



LEPCs and Deliberate Releases: Addressing Terrorist Activities in the Local Emergency Plan

In recent years, the threat of terrorist incidents involving chemical and biological materials has increased. Local emergency planning committees (LEPCs) should consider the possibility of terrorist events as they review existing plans and consider how to incorporate counter-terrorism (CT) measures into their plans. CT planning and preparedness is often an extension of existing activities, rather than a totally new effort. This factsheet discusses how LEPCs can incorporate CT issues when they review and update their local plans. This factsheet builds on the National Response Team's Hazardous Materials Emergency Planning Guide (NRT-1) and supersedes "Thinking about Deliberate Releases: Steps Your Community Can Take."



FACTSHEET

BUILD ON CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Local emergency planning committees (LEPCs), established under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA), prepare and maintain comprehensive emergency plans. These plans address the extremely hazardous substances listed under EPCRA as well as thousands of hazardous chemicals for which OSHA requires Material Safety Data Sheets. Many LEPCs are already addressing CT, even if they do not use the word "terrorism." If you have developed a plan for possible accidental releases of chemicals in your community, you can use the same general planning principles for deliberate releases caused by terrorists. You may need to spend some time considering biological agents. This factsheet includes some suggestions for how you can modify your current activities to include deliberate chemical and biological releases.

MAINTAIN BROAD-BASED MEMBERSHIP

LEPC membership includes a wide variety of stakeholders, such as elected

State and local officials; police; fire, civil defense, public health, environmental, hospital, and transportation officials; representatives of facilities where chemicals are stored or used; community groups; public works departments; and the media. Identify any specific roles each of these groups might have in the event of a terrorist attack. In addition, you might add a few new members who would bring specific expertise during a release involving biological agents (e.g., the coroner, morticians, chemistry and biology labs, university experts).

UPDATE AND REVISE YOUR PLANS

LEPCs should review their emergency response plans annually. Before you begin specific consideration of CT issues, ensure that your emergency plan is up-to-date. Simply adding CT materials to an outdated plan will not create an effective emergency plan. For example, review your plan for outdated contact information, unique hazards presented by facilities that may have been constructed after the emergency response plan was first written, or new public works facilities. Also review the annual inventory reports filed under EPCRA Section 312 to determine if new chemicals or hazards are present in your community.

In addition, check Risk Management Plans submitted by facilities in your community to ensure that you address the specific hazards identified by each facility. After you have generally updated your plan, consider adding information and procedures related to potential terrorist incidents involving weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Table 1 (page 6) defines each type of WMD and explains the consequences and response difficulties associated with each type.

One overall difference in dealing with a WMD incident is that law enforcement officials will be involved in the response as investigators. Officials from local, State, and Federal agencies will be on the scene of an incident to collect evidence and interview survivors. Their priorities may create emergency response coordination challenges that your LEPC should address in its plan.

This portion of the factsheet suggests changes you can make to specific sections of your emergency plan.

Emergency Contact Information

In the event of a terrorist incident, rapid and secure communications will be crucial to ensure a prompt and coordinated response. Your plans should include current contact information for fire, emergency medical services (EMS), law enforcement, medical, and other local departments and supporting organizations. Contact information for State officials, including those at public health agencies, the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC), State Police, and emergency management agencies also should be included.

The emergency assistance telephone roster in your emergency response plan should include regular phone numbers, cell phone numbers, pager numbers, and other emergency contact information for those individuals (Federal, State, local, and private sector) who have specific CT functions. The National Response Center (NRC) continues to be the sole Federal point of contact for reporting oil and chemical spills, and now provides the service of the Chemical and Biological Hotline. The NRC telephone number (800-424-8802) should be part of your emergency plan. NRC Duty Officers take reports of actual or potential domestic terrorism and link emergency calls with the Department of Defense (DOD) for technical advice on dealing with weapons of mass destruction and with the FBI to initiate the Federal

response actions. The NRC also provides reports and notifications to other Federal agencies as necessary. All local plans should also include contact information for the local FBI Field Office.

Response Functions

Incident Command/Unified Command. Your emergency plan should address direction and control of responders in the event of terrorist attack. Local responders respond to an incident scene and should notify local, State, and Federal authorities if terrorism appears to be involved. Local response authorities (such as a senior fire or law enforcement official) should establish control of the incident scene. The Incident Command System (ICS) that is initially established will likely transition into a Unified Command (UC). The UC structure used at the scene will expand as mutual-aid partners, and State and Federal responders arrive to assist with response operations.

The FBI is the overall Lead Federal Agency (LFA) for a domestic terrorist incident involving WMD and will lead the crisis management activities (including law enforcement activities) of the response.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is the lead agency for coordination of Federal support to State and local responders during consequence management activities of the response. Although the FBI is always involved in response to a credible terrorist threat or attack, FEMA support is provided only after a Presidential declaration, typically after State and local agencies request their assistance. Consequence management includes measures to protect public health and safety after an explosion or release; restore essential government services; and provide emergency relief to governments, business, and individuals. When crisis management activities have been completed, the U.S. Attorney General may transfer the overall Lead Federal Agency role to FEMA. EPA, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and DOD also have specific CT-related functions. EPA's role in counter-terrorism activities is described in a factsheet by that name, available at www.epa.gov/ceppo/ct-publ.htm#factsheet.

