

Fire and Emergency Services Preparedness Guide for the Homeland Security Advisory System

First Edition - January 2004



FEMA

United States Fire Administration

FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

PREPAREDNESS GUIDE

FOR THE

HOMELAND SECURITY

ADVISORY SYSTEM



FEMA

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FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES PREPAREDNESS GUIDE FOR THE HOMELAND SECURITY ADVISORY SYSTEM

Threat Conditions and Associated Preparedness Measures

The world has changed since September 11, 2001. We remain a Nation at risk from terrorist attacks and will remain so for the foreseeable future. At all Threat Conditions, we must remain vigilant, prepared, and ready to deter terrorist attacks. The following Threat Conditions each represent an increasing risk of terrorist attacks. Beneath each Threat Condition are some suggested preparedness measures. These preparedness measures are provided to assist the heads of fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) agencies with development and implementation of appropriate agency-specific preparedness measures. These listed measures should be modified to meet local conditions and situations.

In order to provide a guide for activities that may be appropriate for the five Homeland Security Advisory System (HSAS) Levels, the U.S. Fire Administration's (USFA) Emergency Management and Response – Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) offers the following preparedness information to protect the infrastructures of fire/EMS and related departments/agencies. The preparedness actions below are not all inclusive, nor do they reflect all the variations in local conditions, agencies, and operations. They should, however, provide a good place to start development, or enhancement, of agency-specific plans. Agencies need to balance cost versus benefit of various proposed measures to determine the most cost effective activities.

PREPARATORY CONSIDERATIONS

Information/Planning

1. Periodically review, maintain familiarity with, and practice all agency operating plans (*e.g.*, standard operating procedures, plans, orders, *etc.*).
2. Develop system to obtain access to all agency facilities after hours.
3. Review all agency/jurisdiction plans and requirements related to elevated threat conditions. Develop a threat condition plan if not already in place.
4. If appropriate, review and coordinate security measures with law enforcement for senior or high profile agency personnel.
5. Assist in development or review of the department/jurisdiction's Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan.
6. Assist in development or review of the department/jurisdiction's Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Plan.
7. Keep key contact and phone lists current, including your jurisdiction, mutual aid, voluntary and private sector agencies that assist the fire and emergency services.
8. Consider developing a family emergency plan for safety/care of family without the emergency responder due to deployment to long-term incidents.
9. Consider organizing Family Support Teams from among family members to assist each other during emergencies when department members are committed for long periods.
10. Consider potential to support the staff and/or families at fire/EMS facilities during crises.
11. Ensure that personnel are trained on the agency's Threat Condition Plan.
12. Review appropriate crisis action plans (*i.e.*, hospitals, schools, major industries, *etc.*).
13. Review related mutual aid plans and procedures. Update/modify as needed.
14. Consider maintaining sufficient supplies of food, water, *etc.*, for staff held over or if stores are closed due to the crisis.

15. Update and expand dependable communications procedures for exchanging operational information with other agencies and departments. Ensure that common radio frequencies or radio frequency switching-integration systems are established and exercised among essential first responders, public health, ICS leadership, and policy makers.
16. Assess threats and vulnerabilities across the community to create specific response plans for key locations.
17. Consider pre-positioning or repositioning supplies, equipment, (*e.g.*, EMS supplies, spare SCBA cylinders, foam, *etc.*) apparatus, and staff for better access/coverage during crises.
18. Develop plans for returning to lower HSAS Threat Condition levels.
19. Develop plans to ensure adequate protective and DECON equipment is quickly accessible by mutual aid agreement for a local worst-case scenario (sports arena, largest office building, mass transit terminal, *etc.*).
20. Consider developing plans to ensure adequate capacity and fuel to support all essential sites/systems/apparatus for a minimum of 72 hours.
21. Consider developing plans for alternate water supplies in case the municipal supply is contaminated and shutdown or pumping stations are knocked offline by a regional blackout, earthquake, *etc.*
22. Consider developing and exercising detailed plans for the decontamination of first responder apparatus and equipment, as well as essential critical infrastructure support transportation such as buses, food and pharmaceutical trucks, *etc.*

