



The InfoGram

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The U.S. Fire Administration maintains the **Emergency Management and Response – Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC)**.

For information regarding the EMR-ISAC visit www.usfa.dhs.gov/emr-isac or contact the EMR-ISAC office at: (301) 447-1325 and/or emr-isac@fema.dhs.gov.

Preventive Anthrax Meds for First Responders

Initial response to a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or explosive (CBRNE) incident generally falls on the local emergency services personnel. This has the potential to put responders in a situation where they could be exposed to an agent despite using proper procedures or PPE.

In a recent letter, the Departments of Homeland Security and Health and Human Services address the proposed action of [preventative and proactive anthrax prescriptions for first responders](#). Immediate access to medications will allow first responders to continue their duties, if necessary, with limited interruption.

This program is entirely voluntary. First responders can elect to request and fill a 10-day initial prescription for doxycycline at their own expense. The antibiotics would be kept at home and used only “when instructed by a public health official if an actual anthrax emergency occurs.” The remaining 50 days of the regimen would need to be filled from the same place the public would receive their medications, which would be announced by public health officials.

Two other informational sheets are available:

- [Doxycycline Information Sheet for First Responders: Options to Purchase Antibiotics for Anthrax Preparedness](#) (PDF, 377 Kb), and
- [Doxycycline Information Sheet for Health Care Professionals: First Responder Voluntary Option to Purchase Anthrax Post-exposure Prophylaxis Antibiotics](#) (PDF, 48 Kb).

(Source: [DHS](#))

Responding to Biodiesel Facilities and Fires

A huge [fire and two explosions at a biodiesel plant in Mississippi](#) last week reduced the entire plant to rubble and heat “was so high that firefighters could not get close enough to battle it.” The explosions knocked out power to the surrounding community. The fire was left to burn out and was finally extinguished 2 days later.

Biodiesel plants in operation around the country pose a life and safety threat to fire personnel and communities in the event of fires or accidents. Incidents last year in [Alabama](#), [Kansas](#), [Arizona](#), and [Missouri](#) caused some evacuations and in some cases the plants were completely destroyed.

The InfoGram is distributed weekly to provide members of the Emergency Services Sector with information concerning the protection of their critical infrastructures.

One cause for concern for fire departments is the [variety of chemicals](#) stored at these plants. In addition to the vegetable oil or animal fat being processed, methanol, isopropanol, and butanol are usually present on site since the oil must be mixed with an alcohol during production. Biodiesel itself is much less flammable than other fuels like kerosene, but the alcohols stored on site have low flashpoints.

There are several resources available for fire officials looking for information:

- [Biodiesel Response Considerations Training Package](#) – co-sponsored by the International Association of Fire Chiefs and the National Biodiesel Board;
- [Biodiesel Production: The Code Official's Perspective](#) (PDF, 389 Kb) – produced by the Connecticut State Fire Marshal's Office (PDF, 389 Kb); and
- [Biofuels and Emerging Issues for First Responders](#) (PDF, 1.04 Mb) – produced by the Environmental Protection Agency.

(Source: [National Hazardous Materials Fusion Center](#))

ESS Resilience Development Webinar Series

Please join the [Emergency Services Sector-Specific Agency](#) on Thursday, February 20, 2014, for the first installment in the Emergency Services Sector- Resilience Development Webinar Series (ESS-RDWS). The webinar is from 10-11am, EST. The call-in number and pin code are listed on the [attached flyer](#) (PDF, 67 Kb).

The ESS-RDWS will be an ongoing Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP) series concentrated on the first responder, focusing on education and awareness, capacity building, and knowledge validation. This month's topic titled "Continuity of Operations for First Responders" will focus on Essential Functions and Test, Training, and Exercise Program, which are Elements of Viable Continuity Capability.

Deputy Chief Jeff Dulin of the Charlotte Fire Department will discuss first responder COOP planning in preparation for the Democratic National Convention. The uniform approach to continuity planning, methodically identified Mission Essential Functions (MEFs), and a Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) validated continuity of operations plans.

(Source: [Emergency Services Sector-Specific Agency](#))

Saline is Latest in Drug Shortage Problems

One of the latest products in the nationwide drug shortage is intravenous hydration solutions, especially Sodium chloride 0.9% injection bags. The American Society of Health-System Pharmacists posted [details on this shortage](#) to their website, citing increased demand as the cause.

The site suggests substitutions available for use, such as lower concentrations of Sodium Chloride, alternative intravenous fluids, or oral hydration where possible. They also list related shortages and estimated resupply dates as reported from the manufacturers involved.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) hosts a page listing all known [drug shortages across the country](#). Drugs are listed alphabetically with as much detail as possible. There is also a list of resolved drug shortages, and a list of discontinued drugs.

(Source: [American Society of Health-System Pharmacists](#))

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For information specifically affecting the private sector critical infrastructure contact the **National Infrastructure Coordinating Center** by phone at **202-282-9201**, or by email at nicc@dhs.gov.