Public Information. Rapid and secure communications help to ensure a prompt and coordinated response to terrorist activities. Therefore, strengthening communications among emergency responders, law enforcement officials, clinicians, emergency rooms, hospitals, and mass care providers is extremely important. Your emergency plan should include the use of accurate and timely public notification measures and warning systems in the event of a terrorist attack. Work in advance with local news media representatives to ensure their cooperation at the time of an incident. Ongoing communication of accurate and up-to-date information will help calm fears and limit the effects of the attack. The FBI will establish a Joint Information Center (JIC) to coordinate the collection and dissemination of public information.

EPA's Role in the Federal Response Plan

The multi-agency disaster response program that helps states during and after a disaster is the Federal Response Plan (FRP), which groups Federal assistance into 12 functional areas called Emergency Support Functions (ESFs). EPA is the primary agency for ESF 10, Hazardous Materials, which provides for a coordinated response to large-scale releases of hazardous materials by incorporating the response mechanisms of the National Contingency Plan (NCP). EPA assists in determining what sort of hazardous substance may be, or has been, released in a terrorist incident, and follows up with response to the incident, assisting with environmental monitoring, decontamination, and long-term site cleanup.

Activities of human services organizations, such as the Red Cross, should be included in the emergency plan. Among other activities, these organizations may use public information systems to provide human services information to the community, perform crisis counseling, provide insurance information and assistance, and provide translation services.

Public and First Responder Health and Safety. Your emergency plan should address public health and medical issues as they relate to terrorist events. The plan should include procedures to identify and treat victims, store and distribute antidotes, and handle fatalities. Mass care issues that may be different during a terrorist WMD event include decontamination,

multihazard/multiagent triage, mortuary services, and notifying and working with families of any fatalities.

The emergency plan should also consider the personal safety of emergency responders in the event of a terrorist attack. A terrorist chemical, biological, or radiological release may not be immediately known or apparent. Caregivers, emergency response and law enforcement personnel, and other first responders are in danger of becoming casualties before anyone realizes that a crime has occurred. Incidents could escalate quickly from one scene to multiple locations and jurisdictions.

The emergency plan should be flexible enough to accommodate evacuation or in-place sheltering. Evacuation may be required outside the perimeter of the scene to guard against further casualties from contamination by a released agent or from the possibility of additional WMD. In-place sheltering may be required if the area must be quarantined or if people are safer in a particular location.

Hazards Analysis

The hazards analysis section of an emergency plan should identify potential hazards, determine the vulnerability of an area as a result of hazards, and assess the risk of a hazardous materials release or spill. In the identification step, you should consider explosive, chemical, biological, and nuclear WMD as potential hazards.

As you conduct your hazards analysis, identify potential targets and review their vulnerability to attack. Consider the population, accessibility, impact on daily life, economic impact, and symbolic value of areas at risk. Terrorists and criminals who want to attack a particular group based on a conflict with their personal beliefs might target Federal, State, or local government offices and facilities, health clinics, or religious structures. Those who want to cause maximum casualties might target public gathering places (such as sports and entertainment complexes or tourist attractions), modes of transportation (such as buses and trains – including subways), routes of transportation (including bridges), or transportation facilities (such as airport terminals). In order to damage infrastructure and interrupt day-to-day functions, a terrorist might target utilities or water and wastewater treatment plants. LEPCs should also consider emergency procedures in the event of

multiple, or simultaneous, terrorist attacks. Terrorists might target first responders (e.g., fire houses, police department offices, response vehicles, and individuals) to hinder them from responding to another terrorist incident. A terrorist may seek to transform a target into a weapon by focusing on facilities that handle explosive, toxic, or volatile chemicals.

Because most public buildings and public areas must be accessible to everyone, they are highly vulnerable to attack. Other facilities, such as water treatment plants and industrial facilities, especially those with chemical or explosives storage, should have site security measures in place. You may want to discuss site security measures with these facilities to ensure that they are adequately protected. You may want to ask the facility the following questions:

- Is the facility or critical equipment and chemicals protected by fences or buildings?
- Are there systems to detect intruders (e.g., patrols, video surveillance)?
- Are there alarm systems?
- Is access to the critical areas controlled?

Do not, however, include details of the security systems in your emergency plan, because it is available to the general public.

Public works facilities and workers will assume a support role, if so requested by State and local agencies. This support role might include damage assessment, debris clearance, search and rescue, traffic control, restoration of lifeline systems, building inspection, provision of potable water and sanitation services, and flood control.

