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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.

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Study Looks at 9-1-1 Dispatchers and PTSD

When a call comes into a 9-1-1 center, the dispatcher hears the distress and fear in caller's voice. They decide what kind and how many assets to send to a caller, and they struggle to get as much information out of panicked victims. After they hang up they may never know what the outcome was for the person on the other end of the line, and then the phone rings and they do it all over again.

Research shows [dispatchers are at risk of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder](#) (PTSD) with only indirect exposure to traumatic incidents. Researchers asked 171 dispatchers from the United States a series of questions on the types of calls they answer and any corresponding emotional distress, and then asked them to rate the types of calls that caused great distress. Finally, they were asked about their worst call.

The study showed 32 percent of respondents, one in three dispatchers, had a high level of distress following potentially traumatic calls and 3.5 percent reported [PTSD symptoms](#).

Call center managers and administration should consider the potential consequences of these numbers. In addition to the effects on the dispatcher and their family, stress of this magnitude can and will affect job functions, potentially causing issues with incoming emergency calls.

Establishing a good program, such as a stress debriefing team, to monitor and assist dispatchers in need is vital. If having an internal program is not possible, having a list of resources already available when someone needs it can save time and let them know that management is aware of and concerned about the issue. Promoting a team environment where people can talk to and support each other goes a long way toward diffusing the stress.

(Source: [National Institutes of Health](#))

Utilizing Other Agencies in Pre-Fire Planning

Last month, two warehouses at a Los Angeles County metals recycling facility caught fire. Firefighters tried to knock it down with water, except one of the warehouses had 10,000 pounds of magnesium shavings stored in it. [Water hitting the burning magnesium caused powerful explosions](#), bringing about evacuations, power outages, and road closures. Firefighters decided to let the magnesium burn out and contain the fire.

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

It is important to include hazardous materials in the [pre-incident planning](#) process and update them regularly. For businesses or industry that may rotate or cycle materials in and out on a regular basis, it is even more crucial to document what kinds of hazardous materials may be on the premises, not just what is there at the time someone last visited. In the example of the recycling plant incident, the magnesium may not have been there the week before.

Good relations with public works, code enforcement, law enforcement, and business or industry contacts benefit the planning process as they can and do see different things at different times. Communicating with these resources regularly will help ensure your department has a better picture of the hazards within your jurisdiction, and will keep the lines of communications open and functional, benefiting all parties involved.

(Source: [NFPA](#))

Voice Radio Communications Guide

The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) and the International Association of Fire Fighters have published the second edition of "[Voice Radio Communications Guide for the Fire Service](#)" (PDF, 6.3 Mb). The updated guide covers the advances the communications industry has made, including portable devices, FirstNet, and changes in frequency use.

It also addresses the unique and challenging environments firefighters face in their work. It is incredibly difficult to maneuver through difficult interior landscapes in reduced visibility, smoke, and water, all the while distracted by noise and the chaotic situation. Each wave of technological advances works to address these and other job challenges.

The guide provides basic radio communications education to include digital and analog radio, conventional radio systems, system design, portable radio selection, interoperability, and radio spectrum licensing. Radio communications is a lifeline on the fireground, is your department doing enough to ensure life safety through their communications systems?

(Source: [USFA](#))

Webinar: Emerging Risks of UAS

This month's Resilience Development Webinar Series is "Emerging Risk to Infrastructure from Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS)." Sometimes called "drones," UAS have become popular in a big way and are being used by media outlets, amateurs, government agencies, criminals, and many other interests to fulfill a variety of needs.

A variety of federal specialists will give an overview of the emerging risk of UAS to critical infrastructure. The presentation will cover several first responders' concerns such as how UAS provides adversaries with the ability to circumvent traditional physical security measures such as gates, surveillance equipment, and security guards.

The webinar is sponsored by the Emergency Services - Sector Specific Agency (ESS - SSA) and is scheduled for Thursday, August 11th from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Eastern. The dial in conference number is 1-855-852-7677 and the participant code is 999963986509. Those interested in attending the webinar must [register](#).

(Source: [ESS-SSA](#))

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