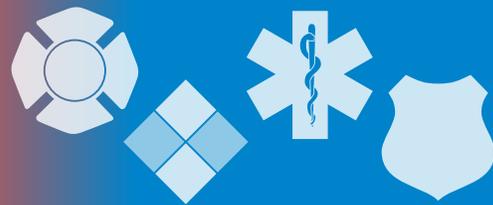


The InfoGram



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Antibiotic-resistant infections are up but deaths are down

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate [35,000 Americans die from antibiotic-resistant infections each year](#). This number is down from 2013 when the death toll was estimated to be around 44,000. The number of [drug-resistant infections](#) each year are estimated at over 2.8 million.

According to research, drug resistant staph bacteria tested in United States hospitals went from 2 percent in 1974 to 59 percent in 2008, a very steep and concerning climb. While research into [new ways of fighting drug-resistant infections](#) show some potential, the best treatment by far is to not get infected in the first place.

Prehospital medicine plays a role in this battle. [EMS workers must know proper infection control methods and use them](#) - both for staff and patients. For example, when did you last disinfect your stethoscope? A 2007 study of 50 stethoscopes used by EMS personnel found nearly one in three tested positive for MRSA.

EMS1 lists out [steps healthcare providers can take to prevent infections](#) and protect themselves and patients:

- ➊ Use proper personal protective equipment at every opportunity.
- ➋ Wash hands properly and often.
- ➌ Clean all medical devices and all emergency vehicles routinely.
- ➍ Establish isolation protocols with all involved healthcare organizations.

The CDC also has an [Infection Control Assessment Tool](#) that may be useful for healthcare facilities and providers.

(Source: [CDC](#))

Hospital Surge Evaluation Tool

Mass casualty events happen at any time and from many different causes. Public Health Emergency (PHE), from the Department of Health and Human Services, developed the [Hospital Surge Evaluation Tool](#) to determine a facility's ability to manage such an event. The PHE website describes it as "Surge Evaluation in a Box."

The tool uses a no-notice drill to help determine how competent a hospital's surge preparedness training and planning are and provides hospital emergency managers a way to hold tabletop exercises regularly. The tool includes:

- ➊ A Command Center Component - requires leaders to assess hospital capabilities.
- ➋ An Emergency Department Component - a physician and nurse are asked to triage a list of patients presenting. This runs concurrently with the command component.
- ➌ A "Hotwash" discussion at the conclusion to go over the exercise.

PHE lists the technical requirements for using the tool on their website. In addition, all the electronic files, which are in Microsoft Word, Excel and Adobe Acrobat, are available for download.

(Source: [HHS PHE](#))



Highlights

Antibiotic-resistant infections are up but deaths are down

Hospital Surge Evaluation Tool

Ways to help people with autism during emergency situations

Webinar: Catch Them Before They Fall - Preventing Suicide

Cyber Threats



The U.S. Fire Administration operates 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.

[Subscribe here](#)



Ways to help people with autism during emergency situations

Fire personnel will someday find themselves in a situation involving a person with autism. Fire personnel and other first responders need to be aware of the challenges this may present in an emergency situation. With a little bit of knowledge, all first responders can be prepared for this. Fortunately there's been a flood of information and resources on this topic in recent years.

People who are on the autism spectrum don't communicate in the same ways we are used to. In addition, 50 percent are nonverbal and another 20 percent are nonverbal when highly stressed. They may not feel heat, cold or pain in the typical way. They are strongly attracted to water and drowning is a leading cause of death among both children and adults with autism.

Families with an autistic member may have to lock interior doors and even bar or nail exterior windows to keep their loved one from wandering, among other things. This may initially come across as an abuse situation. It may also cause problems for entry into a burning house or during a rescue.

Those who are autistic often don't communicate the same way others do. Creating a sensory bag or comfort kit, as these departments in [Ohio](#) and [Ontario](#) have done, can help the situation by keeping the individual busy and reducing noise, a common stressor for those with autism. These kits are quick to put together and the cost is minimal.