For more information on site security, read CEPPPO's Chemical Safety Alerts *Chemical Accident Prevention: Site Security* (EPA K-550-F00-002) and *Anhydrous Ammonia Theft* (EPA-F-00-005), available at www.epa.gov/ceppo/p-small.htm#alerts.

Mitigation Procedures and Ongoing Assessment

Mitigation procedures and ongoing assessment involve consequence management activities to assess and protect the public from further exposure to hazards presented by terrorist activities. Public health officials, hazmat teams, coroners and/or medical examiners, and criminal investigators should work together to mitigate residual hazards as well as identify potentially large

numbers of fatalities. Federal assistance should be available to support this task. Ongoing assessment activities may include environmental sampling of air, water, and soil, and insect and animal screening for chemical, biological, or radiological agents.

The criminal investigation of a terrorist attack will be a joint effort that includes many agencies. In the event of a biological attack, an epidemiological investigation may also be performed to assess the distribution of cases and sources of outbreak. The emergency plan could include a checklist of basic questions to ask when conducting interviews with victims in hospitals, sick officers, and other individuals in affected population groups. (It may be necessary to train people in how to ask such questions appropriately in stressful circumstances.)

Equipment

Your emergency response plan should include standard operating procedures on when to use specialized WMD response equipment. Local responders should be trained to use, maintain, and calibrate this specialized equipment. The Department of Justice's Office for State and Local Domestic Preparedness Support (OSLDPS) provides equipment grants and technical assistance to eligible communities. Visit their website at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/terrorism/funding.htm> for more information and grant application kits.

Training

The 1996 Nunn-Lugar-Domenici (NLD) legislation authorized funding to form a Domestic Preparedness (DP) training initiative. This initiative was recently transferred from DOD to the Department of Justice (DOJ), and includes a range of specialized courses, from basic awareness to discipline-specific advanced level training and exercises.

Training is available for identified cities and is directed at a broad spectrum of emergency responders from a variety of response disciplines, including fire, hazardous materials, law enforcement, emergency medical services, public health, emergency management, and public works. Additional advanced level courses involving the use of real-time experiences, live agents, and explosives are taught at cutting edge training facilities.

The NLD DP Program also includes three exercises: a chemical weapons tabletop, a biological weapons tabletop, and a chemical weapons full-scale exercise. Both types of exercises allow participants to test their knowledge and training, as well as increase the overall preparedness of responders across the jurisdiction.

FEMA independently offers the following:

- Course materials on WMD and preparedness and response for terrorist incidents that can be downloaded from www.fema.gov/emi/termng.htm.
- A terrorism consequence management course at their Mount Weather Emergency Assistance Center. Contact the training officer in your State Training Office of Emergency Services for information on course schedules and application procedures. A list of offices and contact information is located at www.fema.gov/emi/sttrgo.htm.
- Information on the Incident Command System (ICS) training conducted by each State Training Office of Emergency Services. Visit www.fema.gov/emi/nrcrs.htm for more details.
- In conjunction with the National Fire Academy, an independent study course in emergency response to terrorism, located at www.fema.gov/emi/crslist.htm.

RESOURCES

LEPCs seeking assistance in terrorism-related emergency planning should begin with their SERCs. The SERC can direct LEPCs to appropriate assistance at the national and State level, and may be able to facilitate LEPCs in a given region working together to address possible terrorist activities.

There are currently many Federal agencies involved in some aspect of counter-terrorism. Many of these agencies support websites. Because of the continual changes in the world of CT, however, many websites become outdated or are even discontinued without warning. Therefore, we recommend that LEPCs consult EPA's Chemical Emergency Preparedness and Prevention Office (CEPPO) website at www.epa.gov/ceppo/cntr-ter.html. This address is updated every two months and includes the latest links to the following types of information: Federal departments and agencies, health and medical, technical information and resources, and international sources.

For More Information:

Contact the EPCRA Hotline at:

(800) 424-9346 or (703) 412-9810

TDD (800) 553-7672

Monday - Friday, 9 AM to 6 PM, EST

Visit the CEPPO Home Page at:

www.epa.gov/ceppo/

Table 1			
Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Definitions, Consequences, and Response Difficulties			
Type of WMD	Definition (according to Title 18, USC 2332a)	Consequences	Response Difficulties
Explosives	Any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas bomb, grenade, rocket ... missile ... mine or device similar to the above	Deaths, injuries, damaged structures	Similar to that of other explosions and large fires
Chemical	Poison gas, blister gas	Deaths, injuries, possible contamination, possible long-term effects	Similar to accidents planned for in current LEPC emergency response plan, but could be more extensive in effect (e.g., VX release in a crowded convention center or school)
Biological	Any weapon involving a disease organism	Deaths, injuries, contamination, long-term, far-reaching geographic effects	Agents may be unknown; Locations may vary and multiply as people travel
Nuclear	Any weapon that is designed to release radiation or radioactivity at a level dangerous to human life	Deaths, injuries, contamination, possible long-term, far-reaching effects	Similar to that of other explosions and large fires plus radiation; could have long-term far-reaching effects