



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

INFOGRAM 12-08

March 27, 2008

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.

Preparing for Civil Unrest

First responders may have been alerted recently about the probability for civil unrest at the Democratic National Convention scheduled for 22-24 August, in Denver, and also the Republican National Convention scheduled for 1-4 September, in Minneapolis-St. Paul. However, some federal law enforcement officials expressed concern that civil disobedience may begin sooner anywhere in the nation at the political rallies, speeches, and fund raising events leading up to the national conventions.

On past occasions, the Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) has heard the apprehension of Emergency Services Sector leaders, owners, and operators regarding local readiness for civil unrest operations. With so much emphasis appropriately placed on all-hazards preparedness, particularly terrorism, many municipalities may not have considered civil disobedience or massive rioting as possible threats to local critical infrastructures.

In the article "Safe Response to Civil Unrest Incidents" seen in the March 2008 issue of "Fire Engineering," August Vernon writes: "Emergency responders at all levels must learn to work together to plan for civil unrest incidents occurring in their jurisdictions and to safely respond if an incident occurs." Mr. Vernon specifically reminds that National Fire Protection Association 1500, "Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program," Sections 6-7, "Civil Unrest/Terrorism," states: "Fire departments shall develop and maintain written guidelines that establish a standardized approach to the safety of members at incidents involving violence, unrest or civil disturbances."

To assist with protecting first responders and preventing their injury and death, the EMR-ISAC offers the following abbreviated recommendations from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and other sources intended for emergency departments responding to scenes of violence including civil unrest:

- Formulate a coordinated multi-disciplinary plan before executing any actions.
- Prepare standard operating procedures for responding to potentially violent situations.
- Develop integrated emergency communication systems that can relay real-time information.
- Plan multiple ingress and egress routes when responding to life-threatening incidents.
- Ensure all personnel at the incident scene can maintain continuous radio contact.
- Provide bullet-resistant personal protective equipment and enforce its use.
- Require dispatch centers to archive location and individual data and provide to responding personnel.
- Create coordinated response guidelines for violent situations.
- Conduct joint training sessions for police, fire, emergency medical, and mutual aid departments.
- Assert controls over emergency vehicles and equipment that can be used by rioters.

Mr. Vernon's entire article referenced above can be seen at this link:
<http://www.emsmagazine.com/features/article.jsp?id=5621&siteSection=4>.

Challenge of Newer Model Cars

Considering a couple recent cases where first responders were hurt by airbags, the Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) examined the current challenge to emergency personnel from the safety features contained in newer model cars.

Airbag safety specialist, Dave Long, reported that there have been cases where firefighters have been injured by airbags because they were not familiar with the vehicle's system. He asserted that training is the best way to protect emergency responders when dealing with a crash of a newer car such as some SUVs with 12 airbags.

Additionally, Associated Press interviews around the United States revealed that the reinforced steel and tougher exotic metals used in roofs, posts, and doors are hindering the extrication of injured persons from newer cars. Cutting through reinforced steel construction creates more obstacles that endanger rescuers and ruin multiple blades of heavy-duty electric saws. Furthermore, pressurized gas canisters that inflate airbags can explode if pierced by cutting tools.

Automakers allege they are doing more to make safety information available to first responders and tool makers before new models are released for sale. However, the EMR-ISAC learned that later this year, the nonprofit group COMCARE Emergency Response Alliance, with cooperation from automakers, will introduce a single website that will offer schematics and safety specifications for most cars on the road. Until this is available, the EMR-ISAC suggests emergency services departments and agencies use the following website to access information relevant to this topic: <http://www.extrication.com/ERG.htm>.

Campus and ESS Security

The 1999 Columbine High School incident, followed by a series of violent episodes at secondary and higher learning institutions, have offered lessons to protect Emergency Services Sector (ESS) critical infrastructures. The Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) continues to collect information and examine resources to assist the protection of responders on scene, maximize positive and constructive interactions with campus officials and populations, and streamline and standardize response protocols.

A New York Times (NYT) article this week on the criticality of conducting regular school emergency drills quoted a county government official who said: "For the most part, we now have schools in the same district using different protocols and it's confusing to staff and responders." The NYT article can be seen at this link:

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/25/nyregion/25drills.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=In+an+Era+of+School+Shootings%2C+a+New+Drill&st=nyt&oref=slogin.

One of the resources available to the ESS mitigates this problem by establishing preparedness plans that enable all involved parties to work in lockstep. A CD developed by the North Carolina Attorney General's office and disseminated by the Rural Law Enforcement Technology Center (RULETC), contains a dramatization of a school shooting incident that explains clearly the critical incident response procedures to be followed by all school districts in the state. Accompanying it are a booklet of recommendations, a school safety plan generator, and a tutorial with an overview of the school violent critical incident process. An important example of safeguarding emergency responders is a color-coded status system described on the CD. Additionally, the step-by-step procedures of the incident process demonstrate clearly the value of a methodology that can be adhered to by all participants during a crisis situation. ESS organizations can request no-cost RULETC materials by calling 1-800-787-2553, ext. 225.

Area responders and school officials at an Eastern U.S. university campus recently conducted a live, full-scale drill to exercise the school's "paper plan" and give all ESS agencies the opportunity to practice procedures and strategies for a "worst possible scenario." Among the procedures and strategies to practice are many that incorporate emergency sector personnel survival lessons learned from previous incidents, e.g., Columbine High School, which are now viewed as common sense, yet were synthesized from responses to chaotic, unpredictable, and highly dangerous situations. After the Columbine incident, for instance, EMS agencies in the jurisdiction rewrote their staging and victim retrieval procedures and formed a Special Weapons and Tactics Team (SWAT)-medic training program.

Dozens of resources for communities, schools, and responders can be found at <http://www.edfacilities.org/rl/disaster.cfm>. The Federal Emergency Management Agency Emergency Management Institute provides Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools, an online, independent study course to help educators and first responders develop effective emergency operations plans for a wide array of potential school emergencies: <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is362.asp>.

Agrosecurity for Emergency Managers

The Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service is a collaborative, multi-state effort to provide access to resources on disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery to reduce the impact of natural and man-made disasters. It offers an online course, Animal Agrosecurity and Emergency Management that targets the Emergency Services Sector (ESS), and stakeholders who understand the need to improve animal agrosecurity and emergency management in their communities.

The free, self-paced, eight-hour course explains how to apply emergency management principles to animal emergencies, recognize threats, identify vulnerabilities, and establish action plans for animal disasters, and partner with interagency representatives in an interdisciplinary effort to address animal emergency issues. The course, with its ready-to-use presentations, activity guidelines (including scenario-based exercises), and printable documents suitable for handouts can also be delivered in a classroom setting. Certificates of completion are awarded.

The course can be accessed at <http://www.eden.lsu.edu/LearningOps/AnimalAgrosecurity/materials.aspx>. A brief registration must be completed before beginning the course. The Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) notes that information about this course, as well as state-by-state disaster education resources, and state regulatory agencies can be seen at the EDEN web site: <http://www.eden.lsu.edu>.

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

DHS and the FBI encourage recipients of this document to report information concerning suspicious or criminal activity to DHS and/or the FBI. The DHS National Operation Center (NOC) can be reached by telephone at 202-282-9685 or by e-mail at NOC.Fusion@dhs.gov.

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.