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# The InfoGram

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## Radiological Operations Support Specialist Program

First responders with duties related to radiological or nuclear incidents should be aware of a new certification program developed by the Science and Technology Directorate (S&T), part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

The [Radiological Operations Support Specialist \(ROSS\) Program](#) provides radiation health specialist with emergency management knowledge and enables them to integrate with the incident command system (ICS). In the field ROSS makes recommendations, interprets models, and analyzes data for the incident commander.

ROSS is a 40-hour training created in conjunction with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Department of Energy to address a need identified by first responders and radiation experts in the field. Now transitioned to FEMA to manage and run, the program focuses on radiological emergency response, terminology, and deciding the best responses for different types of incidents, all skills that are desirable to incident commanders.

Training sessions will be in-person and are funded through FEMA's current training budget. Those interested in more information should contact [first.responder@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:first.responder@hq.dhs.gov).

(Source: [DHS S&T](#))

## Funding and Next Generation 911

The National Association of State 911 Administrators (NASNA) released "[911 Funding: Optimizing revenue from the Current Surcharge Model](#)" (PDF, 269 Kb), outlining challenges states face in optimizing revenue from the existing telephone surcharge model for funding 911. The paper is a companion to the September 2015 white paper titled "[Four Potential Sustainable Funding Models for NG911](#)" (PDF, 388 Kb).

This paper discusses the challenges states and territories face with 911 fee revenue, both collection and usage, and recommends solutions. Each state and territory has a different statutory and regulatory framework for 911, affecting both how states can ensure providers collect and remit surcharges, and that it is done correctly. These differences also impact a state's ability to enforce laws and rules regarding usage of 911 funds.

NASNA outlines some of the many issues states face and summarizes ways to over-

come the hurdles, either by working to change the regulations or by optimizing the system already in place. The paper also discusses how some states have enacted mechanisms to reduce or stop fund diversions by state legislatures, and what can be done to hold local governments accountable in their use of 911 funds.

(Source: [NASNA](#))

## The Superbugs in the Sink Drains

Antibiotic-resistant bacteria “superbugs” continue to be in the news, and recent research out of the University of Virginia Health System shows how superbugs can spread at medical facilities from something so simple that many staff don’t realize it is happening.

[Water splashing up from sinks onto countertops has been proven to spread antibiotic-resistant bacteria](#), according to this research. The bacteria grows very well in pipes and drains, and it is difficult to kill in that environment. Additionally, while the bacteria grows in the sink trap, it is also growing on the straight pipe leading to the sink and the mouth of the drain itself, making it very easy to splash and spread.

In 2011-2012, 11 patients were killed in a superbug outbreak spread in this way at the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center. While identifying the problem and meticulous cleaning efforts helped end the outbreak, they report some sinks and drains took multiple wire brush scrubbing with bleach to completely knock out the colonies.

Epidemiologists at NIH say sink and faucet design “is a big deal” but it may be impractical or cost-prohibitive to replace them throughout a medical facility or hospital. Regardless, consistent and repetitive cleaning along with attention to methods used are key to protecting patients and staff from the spread of these dangerous strains of bacteria. Medical facilities should review their methods to see if this could become an issue in the future.

(Source: [NBC](#))

## National Fire Academy Pilots WUI Course

The U.S. Fire Administration is recruiting students for the 6-day pilot offering of a new Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) course to be held at the National Fire Academy (NFA) in Emmitsburg, MD. “[WUI Planning Series: Evacuation, Land Use and Fire Regulations](#)” is scheduled for April 23<sup>rd</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>, 2017. This course contains three modules covering land-use planning, adopting regulations for the WUI, and evacuation planning and procedures.

The course targets a wide range of students including land use planners, mitigation specialists, foresters, emergency managers, fire prevention and operations personnel, and building and real estate.

Those interested in applying should review the selection criteria and prerequisites in the course flyer, then submit a General Admissions Application no later than March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017. For more information, please contact Woody Stratton at [Woodrow.Stratton@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:Woodrow.Stratton@fema.dhs.gov).

(Source: [NFA](#))

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