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# The InfoGram

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## Distracted Driving's Legal Concerns for EMS

Traffic is difficult enough to maneuver for EMS teams without having to deal with distracted drivers. Since the introduction of mobile devices, accidents caused by distracted driving have spiked, and it affects EMS drivers, too.

According to [Distraction.gov](http://Distraction.gov), 660,000 drivers are using cell phones or electronic devices while driving at any given daylight moment. This number has held steady since 2010. [Statistics for EMS drivers also show a lot of electronics use](#), with 26 percent admitting to using a mobile device while driving and 53 percent admitting to still using one even though they know the safety risks.

In addition to the serious threat to life, departments also need to take into account the legal and insurance issues they may face. Many states now have limitations on drivers using mobile devices while driving. If an EMS driver is found to have been using one and they are at fault for the accident, insurance may not cover the damages. Worse, in some states the insurer may cancel or not renew the policy. This makes the liability risk greater.

In addition to the above, accidents involving apparatus are newsworthy; if the driver is found to have been using a cell phone at the time, the public and political scrutiny will be even more intense. Departments should frame [policy to minimize distracted driving](#) of any kind, and could [enact a "sterile cockpit" model](#), stolen from the airline industry. Minimizing distractions to drivers is key to the safety of the patient, the public, and the crew.

(Source: [Distraction.gov](http://Distraction.gov))

## First Responder Earthquake Risk Video

Many don't realize that all 50 states have some earthquake risk. First responder departments and agencies especially should take note of their risk and actively plan for the worst-case scenario. How will your apparatus respond to a call if the fire station has collapsed around it? How can you reassure the public you will be able to respond when you are also located in the disaster zone?

A short new video from the National Earthquake Hazard Reduction Program (NEHRP) talks about [how earthquakes affect fire departments and how they can disrupt response efforts](#). NEHRP interviews members of fire departments in Los Angeles, Napa Valley, California, and Seattle to find out how they were affected in recent earthquakes and how they have retrofitted their stations to withstand future ones.

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

All available resources are needed in an earthquake that causes even moderate damage. If a station is badly damaged, then an entire team is taken out of the response and recovery efforts.

Fire departments concerned about the possibility of damage to their facilities should take a look at the [QuakeSmart Mitigation Program](#), which helps departments and businesses identify and address risks in their buildings through a three-step process: identify your risk, make a plan, and take action to fix the known structural and non-structural problems. Fixing these problems will lessen damage to your stations and enable your teams to respond faster after an earthquake.

(Source: [NEHRP](#))

## CBRNE Emergencies Medical Management Course

The U.S Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has available an online course and a list of resources for those agencies looking to bolster their medical planning and management of Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosives (CBRNE) incidents. “[Health Information Resources for CBRNE](#)” is a self-paced course and is free but requires an account for access. It carries four continuing education credits.

Offered through their [Disaster Information Management Research Center](#), the course covers concepts of CBRNE and details emergency planners must consider when writing CBRNE-related plans. These incidents are dynamic and happen rarely enough that, without adequate and regular training, response to a true event can suffer.

The course includes information from [Chemical Hazards Emergency Medical Management](#) (CHEMM), [Radiation Emergency Medical Management](#) (REMM), and [Wireless Information System for First Responders](#) (WISER). These sites provide first responders, public information officers, response planners, and others information on nuclear power plant or reactor incidents, dirty bombs, exposure and contamination, triage guidelines, and more.

Another resource on this topic can be found on the CBRNE Branch of the [Public Health Emergency](#) website. There, you can find a variety of training resources, several planning guides for CBRNE events, and access to the Radiation Injury Treatment Network (RITN).

(Source: [HHS](#))

## State of 911 Webinar: Funding Challenges

911.gov's next “[State of 911](#)” webinar will be Tuesday, October 11<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 p.m. Eastern, which will include an update from the Federal Communications Commission's Task Force on Optimal Public Safety Answering Point architecture.

Also slated is a discussion about how five Missouri counties from the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) region have addressed funding challenges through the use of population-based cost sharing and interlocal agreements.

Those interested in joining this webinar must [register](#). Past offerings from the “State of 911” webinar series are available on the [911.gov archives](#).

(Source: [911.gov](#))

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