



Preparedness News and Information

From FEMA's Office of National Preparedness

May 9, 2003

NATIONAL NEWS

Terrorism Response Drill Begins Next Week

GovExec, May 5, 2003

TOPOFF 2, a weeklong exercise, run by the Homeland Security and State departments and involving about 19 federal agencies, the Red Cross and state governments will kick off the first large-scale homeland security drill since Sept. 11.

- [U.S. Planning Response Tests in Two Cities Next Week](#), *NY Times*, May 5
- ["TOPOFF 2" Week-Long National Combating Terror Exercise Begins May 12](#), *Department of Homeland Security*, May 5
- [DHS Poised for Mock Terror Attacks](#), *Federal Computer Week*, May 6

U.S. Looks to Curb Rising Cost of Natural Disasters

Post-Gazette, May 7, 2003

Even though the current wave of deadly tornadoes in Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, Missouri, Kansas and Kentucky has barely ended, members of Congress are getting ready for what has become an annual ritual -- putting in requests for disaster assistance to compensate local businesses and homes for tornado-related damage.

Security Agency to do Background Checks on Hazardous Material Drivers

GovExec, May 6, 2003

U.S. commercial driver's license holders who want to be authorized to transport hazardous materials will have to undergo federal background checks under interim Transportation Department rules.

Homeland Security CIO: "No Digital Pearl Harbor Likely"

Tech Web, May 7, 2003

Homeland Security CIO lists his top priorities for the department as completing its architecture and road map, integrating various governmental terrorist watch lists and distributing the integrated list to local law-enforcement agencies, creating an information-exchange environment with the first-responder community, sharing threat and intelligence information with local law enforcement; and determining critical infrastructure risks.

- [IT Officials Emphasize Need for Emergency Backup Systems](#), *GovExec*, May 7
- [Roadmap for Homeland Security Department Takes Shape](#), *GovExec*, May 8

Officials Weigh Unique Challenges of Information Sharing

GovExec, May 7, 2003

Officials from the Defense and Homeland Security departments on Wednesday described their ongoing efforts to achieve federal, state and local unity on data needed in the event of national disasters or terrorist attacks.

Report: U.S. Ill Equipped to Handle SARS

Akron Beacon Journal, May 8, 2003

America's public health system - especially its front-line emergency rooms - is not ready for an outbreak of SARS or a similar infectious disease, according to a new government report and top trauma doctors.

- [US Agents Being Trained to Spot SARS](#), *Associated Press*, May 7

CONGRESS

Homeland Security Answers to Everyone

USA Today, May 5, 2003

Nearly six months after Congress voted to reorganize the federal government by combining 22 agencies and 180,000 employees into one Cabinet-level Department of Homeland Security, the House and Senate have not significantly streamlined their own operations to deal with it.

Homeland Official Outlines Budget Plan for Border Protection

GovExec, May 6, 2003

Testifying before the Senate Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee, Asa Hutchinson, head of the department's border and transportation security directorate, cited programs such as the Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism and the Container Security Initiative as reasons for seeking a bureau budget of \$6.7 billion in fiscal 2004.

- [Dems Demand More Cash for Port Security](#), *Washington Times*, May 6

Lawmakers Question Bioterror Readiness of Public Health System

GovExec, May 6, 2003

Members of a House Government Reform subcommittee on Monday expressed their concern that while the country's public health system has come a long way in preparing for a bioterrorist attack, it still has a long way to go.

- [Administration Throws Breaks on House Bioshield Bill](#), *GovExec*, May 8

Senate Deal Kills Effort to Extend Antiterror Act

NY Times, May 9, 2003

Senate Republicans backed down from an effort to make permanent the sweeping antiterrorism powers in a 2001 act, clearing the way for passage of a less divisive measure that would still expand the government's ability to spy on foreign terrorist suspects in the United States.

BILLS RECENTLY INTRODUCED

- **S.994:** A bill to protect human health and the environment from the release of hazardous substances by acts of terrorism, *Senate Environment and Public Works*, May 5

- **H.R.2012:** To require the Secretary of Defense to implement fully by September 30, 2004, requirements for additional Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Teams, *House Armed Services Committee, May 7*

RECENT HEARINGS

- [Homeland Security: Improving Public Health Surveillance](#), House Government Reform Committee, May 5, 2003
- [FY2004 Appropriations for Border and Transportation Security](#), Senate Committee on Appropriations, May 6, 2003
- [National Security Personnel](#), House Government Reform Committee, May 6, 2003

STATE AND LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Officials Start Work on Devens Emergency Plan

Shirley Oracle, May 2, 2003

The newly formed Devens Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) started organizing subcommittees to carry along work on three crucial projects at its second meeting on Tuesday.

Region Expects Anti-Terror Funds

Erie Times-News, May 6, 2003

Local critical incident responders expect a portion of the \$49 million in homeland security funds headed to Pennsylvania to help them be better prepared and equipped for whatever disastrous events come its way.

Woodford Recruits Emergency Volunteers

Lexington Herald Leader, May 4, 2003

The Woodford County Health Department is enlisting volunteers who would assist firefighters and other emergency personnel after a tornado, flood or even a bioterrorist event, such as a smallpox outbreak.

Caroline to Introduce New 911 Equipment

Free Lance-Star, May 6, 2003

To fulfill the state requirement for 911 systems to have wireless tracking capabilities, the county will implement a new digital system equipped with a mapping program to identify towers during cell-phone calls and putting rescuers within a one-mile radius of a caller.

Emergency Crews Tested in Staged Full-Scale Disaster

KARE 11, May 3, 2003

The Metropolitan Medical Response System staged a full-scale disaster drill at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds involving a large explosion and chemical release, with multiple mock injuries and fatalities.

Emergency Alert System Up and Running

Manchester Enterprise, May 8, 2003

Manchester's new severe weather alert siren, operated by the Washtenaw County Emergency Management Division, is capable of different sounds but at this time the only one utilized is the steady three to five-minute blast that will be used for tornado warnings.

Municipal Leaders Learn Their Place in Homeland Security

Press of Atlantic City, May 8, 2003

According to Atlantic County Executive Dennis Levinson, most officials such as mayors, councilmen and administrators, don't typically participate in an emergency on-scene command structure although they play a vital role and provide essential support.

Official Impressed with Hawaii Terrorism Preparedness

KITV 4, May 7, 2003

Hawaii received high praise Tuesday night from the federal Department of Defense when Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's top assistant said the state's readiness to handle a major terrorist attack is among the best in the nation.

County to Simulate Terror Attack at Letterkenny to Test Preparedness

Public Opinion, May 7, 2003

A simulated terrorist attack on Letterkenny Army Depot will test Franklin County's emergency preparedness this weekend, as attackers attempt to crash through barriers and cause an explosion.

FEMA Head Visits Areas Hit by Tornadoes

Federal Emergency Management Agency, May 7, 2003

Michael D. Brown, Undersecretary for the Department of Homeland Security and Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), met with state officials Tuesday, May 6 to tour areas damaged by the recent devastating tornadoes.

RELATED INFORMATION

RECENT REPORTS

- [Adding Flexibility and Purpose to Domestic Preparedness Grant Programs](#), *Heritage Foundation*, May 6, 2003
- [SARS Outbreak: Improvement to Public Health Capacity are Needed for Responding to Bioterrorism and Emerging Infectious Diseases](#), GAO-03-769T, May 2003
- [Homeland Security Information Sharing Responsibilities, Challenges, and Key Management Issues](#), GAO-03-715T, May 2003

The information contained in this newsletter was collected from Internet sources. Opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the official position of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Office of National Preparedness.