Facility Security

1. Perform initial and annual agency facility threat and vulnerability assessments; apply countermeasures for those critical infrastructures that are both threatened and vulnerable. Seek advice/assistance from law enforcement or other security entities.
2. Ensure perimeter and parking area lighting is properly operating and lit during periods of limited visibility.
3. Assure that all computer systems and networks are operated in accordance with current information technology security measures.
4. Remind staff to remain attentive for unexplained odors, powders, liquids, *etc.*
5. Remain observant for and report any unusual or suspicious activity or people to appropriate fire department and law enforcement personnel. This activity should be reported to the Homeland Security Operations Center at (202) 323-3204/3205/3206 or nipc.watch@fbi.gov and/or the USFA EMR-ISAC at (301) 447-1325 emr-isac@dhs.gov.
6. If needed, work with law enforcement to develop a vehicular parking plan for safe distances next to and around agency facilities, including garages or underground/under building parking.
7. Implement the Critical Infrastructure Protection Process using the USFA CIP Job Aid: (<http://www.usfa.fema.gov/fire-service/cipc/cipc-jobaid.shtm>).

Personnel

1. Provide staff training on all related plans, SOPs, *etc.*
2. Keep staff informed of threat level and any special situations needing attention.
3. Consider preparation of personnel callback lists, if not already developed.
4. Consider devising new operating procedures that are designed for force protection, safety from terrorism, emergency assembly points, *etc.*
5. Consider that, if necessary, first responders and their families have priority access for immunization against biological threats (*e.g.* smallpox, anthrax, *etc.*).
6. Consider developing evacuation plans and give priority to first responder families.

Operations

1. Consider periodic drills/exercises with police, public health, National Guard, and HAZMAT/WMD teams, *etc.*
2. Assure 24/7 access to and availability of repair, maintenance, and towing services for apparatus.

LOW CONDITION (GREEN)

This condition is declared when there is a low risk of terrorist attacks. Fire departments and EMS agencies should consider the following general measures in addition to the agency-specific preparedness measures they develop and implement:

1. Refine and exercise as appropriate the preplanned preparedness measures.
2. Ensure personnel receive proper training on the HSAS and specific preplanned department or agency preparedness measures.
3. Institutionalize a process to assure that all critical infrastructures are periodically assessed for vulnerabilities to terrorist attacks, and all reasonable measures are taken to mitigate these vulnerabilities.

Preparedness Actions

Information/Planning

1. Monitor local, state, national and international terrorism activities as well as intelligence and threat information.
2. Adjust the department operating status based on HSAS Threat Level changes.
3. Review plans for implementing the Guarded (Blue) Threat Condition.

Facility Security

1. Maintain routine access control.
2. Continually watch for and report the presence of abandoned parcels, briefcases, *etc.*
3. Secure buildings, rooms, and storage areas not in regular use.

Personnel

1. Periodically remind all personnel to be suspicious and inquisitive about strangers, particularly those carrying packages, suitcases, or other containers. Avoid complacency.
2. Ensure computer and network access control mechanisms function properly and are used in accordance with established policies.
3. Immediately report suspicious or abnormal computer or network behavior to appropriate personnel.
4. Encourage personnel to prepare their families for potential crises by gathering needed supplies, *etc.*

Operations

1. Secure all apparatus and equipment when either unattended or not in use.
2. Arrange with law enforcement for limited access to the immediate area of an incident.
3. Diversify operational procedures to avoid consistent patterns.
4. Increase the vigilance by all personnel on scenes regardless of rank or position.
5. Encourage personnel to vary their routines and habits.
6. Instruct supervisors to pre-plan emergency responses with their personnel.

GUARDED CONDITION (BLUE)

This condition is declared when there is a general risk of terrorist attacks. In addition to the preparedness measures taken in the previous Threat Condition, fire departments and EMS agencies should consider the following general measures as well as the agency-specific preparedness measures that they will develop and implement:

1. Check communications with designated emergency response or command locations.
2. Review and update emergency response procedures.
3. Provide the public and private sectors with any information that would strengthen their ability to act appropriately.

Preparedness Actions

Continue all security measures for the previous Threat Condition and warn personnel of any potential terrorist threat.

Information/Planning

1. Conduct regularly scheduled meeting/conference calls with law enforcement to review emergency plans, access controls, incident command, force protection, and other issues.
2. Schedule periodic agency staff meetings to discuss planning and policies for security and infrastructure protection.
3. Review plans for implementing the Elevated (Yellow) Threat Condition.
4. Stay in contact with local/state/federal authorities and private sector agencies on threat and mutual response to terrorism measures.
5. Update and practice emergency action plans for single and multiple incidents.

