



Emergency Management and Response Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC)

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NOTE: This INFOGRAM will be distributed weekly to provide members of the Emergency Services Sector with information concerning the protection of their critical infrastructures. For further information, contact the Emergency Management and Response- Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) at (301) 447-1325 or by e-mail at emr-isac@dhs.gov.

Quick Guide to Gangs

During the past year, multiple news sources reported about the possibility of criminal gangs targeting emergency responders. Considering this information, the [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) examined the contents of the “[Quick Guide to Gangs](#),” which is a collective effort of the National Alliance of Gang Investigators’ Associations (NAGIA) and the National Gang Intelligence Center.

The Quick Guide was designed to give emergency personnel a basic overview of symbols and identifiers used by some of the major street gangs across North America. According to the NAGIA, “It is not inclusive of every street gang in North America and should be used to enhance the understanding of local gangs encountered on a daily basis.”

Within this Guide, the EMR-ISAC further observed that the NAGIA recommended all questions or concerns about gangs should be directed to the local Gang Investigators’ Association. Contact information for a local association can be under “Member Associations,” at the left bar of the NAGIA home page.

Note: When clicking on the hyperlink for the “Quick Guide to Gangs” in the first paragraph, scroll down the NAGIA home page to find the free download of the document (2 Mb, 39 pages). To locate the Guide, be sure to wait several seconds for all the items on the home page to successfully download.

Phencyclidine (PCP)

At their web site, [The Partnership for a Drug-Free America](#) discussed the nature and dangers of phencyclidine or PCP, which is a white crystalline powder in its pure form that is readily soluble in water or alcohol. The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) learned that it appears on the illicit drug market in a variety of tablets, capsules, and colored powders. The [U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration](#) indicated that PCP is normally used in one of four ways: snorted, smoked, injected, or swallowed.

Toby L. Litovitz, M.D., an active emergency medicine physician in Washington, DC, explained that PCP users can display bizarre and violent actions. In a textbook on clinical toxicology, she wrote: “Perhaps the hallmark of PCP intoxication is the recurring delusion of superhuman strength and invulnerability resulting from the analgesic and dissociative properties of the drug. Intoxicated patients have been known to snap handcuffs and attack large groups of people or police officers.”

The writings of Dr. Litovitz help explain why so many PCP users are brought to emergency rooms with unpleasant psychological effects that are dangerous to themselves and others, according to The Partnership for a Drug-Free America. Therefore, this drug poses risks not just to users, but also to those who encounter them such as police, emergency medical technicians, and paramedics. Indeed, the EMR-ISAC noted in national news sources that PCP incidents may be increasing nationwide and creating greater challenges for the safety and duties of first responders.

More information regarding PCP can also be seen at [Drug Information Online](#).

Hazards Warning

Recognizing that the public relies heavily on first responders during severe weather conditions, the [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) reviewed the [U.S. Hazards Assessment](#), a program of the National Weather Service (NWS) Climate Prediction Center (CPC), which provides advance notice of potential hazards related to climate, weather, and hydrological events.

Hurricanes, blizzards, ice storms, extreme cold, and excessive heat are usually predictable situations that meteorologists can track and monitor for hours or days prior to the onset of conditions. The Hazards Assessment shows potential perils from 2 to 12 days out. CPC realizes the assessment may change daily because the models used to produce the assessment vary from one day to the next. It also recognizes that the [local NWS](#) offices forecast short time-range and local weather effects.

In a previous INFOGRAM, the EMR-ISAC described the U.S Fire Administration "[Special Report: Preparedness for Extreme Weather Emergencies and Natural Disasters](#)," (PDF, 367.2 Kb) According to the report, information can be used to enhance the level of preparedness and ensure greater safety the next time disaster strikes. It examines the impact of extreme weather and natural disasters on first responder's duty performance, addresses the type of service calls, and what equipment and planning are needed in order to be prepared.

NIOSH Safety Advisory

The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) learned that the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) released a Safety Advisory for their Fire Fighter Fatality Investigation and Prevention Program, "[Manual Adjustment of Automatic Slack Adjusters May Contribute to Unexpected Brake Failure on Automotive Fire Apparatus](#)," (PDF, 471.2 Kb) after conducting an investigation of a recent apparatus crash-related fire fighter fatality.

The Safety Advisory recommends that all fire departments operating fire apparatus equipped with automatic slack adjusters (ASAs) immediately take the following actions to reduce the risk of injury in an apparatus crash due to brake failure:

- Ensure that ASAs are not manually adjusted.
- Establish procedures to assure maintenance on fire apparatus is conducted as recommended in NFPA 1911, "Standard for the Inspection, Maintenance, Testing, and Retirement of In-Serve Automotive Fire Apparatus."
- Guarantee maintenance is only performed by qualified technicians who meet NFPA 1071, "Standard for Emergency Technician Professional Qualifications."

NIOSH also suggests that all drivers of fire apparatus equipped with air brakes should undergo training and testing to demonstrate proficiency in the inspection and operation of air-braked vehicles. The advisory states that when ASAs are found to be out of adjustment, it signifies the existence of a larger problem with the braking system that needs to be corrected immediately. Vehicles should be taken out-of-service without delay until corrective brake service is complete.

NFPA standards can be read at http://www.nfpa.org/aboutthecodes/list_of_codes_and_standards.asp.

USFA Install. Inspect. Protect. Campaign

The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) launched a public fire safety campaign, "Install. Inspect. Protect. Campaign," pertaining to home smoke alarms and residential fire sprinklers. In the [October 28, 2009 press release](#), U.S. Fire Administrator Kelvin Cochran explained that firefighters often die in the line of duty trying to rescue people who did not get out at the first sign of fire.

The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) understands that this campaign can help fire fighters improve their own safety and success by educating residents about the value of installing and actively maintaining smoke alarms in their homes.

To effectively promote fire safety, the USFA provides a free campaign toolkit DVD available from the USFA Publications Center at www.usfa.dhs.gov or by calling (800) 561-3356. No cost educational materials can also be downloaded at www.usfa.dhs.gov/smokealarms (English) or www.usfa.dhs.gov/detectoresdehumo (Spanish).

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REPORTING NOTICE

The National Infrastructure Coordinating Center (NICC) within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Infrastructure Protection is the central point for notifications regarding infrastructure threats, disruptions, intrusions, and suspicious activities. Emergency Services Sector personnel are requested to report any incidents or attacks involving their infrastructures using at least the first and second points of contact seen below:

- 1) NICC - Voice: 202-282-9201, Fax: 703-487-3570, E-Mail: nicc@dhs.gov
- 2) Your local FBI office - Web: www.fbi.gov/contact/fo/fo.htm
- 3) EMR-ISAC - Voice: 301-447-1325, E-Mail: emr-isac@dhs.gov, fax: 301-447- 1034, Web: www.usfa.dhs.gov/emr-isac, Mail: E-108, 16825 South Seton Avenue, Emmitsburg, MD 21727