EMR-ISAC
Emergency Management & Response-Information Sharing & Analysis Center

The InfoGram

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Highlights:

New Risk Communications Guides Published

The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) has published two new guides on risk communication, "Understanding Risk Communication Theory" (PDF, 1.16 Mb) and "Understanding Risk Communication Best Practices" (PDF, 1.21 Mb). Both are geared towards emergency managers and those who have preparedness outreach responsibilities.

The guides are timely. Surveys are showing the preparedness message is getting lost or ignored by the public, and as seen in an article in Emergency Management magazine some organizations are calling for a serious reassessment of risk communications methods. One director of a nonprofit group is quoted in the article as saying "No private-sector company would invest billions of dollars in putting out a message that had such dismal returns."

Both the article and the START guides suggest changes. One is layered messaging; instead of either sirens or phone calls, do both. Another is geographically-targeted messaging, such as evacuation notices by ZIP code or neighborhood. A third recommendation is to begin using effective social media, as it is being relied on by the public and is becoming part of our overall culture.

(Source: START)

Subway Response Training at CDP

A newly-built facility at the Center for Disaster Preparedness (CDP) is providing access to all-hazards training on subway systems to state, local, and tribal emergency responders. The training is based on potential natural and man-made threats to mass transit systems.

The subway car facility combines a variety of complex environmental variables including confined space, high-density crowds, high-voltage electrical systems, and tunnels. The CDP facility can simulate tunnel collapses, blasts, mass casualties, and chemical or biological threats.

While the facility physically resembles a subway, it "also replicates the complexity of response to other public transportation modes including buses, trains, and even street cars." Most medium and large cities have mass public transit of one kind or another and such training reinforces local emergency plans and preparedness.

The U.S. Fire Administration maintains the **Emergency Management** and **Response – Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC)**.

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

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

The CDP, located in Anniston, AL, is one of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) training facilities and holds classes on incident management, mass casualty response, and emergency response to catastrophic natural or man-made disasters.

(Source: FEMA)

Dangers of Failing Pipelines Across Country

In the last few years, natural-gas pipeline failures and explosions in Appomattox, VA, Allentown, PA, and San Bruno, CA, have accounted for numerous fatalities, millions in property loss, and renewed attention to the aging gas pipeline system. Much of the pipeline in the United States is decades old, made of materials that will corrode or degrade, and are therefore more likely to fail.

Fire Chief Magazine gives two practices fire departments should adopt. First, preplanning activities with utilities is a critical step to ensure a smoother response during an accident. The chief of the Appomattox Volunteer Fire Department says "knowing personally who he needed to talk to well before the incident made a world of difference in the way the company responded to the rupture."

Second, locating and evaluating pipelines in their response area gives departments a chance to fine-tune the preplanning and training, filling in identified gaps. The fire service should have a role in any inspections or risk assessments of their local pipelines, because they will be the first dispatched when there is an accident.

The GIS-based National Pipeline Mapping System (NPMS) provides government employees detailed information on the pipelines operating in their areas. A regional search is available and provides company name and contact information. Another part of the system is password protected; users must register for an account. The NPMS is managed by the Pipeline and Hazardous Material Safety Administration.

(Source: Fire Chief Magazine)

Lax Security a Threat to Commercial Facilities

The suspect of a recent hostage situation in Pittsburgh told police he chose the office building based on the lack of security. According to articles in the Pittsburgh Post Gazette and the Tribune Review, "he noticed women entering the building freely and believed he could do the same."

He attempted to access some offices, but failed because he didn't have a pass key. He then succeeded in entering an office on a lower floor, resulting in a hostage situation that ended peacefully but lasted almost 6 hours.

Office buildings fall under the umbrella of the Commercial Facilities Sector, one of the identified 18 Critical Infrastructures. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is the Sector Specific Agency selected to oversee this sector and serves on the Sector Coordinating Council. DHS offers training, guides, and other services to help the private sector in identification of security gaps and training.

The Commercial Facilities Sector Snapshot (PDF, 1.39 Mb) provides an overview of the many services offered to the private sector operators of these facilities.

(Source: DHS Office of Infrastructure Protection)

DHS and the FBI encourage recipients of this document to report information concerning suspicious or criminal activity to the local *FBI office* and also the *State or Major Urban Area Fusion Center*.

For information specifically affecting the private sector critical infrastructure contact the **National Infrastructure Coordinating Center** by phone at **202-282-9201**, or by email at **nicc@dhs.gov**.