

## Emergency Management and Safety



David L. Howell is the Chief of the Office of Emergency Management and Safety (EMS). EMS was created at the start of FY2007 following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita to broaden USCIS operations beyond emergency response and continuity of operations planning to incorporate a more expansive, comprehensive and robust program of emergency preparedness and management.

Consolidation of emergency management and occupational safety and health functions further strengthened USCIS' ability to prevent, protect, respond to and recover from manmade and natural disasters without disruption to the performance of mission essential functions.

The Office of Emergency Management and Safety's mission is to protect USCIS employees, ensure a safe and healthy work environment, mitigate and minimize damage or destruction of property and vital records and ensure the continued performance of agency mission essential functions during unexpected emergencies and/or catastrophic events.

Through the establishment of a nationwide support network of trained emergency preparedness coordinators in each field location, the Office of Emergency Management and Safety has dramatically improved the flow and consistency of emergency management information between headquarters and field offices. Additionally, field office emergency preparedness coordinators provide on-site emergency management expertise to local managers during an emergency or disaster.

Emergency management training and outreach programs conducted by the Office of Emergency Management and Safety (EMS) staff have led to higher levels of personal, family and worksite preparedness. EMS works closely with Department of Homeland Security headquarters and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, in order to position the agency to exploit the robust emergency alert and notification capabilities of the Communicator NXT system. This new system, scheduled for installation in the first half of FY2008, will give the agency an expanded ability to notify and provide timely, targeted emergency notification information, preparedness and response guidance to all USCIS employees and contractors, as well as a mechanism for accounting for USCIS personnel during an emergency.

Through strong leadership, innovation and strategic direction the Office of Emergency Management and Safety (EMS) has strengthened USCIS' ability to prevent, protect, respond to and recover from a wide-variety of natural and manmade hazards. Through EMS's introduction and promotion of an emergency management approach to disaster preparedness and readiness, previously discordant mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery programs and activities have been harmonized and integrated into a comprehensive all-hazards preparedness and response approach.

## Emergency Management and Safety

