unfortunately, the possibility exists that the greetings or gifts could contain explosives, chemicals, or biological agents. Although there is no known threat against ESS organizations, the [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center \(EMR-ISAC\)](#) shares the following [typical characteristics](#) of mail and packages that should trigger suspicion:

- Sent by an unexpected or an unknown person or source.
- Contain no return address or an address that cannot be verified as legitimate.
- Have protruding wires or aluminum foil, strange odors or stains.
- Show a city or state in the postmark that does not match the return address.
- Are of unusual weight given their size, or are lopsided or oddly shaped.
- Marked with threatening language.
- Labeled in an inappropriate or unusual manner.
- Include excessive postage or packaging material, such as masking tape and string.
- Contain misspellings of common words.
- Addressed to someone no longer with the organization or used other outdated information.
- Titled incorrectly or without a name.
- Are not addressed to a specific person.
- Have hand-written or poorly typed addresses.

See the [“Best Practices for Safe Mail Handling”](#) (PDF, 831 KB) for additional information to assist security managers in implementing protected mail handling at ESS facilities.

### Fire Protection and Safety Grants

(Sources: Domestic Preparedness.com and FEMA)

The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) received notification that the Assistance to Firefighters Grants Program sponsored the preparation of the Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) Grants [“Get Ready Guide”](#) (PDF, 1.5 MB) to offer assistance in preparing applications for the approaching grants application period.

According to [DomesticPreparedness.com](#), the guide provides tips on the most heavily weighted areas of the application: vulnerability, implementation, and evaluation. It also asks questions to help formulate comprehensive answers for the preparation of an excellent application.

FP&S Grants support projects that enhance the safety of the public and firefighters from fire and related hazards. The primary goal is to target high-risk populations and reduce injury and prevent death. Visit [firegrantsupport.com](#) to learn more about the grants and the [National Volunteer Fire Council](#) for additional grant-writing resources.

## Foodborne Illness

(Sources: CDC and American Medical Association)

During this holiday season, the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) recommend keeping food safety in mind whether attending or hosting parties, “because foodborne illness has become a serious public health problem.” According to the [American Medical Association](#) (AMA), foodborne illness can be any illness that is related to food ingestion. Gastrointestinal tract symptoms are the most common clinical manifestations of foodborne illnesses.

Accepting that health care professionals, such as emergency medical technicians and paramedics, have a critical role in the identification and control of food-related disease outbreaks, the [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) perused the [Primer for Physicians and other Health Care Professionals](#) (PDF, 190 KB). The document provides practical and concise information on the diagnosis, treatment, and reporting of foodborne illnesses.

The primer is also a teaching tool to update physicians and other health care professionals about foodborne illness and remind them of their important role in recognizing suspicious symptoms, disease clusters, etiologic agents, and reporting cases of foodborne illness to public health authorities.

More useful information about food poisoning can be seen at [FoodSafety.gov](#).

## Holiday Vigilance

As we gather with family and friends between 24 December and 2 January, the [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) staff wish all members of the Emergency Services Sector (ESS) a very happy, safe, and peaceful holiday season. It was an honor and pleasure to provide sector personnel with infrastructure protection and resilience information during 2010.

At this festive time of the year, ESS leaders, owners, and operators comprehend that the critical infrastructures (i.e., personnel, physical assets, and communication/cyber systems) upon which our loved ones and citizens depend must remain intact and operational without incapacitation or destruction by deliberate, natural, or accidental causes. Therefore, while our thoughts and attention turn to possible travel and celebrations, the EMR-ISAC acknowledges that continued vigilance is necessary to ensure the survivability, continuity, and responsiveness of emergency departments and agencies.

Several domestic and international incidents in 2010 have been chilling reminders that our adversaries—frequently weather—do not rest, but persevere to threaten infrastructures, exploit vulnerabilities, test protective measures, and challenge our resilience. Hence, persistent and effective preparations and vigilance is necessary to deter or prevent similar events from occurring or reoccurring in the United States.

**NOTE:** There will be no INFOGRAM published on 30 December. Nevertheless, the EMR-ISAC will continue to monitor events during the holidays and disseminate any credible information regarding man-made emergencies or natural disasters. The next INFOGRAM will be dated 6 January 2011.

## DISCLAIMER OF ENDORSEMENT

The U.S. Fire Administration/EMR-ISAC does not endorse the organizations sponsoring linked web sites, and does not endorse the views they express or the products/services they offer.

## **FAIR USE NOTICE**

This INFOGRAM may contain copyrighted material that was not specifically authorized by the copyright owner. EMR-ISAC personnel believe this constitutes "fair use" of copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the U.S. Copyright Law. If you wish to use copyrighted material contained within this document for your own purposes that go beyond "fair use," you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

## **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