Facility Security

1. Screen all visitors.
1. Deny entry to anyone who refuses inspection or fails to follow security guidance.
2. Require department identification for employees and implement a positive visitor identification and accountability system.
4. Increase vigilance and observations of areas surrounding agency facilities.
5. Direct agency mail-handlers and mail-deliverers to be more vigilant in handling and delivering mail. They need to look for powders, liquids, wires, *etc.*
6. Increase awareness and attention applied to computer and network access control measures.

Personnel

1. Periodically check callback or volunteer availability.
2. Keep all officers, supervisors, and special team leaders informed of conditions.
3. Provide training as needed to enhance staff ability to operate safely at terrorist, or suspected terrorist, Chemical, Biological, Radioactive, Nuclear and Explosives (CBRNE) incidents.

Operations

1. Check communications with law enforcement and other jurisdictions and agencies at least weekly.
2. Review, revise, or implement Incident Command and its Unified Command component.

ELEVATED CONDITION (YELLOW)

An Elevated Condition is declared when there is a significant risk of terrorist attacks. In addition to the preparedness measures taken in the previous Threat Conditions, fire departments and EMS agencies should consider the following general measures as well as the preparedness measures that they will develop and implement:

1. Increase scrutiny of critical agency locations.
2. Coordinate emergency plans as appropriate within the jurisdiction and with nearby jurisdictions and related private sector agencies.
3. Assess whether the precise characteristics of the threat require the further refinement of preplanned preparedness measures.
4. Implement contingency and emergency response plans as appropriate.

Preparedness Actions

Continue all security measures for previous Threat Conditions.

Information/Planning

1. Contact law enforcement at least weekly to exchange and disseminate threat and intelligence information.
2. Maintain contact with the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) or its equivalent. Periodically meet to make decisions of what to do, who will do it, *etc.* to respond to changing conditions/requirements.
3. Review plans for, and prepare to immediately implement the High (Orange) Threat Condition measures.
4. Assess and report new found or changed vulnerabilities.

Facility Security

1. Limit the number of access points to facilities.
2. Enforce access control procedures (100% ID check) and consider escorting unknown visitors.
3. Implement screening practices for incoming postal and electronic mail, phone calls, deliveries, and visitors.
4. Randomly inspect the security and condition of all facilities and HVAC systems.
5. Lock all facilities and require access control.
6. Periodically test security systems, back-up power systems, and emergency communications systems.
7. Review existing threat analysis and vulnerability assessments for department critical infrastructures. Apply new countermeasures if needed.

Personnel

1. Keep personnel informed in order to stop rumors and prevent unnecessary alarm.
2. Remind staff to maintain their personal and family emergency preparedness "go kits."
3. Require staff to review all pertinent special operations and terrorism related plans.

Operations

1. Consider placing selected emergency teams on a higher alert status based on the nature of the underlying threat.
2. Review and exercise emergency operations plans.
3. Request police assistance to periodically surveil apparatus located away from quarters.
4. Arrange with law enforcement to restrict access to the immediate area of an incident.
5. Vary response routes to avoid regular patterns. Establish the Command Post at a different position each time. Avoid predictability.
6. Prioritize training and investments in new resources to accomplish response plans.

HIGH CONDITION (ORANGE)

A High Condition is declared when there is a high risk of terrorist attacks. In addition to the preparedness measures taken in the previous Threat Conditions, fire departments and EMS agencies should consider the following general measures as well as the agency-specific preparedness measures that they will develop and implement:

1. Coordinate necessary security/preparedness efforts as directed by Federal, State, and local agencies.
2. Take additional precautions at those public events receiving agency participation, and possibly considering alternative venues or even cancellation.
3. Prepare to execute contingency procedures, such as moving to an alternate site or dispersing the agency workforce.
4. Restrict threatened facility access to essential personnel only.

Preparedness Actions

Continue all security measures for previous Threat Conditions.

Information/Planning

1. Contact law enforcement at least daily to collect and disseminate threat and intelligence information.
2. Identify public events of concern and caution employees to avoid participation or attendance.
3. Review plans for, and prepare to immediately implement, the Severe (Red) Threat Condition measures.
4. Track apparatus and equipment availability.
5. Review plans for returning to the lower HSAS level.
6. Keep the Public Information/Affairs Officer informed so he/she can accurately brief public officials, media, *etc.*
7. Maintain communications with related private sector agencies for status changes.

