



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

INFOGRAM 8-08

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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.*

Fusion Centers and EMR-ISAC Relationship

Most states and many local governments established fusion centers to analyze threats from all hazards, track asset location and operational readiness, and issue reports related to existing, developing, and future threats from man-made and natural disasters. Generally, a fusion center is a collaborative effort to detect, prevent, investigate, and respond to criminal and terrorist activity; however, most centers now accept responsibility for all hazards that threaten the public safety or property of a state.

Fusion centers represent a unique blend of federal, state, and local law enforcement personnel, and often include representatives from other disciplines such as emergency management, fire, emergency medical, public works, and the National Guard. Recognizing their importance, some centers have begun to incorporate private-sector partners. According to a recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) summary, "The primary responsibility of today's fusion centers is to ensure that state and local leadership is knowledgeable about current and emerging trends that threaten the security of local jurisdictions."

In order to obtain and disseminate timely, emergent, and consequential information, the Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) continues to aggressively establish viable information sharing relationships with state and local fusion centers. With an exclusive focus on Emergency Services Sector (ESS) departments and agencies, the EMR-ISAC cultivates new information exchange arrangements to evolve into a reliable and beneficial source of information regarding the threats to and vulnerabilities of ESS critical infrastructures.

EMR-ISAC no-cost information distribution services will be particularly valuable when the Department of Homeland Security raises the Homeland Security Advisory System to ORANGE (High) or RED (Severe), or during periods of natural or man-made disasters of national significance. Therefore, the EMR-ISAC encourages all leaders of individual ESS organizations to be subscribed for receipt of the CIP (For Official Use Only) Notices. ESS leaders, owners, or operators not already receiving FOUO information should contact the EMR-ISAC at emr-isac@dhs.gov for subscription directions.

Resources for Ethanol Fuel Incident Responses

The increasing use of alternative fuels, such as ethanol blends, have the following consequences: tanker trucks and railcars that carry enormous quantities of the fuels are transporting them to areas of the U.S. not familiar with the products; tank farms that hold the products are appearing in many jurisdictions; and Emergency Services Sector (ESS) organizations are challenged to become aware of the hazards and behavior of the products and understand the training, equipment, and extinguishing agents necessary for safe and effective responses to alternative fuel incidents.

The Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) examined a variety of resources that can aid departments in planning and preparedness to enhance response-ability and personnel protection. One is the Ethanol Emergency Response Coalition (EERC) formed in 2006 to address challenges first responders face in handling ethanol fires and spills. Last year, the EERC conducted live fire tests using differing types of foams on ethanol fuel fires with the objective of documenting which foams were most capable of controlling these fires. (Traditional non-alcohol resistant foams are not effective on ethanol or ethanol-blend fuel fires.) A [description of the tests](#) and an [Executive Summary](#) of the test results can be seen at Fireworld.com.

Experts who appear in a 19-minute video on responding to ethanol incidents urge ESS departments to assess the risks posed by storage and transport of the fuels at the community level. This is consistent with Step 4 of the Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP) Process seen in the [EMR-ISAC CIP Job Aid](#). Experts further stressed the need to inform personnel about appropriate equipment, extinguishing agents, and training. An [article on relevant training](#) is available at Fireworld.com. The response video can be viewed at [Google Video](#). Another resource is Missouri's Department of Natural Resources [Technical Bulletin on Response to Ethanol and Gasoline Fuel Blend Releases](#) (PDF, 58 Kb). It explains the fuels and their properties, and offers measures for potential firefighting hazards, and spill or leak prevention guidelines.

Injury Reduction Strategy

A Midwestern Emergency Services Sector (ESS) organization is among departments that have proactively implemented a strategy change in responses to incidents at vacant and abandoned buildings. The Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) examined this hazard to the personnel component of ESS critical infrastructures in the [12 July 2007 INFOGRAM](#).

The Midwest department suffered 21 personnel injuries during responses to 20 fires at vacant and abandoned buildings during a one-year period. The injuries to personnel who were attempting to save structures slated for demolition (at least 16 of the structures were ultimately demolished) prompted ESS leaders to fully research the threat, report their findings, and implement a strategy change that calls for responders to engage in defensive (exterior) firefighting. Mistakenly characterized in the past as a “let it burn” policy, the new approach does not mean firefighters stand by and watch empty buildings burn. Instead, the policy urges a measured approach of applying water on a building from the outside. Following the strategy implementation, personnel injuries at vacant and abandoned structure fires dropped by more than 50 percent. However, a department spokesperson said that convincing responders to resist their natural urge to aggressively fight every fire has been a challenge because it is a “cultural change”. For more information, visit [Firehouse.com](#).

In its [report on vacant structure fires and firefighter injuries](#) (PDF, 288 Kb), the department examined issues such as injury rates, lost personnel time, and the costs of overtime pay to supplement staffing shortages. In evaluating the personnel risks and their consequences for critical infrastructure protection and resiliency, and to formulate the defensive firefighting strategy, it was concluded that, “A fire in a vacant property, especially an open and abandoned property, should be viewed for what it truly represents: a uniquely dangerous hazard that is waiting to injure and kill firefighters.”

To inform personnel about the inspection and dangers of blighted structures, the U.S. Fire Administration and the International Association of Arson Investigators created the [Abandoned Building Project](#), a free downloadable training resource that includes community strategies, lesson plans, sample ordinance and Memorandum of Understanding documents, and additional resources.

NRF Web Cast

In a major first step toward implementation of the National Response Framework (NRF), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will present a one-hour nationwide NRF broadcast on 5 March

2008 beginning at 1:30 EST from the National Preparedness Network (PREPnet) studio at the National Emergency Training Center in Emmitsburg, MD.

The Framework is a “national” guide that cuts across all jurisdictions and explains how officials and Emergency Services Sector (ESS) responders at all levels of government will work as a team in responding to disasters of all types and sizes. The Framework’s goals mesh with many critical infrastructure protection and resiliency objectives, e.g., strong working relationships among community stakeholders, a focus on preparedness, support of local mitigation, recovery from incidents, resource protection, etc. “Given that the NRF spells out the way the nation will provide assistance and resources to other agencies and levels of government in the event of a major emergency, it is critical for first responders to understand and be familiar with how we will all work together in such circumstances,” said U.S. Fire Administrator Gregory Cade. “I encourage our nation’s fire service to gain familiarity and confidence with the NRF by taking in this broadcast.”

The NRF document and supporting information can be viewed and downloaded at <http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nrf/>. The broadcast will be distributed through the DISH television network. Locations with Dish TV receivers can tune to Channel 9602 at 1:30 p.m. EST on 5 March to view the broadcast. Alternatively, the discussion can be accessed via the Internet by visiting <http://www.vodium.com/goto/fema/nrf.asp>, and clicking on the NRF button that will be displayed there. The Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) suggests that ESS members visit the site before the web cast begins to assure that any connectivity issues involved with individual computer settings are addressed.

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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.

When available, each report submitted should include the date, time, location, type of activity, number of people and type of equipment used for the activity, the name of the submitting company or organization, and a designated point of contact.