



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

INFOGRAM 8-10

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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.*

ESS “Struck-by” Incidents

Since the beginning of this year, the [Emergency Responder Safety Institute](#) has collected at least 20 news reports where Emergency Services Sector (ESS) personnel and/or apparatus have been struck while operating on America’s roadways. This prompted the [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) to relook a problem that continues to scourge ESS departments and agencies nationwide.

Considering the frequency of first responder “struck-by” incidents, and the possibility that these occurrences will increasingly jeopardize the personnel safety and operational continuity of ESS organizations, the EMR-ISAC reviewed the [FireRescue1](#) article on this matter. Within this article can be found the following minimum strategies to protect emergency responders from becoming a victim in the performance of duties:

- Develop standard operating guidelines for roadway incidents.
- Train personnel periodically on guidelines, procedures, and safety strategy.
- Ensure proper positioning of emergency vehicles to protect the incident work area.
- Provide advanced warnings for motorists using whatever tools available.
- Wear high-visibility personal protective equipment.
- Participate in regional traffic incident management committees.
- Conduct occasional joint multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional training on roadway incident management.

The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) has collaborated with numerous associations to enhance the operational safety of emergency responders on the highways. More information about roadway operations safety can be seen at the [USFA web site](#).

“Rules for Survival”

Year after year, the [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) examines the annual reports of “line-of-duty” firefighter deaths (LODDs) generated by the [U.S. Fire Administration](#) (USFA) and the [National Fallen Firefighter Foundation](#) (NFFF) (PDF, 61 KB). The EMR-ISAC noted that 103 firefighters lost their lives in the performance of duties during 2008.

Recognizing that many LODDs might have been avoided, the EMR-ISAC perused the article in [FireRescue1](#) regarding 10 ways to stay safe when at the scene of an incident. These “Rules of Survival” were developed by the Houston Fire Department late last year, and have application to Emergency Services Sector (ESS) departments and agencies everywhere.

For the consideration of ESS organizations, the 10 very basic lessons or rules are abridged as follows:

- Use seat belts any time the vehicle is in motion.
- Obey all traffic laws and always avoid running red lights.
- Wear all parts of issued personal protective equipment.
- Take time upon arrival to perform a “360 visual size-up” of the incident scene.
- Ensure uninterrupted water supply before any entry occurs.
- Keep a low posture upon entry, while inside, and when exiting.
- Practice the art of coordinated ventilation as the first priority.
- Make it a habit to have the Rapid Intervention Team available for every incident.
- Maintain crew integrity at all times.
- Continue communicating progress reports throughout the incident.

See the [Everyone Goes Home Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives](#) and [Public Entity Risk Institute](#) (PDF, 144 KB) web sites for more information about reducing LODDs.

New Dangers for First Responders

According to [FireFightingNews.com](#), two weeks ago firefighters and paramedics in Florida approached a car in response to a suicide call. Upon arrival they smelled a strange odor, saw the car was filled with smoke, and read the “HazMat” warning signs on the windows of the vehicle. Quickly the responders realized that they had a dangerous situation necessitating a temporary retreat to acquire their personal protective equipment (PPE) with self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA).

After reviewing similar occurrences in California and New York involving asphyxiation from intentionally inhaling toxic mixes of household chemicals, the [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) learned that the methodology involves mixing two chemicals (i.e., bonide and hydrochloric acid) purchased without restrictions in local stores. When the chemicals are mixed, they quickly produce heat and a flammable, noxious gas causing the loss of consciousness and heart stoppage within minutes.

Usually concentrated within a small space (e.g., car, bathroom, closet), the resulting hydrogen sulfide gas could easily compromise an emergency response if the gas is released without the proper safeguards in place by trained and equipped hazardous materials (HazMat) personnel. Therefore, the EMR-ISAC offers the following considerations gleaned from the [Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry](#) (PDF, 36 KB) and other sources:

- Stay aware of the possibility of poisonous gases when accessing an unresponsive individual in a confined or enclosed space (e.g., car, bathroom, closet).
- Remember that hydrogen sulfide has a very strong pungent odor similar to rotten eggs.
- Retreat to a safe area for PPE and SCBA if the hydrogen sulfide odor is perceived.
- Recall that the confined or enclosed space will temporarily continue to discharge the noxious gas.
- Bear in mind that the individual and his/her clothing will also release the gas for a brief period.
- Consider the necessity for decontamination if the chemicals have been spilled on the patient.
- Request assistance of a HazMat Support Unit with a Cyanide Antidote Kit for antidote administration.

Highway-Borne HazMat a Potential Target

The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC), a member of the [National Council of ISACs](#), receives frequent reports from the Supply Chain ISAC listing the number, type, and cargo of the trucks, tankers, and tractor trailers that have been stolen throughout the United States. Occasionally, these missing vehicles were transporting hazardous materials (HazMat). This knowledge motivated the EMR-ISAC to read with interest the Truckinginfo.com article: “[Highway-Borne HazMat a Greater Target for Terrorists.](#)”

In this article, the EMR-ISAC ascertained that the Department of Homeland Security requested the [Mineta Transportation Institute](#) (MTI) provide any research regarding the security risks created by the highway transportation of HazMat. Subsequently, MTI assembled a small team of terrorism and emergency response experts to report on the risks of terrorists using highway shipments of flammable liquids (e.g., gasoline tankers) to cause casualties anywhere, and ways to reduce these risks. This team initially focused on surface transportation targets such as highway infrastructure and public transportation stations. Shortly after, the team shifted its attention to the plentiful targets outside of surface transportation.

Community leaders and their emergency organizations can see this report by clicking [here](#) (PDF, 1.93 MB), because of its relevance to the protection and resilience of both transportation and non-transportation targets.

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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
- 2) Your local FBI office - Web: www.fbi.gov/contact/fo/fo.htm
- 3) EMR-ISAC - Voice: 301-447-1325, E-Mail: emr-isac@dhs.gov, fax: 301-447- 1034, Web: www.usfa.dhs.gov/emr-isac, Mail: E-108, 16825 South Seton Avenue, Emmitsburg, MD 21727