The websites [Autism Speaks](#) and [Autism Spectrum Disorder Foundation](#) are a wealth of information for firefighters, law enforcement, EMS, 911 personnel, search and rescue teams and more.

(Source: [Autism Spectrum Disorder Foundation](#))

Webinar: Catch Them Before They Fall - Preventing Suicide

Mental health research shows [firefighters and law enforcement officers are more likely to die by suicide than in the line of duty](#). Even more disturbing is the estimate that only 40 percent of firefighter suicides are reported, suggesting the numbers are much higher.

While fire and law enforcement departments are beginning to address this through education and mental health programs, it is an uphill battle. The shame surrounding mental illness and depression proves to be a difficult barrier to break. More internal conversations are needed in offices and stations around the country, and more national-level attention will help to cut through the stigma.

The International Public Safety Association (IPSA) is holding a webinar on preventing suicide through early detection. In the interactive session, the presenter will review ways of preventing suicide by identifying early distress and offering immediate referrals to support resources. The webinar will also discuss methods used in the field, including peer and supervisor training and automated check-in systems like [Early Alert](#).

Following the session, attendees will be able to distinguish between passive and proactive methods of identifying distress; analyze their departments' methods of identifying employees in distress; and identify ways to bolster their departments' methods of identifying employees in distress.

Join IPSA for this free webinar on Wednesday, January 15, 2020, from 1-2:15 p.m. Eastern. [Registration is required](#).

(Source: [IPSA](#))

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Cyber Threats

10 tips to securely configure your new devices

The holiday season is upon us, which means shopping for the latest gadget is in full swing. With the massive number of discounts that are available this year, it makes sense for you to buy that latest smart device, right?

However, as impressive as the latest iPhone or gaming computer might be, ensuring you're able to properly secure these devices is more important than ever! **Any device that connects to the internet is potentially vulnerable and could become compromised.** Here are several tips to keep in mind that can help you securely configure your new devices:

(Source: [Center for Internet Security](#))

Ransomware strain now stealing data before encrypting it

The Zeppelin ransomware gang has joined the ranks of ransomware strains that will collect and steal a victim's data before encrypting files. It is part of a recent trend in the ransomware scene.

Over the past few weeks, some of these **ransomware gangs are threatening to leak data on the public Internet if they aren't paid.**

This pay-or-we-will-leak-your-data approach is currently being used by the Maze ransomware gang. They recently created a website on the public Internet where they list all the victim companies who didn't pay and have started leaking some of their data.

(Source: [zdnet](#))

The coolest hacks of 2019

In a year punctuated by endless reports of leaky cloud storage buckets, firmware flaws, and the resurgence of ransomware into a full-blown epidemic, security researchers still found **innovative hacks to keep one step ahead of cybercriminals** and (maybe) nation-states.

They weaponized sound, hijacked building automation systems and found security holes in the Boeing 787 airplane's on-board network. Internet of Things devices and mobile apps continued to be a pathetically easy mark for vulnerability hunters, but it was an accidental finding by a 14-year-old Fortnite gamer that rocked the mobile sector: a flaw in Apple iOS's Group FaceTime app that activated the microphone on an iPhone even if the user doesn't answer the call.

(Source: [Dark Reading](#))

Ransomware hit over 1,000 United States schools in 2019

Since January 2019, 1,039 schools across the United States have been potentially hit by a ransomware attack. 72 school districts and/or educational institutions have publicly reported being ransomware victims, according to the report from a security solutions provider.

Eleven of the impacted United States school districts had their systems affected by ransomware since late October 2019, with 226 schools being directly affected as a result.

(Source: [Bleeping Computer](#))

Cyber Information and Incident Assistance Links

[MS-ISAC](#)

SOC@cisecurity.org
1-866-787-4722

[IdentityTheft.gov](#)

[IC3](#)

[Cybercrime Support Network](#)

General Information Links

[FTC scam list](#)

[CISA alerts](#)

[Law Enforcement Cyber Center](#)

[TLP Information](#)

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