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- Target Folder
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PRIMARY DISCIPLINES

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BEST PRACTICE

Pre-Incident Site Planning: Overview

PURPOSE

This document presents an overview of a collection of Best Practices that recommend pre-incident planning procedures and guidelines. Pre-incident planning involves the collection and storage of critical site data and characteristics about target hazard sites by emergency responders. Pre-incident plans (also called target folders) can improve the effectiveness of responses to terrorist and emergency incidents.

SUMMARY

Emergency responders require extensive amounts of detailed yet easily understandable information in the event of an attack or other emergency at potential terrorist targets (also called target hazard sites). These sites may present unique challenges to emergency responders due to their size, complexity, population density, symbolic nature, and/or presence of hazardous materials (HazMat).

Pre-incident site planning will ensure that important location-specific information is readily available to emergency responders in a standardized format. Public safety officials need to work with on-site personnel to collect, analyze, and disseminate pre-incident site plan information.

These Best Practices outline an approach to pre-incident site planning that emphasizes public safety and incorporates other response personnel. Building upon the inspection and pre-incident site planning processes used by fire departments and HazMat personnel, these Best Practices describe procedures for gathering, analyzing, and storing a broad range of information, such as mechanical system shutoffs, evacuation routes, on-site hazards, and other data for potential target hazard sites.

These Best Practices offer a comprehensive method to pre-incident site planning. The practices highlight, where appropriate, a tiered approach to site pre-planning that differentiates between tactical, "quick action" pre-plans and comprehensive, strategic pre-plans. Tactical, "quick action" pre-plans provide an initial tactical overview of a site while comprehensive strategic pre-plans provide more in-depth and detailed information about a site. This tiered approach is useful because the information required during the initial minutes of a response may differ from that needed for longer, more strategic responses.

BEST PRACTICES OUTLINE

- The Pre-Planning Team
 - Pre-Planning Leadership
 - Pre-Planning Managers
 - Pre-Planning Developers
- Generating Pre-Plan Requirements
- Selecting Sites to Pre-Plan
- Initiating and Conducting a Pre-Plan Site Visit
 - General Site Data
 - Site Hazards
 - Site Contacts
 - Staging, Evacuation, and Tactical Areas
 - Emergency Response Requirements
 - Mechanical Systems and Site Infrastructure
 - Site Surrounding Area
 - Structural Information
- Storing the Pre-Plan Information
 - Lockboxes and Pre-Plan Information

BACKGROUND

Pre-incident planning is largely based on pre-fire planning and inspection procedures. Whether informally or formally, fire departments generally survey their local jurisdictions for potentially hazardous sites, familiarize themselves with the site, and assess tactical and strategic considerations for responding to an emergency in these locations.

In 1986, the Environmental Protection Agency's [Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act \(EPCRA\)](#) was signed into law. This law required newly created [local emergency planning committees \(LEPCs\)](#) to prepare emergency response plans for facilities that house dangerous quantities of certain hazardous materials. The EPCRA was the first systematic, top-down effort to collect critical pre-incident information about potentially hazardous sites. Since the passage of the EPCRA, every US state and territory has enacted similar [right-to-know laws or regulations](#).

As the result of a large warehouse fire, which occurred shortly after the passage of the EPCRA, the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) began working on its own standard for pre-incident site planning, issuing recommended practices for warehouse pre-plans. *NFPA 1420: Recommended Practice for Pre-Incident Planning for Warehouse Occupancies* was adopted in 1993 and a broader version, [NFPA 1620: Recommended Practice for Pre-Incident Planning](#) was adopted in 1998. While many fire departments had been conducting pre-fire planning long before the NFPA codes, these documents represented the first national official guidance on pre-planning activities.

The field of pre-incident planning has begun to extend beyond the traditional activities of HazMat and fire pre-planning. In the late 1990s, Los Angeles' [Terrorism Early Warning Group \(TEW\)](#), an anti-terrorism intelligence and assessment team, broadened fire/Hazmat pre-planning to include preparing for terrorist incidents. Coining the term "target folder," the TEW began building target folder pre-plans for key sites in L.A. While the TEW's target folder methodology originated from a law enforcement and intelligence perspective, it is similar to fire/HazMat pre-planning activities. The TEW actively incorporates law enforcement, fire, emergency management, and public health perspectives into the pre-planning process.

In addition, technology has become an increasingly important component of the pre-planning process. As a result of the Columbine High School tragedy in Littleton, Colorado, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Region VIII began conducting field trials for an electronic [Pre-Incident Planning System \(PIPS\)](#), which integrates planning data into HTML (website) format. In addition to the FEMA trials, several jurisdictions, including Pierce County, Washington and Phoenix, Arizona have successfully integrated technology into comprehensive pre-planning programs.

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