Facility Security

1. Search all bags, cases and parcels, including employee-carried.
2. Reduce visitations by non-department personnel.
3. Screen all personnel allowed to enter the facility such as repair workers, *etc.*
4. Consider escorting all required visitors.
5. Conduct regular, but randomly timed inspection tours of the facility exterior.
6. Limit access to computer facilities.
7. Consider restricting or prohibiting incoming traffic access to agency controlled underground/under building parking garages.

Personnel

1. Alert staff to situation and any special considerations.
2. Place the on-call Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Team on a higher alert status.
3. Place the off-call EOC Team(s) on alert (if multiple EOC teams).
4. Notify special team leaders of situation.
5. Implement additional security measures for senior or high profile personnel, if required.

Operations

1. Review and practice incident handling procedures under High Condition (Orange).
2. Reaffirm communications lines.
3. Consider partial activation of the EOC.
4. Arrange with law enforcement for aggressive restriction to the incident area.
5. Conduct pre-event security checks followed by extra inspections as necessary for all public events.

SEVERE CONDITION (RED)

This condition reflects a severe risk of terrorist attacks. Under most circumstances, the preparedness measures for a Severe Condition will not be sustained for substantial periods and may be implemented on a local, regional, or state level based on specific threat intelligence. In addition to the preparedness measures in the previous Threat Conditions, fire and EMS departments should also consider the following general measures as well as the agency-specific preparedness measures that they will develop and implement:

1. Increase or redirect personnel to address critical emergency needs.
2. Assign emergency response personnel; mobilize and pre-position specially trained teams or resources if appropriate based on specific threat information.
3. Consider requesting the redirection of transportation systems in very close proximity to department critical infrastructures.
4. Consider closing non-essential public and government facilities.

Preparedness Actions

Continue all security measures for previous Threat Conditions.

Information/Planning

1. Review staffing levels for appropriateness.
2. Contact law enforcement once daily, or more frequently if the situation warrants, to exchange threat and intelligence information.
3. Consider preparation to support short-term housing of employees and families in agency facilities if necessary.
4. Review and/or modify plans and actions in response to specific threat information, including potential for relocation of personnel or resources.
5. Plan for alternate service delivery means in case of disruption of normal operations.

Facility Security

1. Close and secure all non-emergency or other unnecessary facilities.
2. Close fire/EMS department controlled underground/under building parking garages to incoming traffic.
3. Shut down all nonessential network and computer systems.
4. Provide added security to fire/EMS facilities as needed (*e.g.*, 9-1-1 center, communications center, Emergency Operating Center, *etc.*)
5. Assure all empty stations and other facilities are properly secured. Set alarms if installed.

Personnel

1. Alert on-duty staff to situation and any special considerations based on threat(s).
2. Consider need for releasing non-emergency/non-critical personnel.
3. Consider activating the EOC staff for minimal staffing.
4. Place the off-call EOC Team(s) on higher alert status (if multiple teams).
5. Notify special teams as needed.

Operations

1. Activate other pertinent emergency plans.
2. Consider staffing levels of the Emergency Operations Center (consider full staffing based on threat(s) or potential), 9-1-1 center, dispatch center, *etc.*
3. Pre-position or reposition apparatus if required.
4. Keep all apparatus and staff in quarters except for responses.
5. Arrange with law enforcement to close access to the area of an incident.
6. Consider pre-positioning or relocating equipment and supplies (*e.g.*, EMS supplies, foam, *etc.*).

HELPFUL LINKS

Federal Links

Department of Homeland Security

<http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?theme=29>

Federal Emergency Management Agency

<http://www.fema.gov>

State Links

California Office of Emergency Services

[http://www.oes.ca.gov/Operational/OESHome.nsf/PDF/HomelandSecGuide/\\$file/HomelandSecGuide.pdf](http://www.oes.ca.gov/Operational/OESHome.nsf/PDF/HomelandSecGuide/$file/HomelandSecGuide.pdf)

Illinois Terrorism Task Force

<http://www.state.il.us/iema/ILHSASMnl.pdf>

New Jersey Division of Fire Safety

<http://www.state.nj.us/dca/dfs/firedepartmenthsasguide.doc>

Organization Links

American Red Cross

<http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/hsas.html>

International Association of Fire Chiefs

<http://www.ichiefs.org/downloads/hscoloralert.pdf>

Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations

<http://www.jcaho.org/about+us/public+policy+initiatives/emergency+preparedness.pdf>

Volunteer Firemen's Insurance Services

<http://www.vfis.com/pdf/TerrorismAssessmentMatrix.pdf>