Learning Objective: *The student shall be able to explain the benefits of electronic pre-incident planning.*

Pre-incident plans (such as site plans, floor plans, hazardous materials (hazmat) information, lists and locations of persons with special needs, structure and construction types, hydrant and Geographic Information System (GIS) maps, utility shutoff locations, etc.) are designed to maximize performance at any response. They familiarize first responders with the critical building features they need to reduce risk for themselves and the citizens they protect, in addition to mitigating potential property damage. Not only does International Fire Code (1408.2) require any building under construction to have a full prefire plan, but National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1620, *Recommended Practice for Pre-Incident Planning* states that "a pre-incident plan is one of the most valuable tools available for aiding responding personnel in effectively controlling an emergency."

Pre-incident planning is needed to maximize performance at any response.

The impact that an up-to-date and readily accessible preplan has on command is immeasurable. In addition to aiding situational awareness and deployment, a first responder who has pre-incident plan information is better prepared to handle the intangibles that any incident might present.

Pre-incident plans and the critical facility information they contain should reflect current conditions.

Thorough pre-incident planning is a great deal more than compiling a binder of old drawings and plans. It's about information gathering and analysis, an application of possible scenarios for planning, training, review, and, in the event of an incident, application. Pre-incident planning, as a practice and standard, is a total concept based on the following six factors:

1.   Situational awareness.

2.   Management commitment.

3.   Education.

4.   Prevention.

5.   Protection.

6.   Emergency organization.

The widespread and expanding standard of the mobile data computer (MDC) has become an invaluable asset for emergency responders. From dispatch to mapping, reporting, and incident command, the inclusion and acceptance of technology has made safety professionals better equipped and more effective. Using in-vehicle MDCs, mobile tablets, or desktop computers, responders have immediate access to compiled preplan data. Programs have been developed to allow real-time access to critical information. With these technologies readily available, a systematic protocol for pre-incident planning in municipalities of all sizes should be established. There is no need for a team of first responders to unnecessarily risk entering a situation without the knowledge they need to respond effectively.