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LESSON LEARNED

Facility Security: Access Badges for Secure Areas

SUMMARY

Facility managers should ensure that all personnel have photo identification visible in order to make certain that only appropriate personnel are in authorized areas. A colored badge system can be used to visibly identify which access areas the individual is authorized to enter.

DESCRIPTION

In October and November of 2007, the state of Washington conducted a multi-agency full-scale exercise (FSE). The FSE included 2,500 players from 35 federal, state, local, and tribal agencies. The exercise simulated a *Salmonella typhi* outbreak deliberately introduced into the Washington region through tainted communion wafers. The objective of the FSE was to test the participating agencies' abilities to detect, respond to, and recover from a bioterrorism event. One of the primary goals of the FSE was to assess the security procedures governing access to the state's Reception Storage and Staging (RSS) facility.

The Washington State Annual Bioterrorism Exercise – Region 9 (WASABE 9) is an annual full-scale exercise conducted by the state of Washington to test the state's preparedness for a bioterrorism incident.

Washington State Patrol officers secured seven locations around the RSS and checked the credentials of anyone entering the site to ensure they were authorized to do so. The officers received an Authorized Entry List at the start of the FSE, and participants wore credentials on lanyards around their necks. These credentials, however, often did not include picture identification. The officers successfully processed the limited number of people who needed to access the RSS during the FSE. However, these security procedures proved cumbersome. The WASABE 9 after-action report (AAR) noted that during an actual emergency the amount of traffic through the RSS would have been much greater, including more personnel who may be unfamiliar with each other.

The WASABE 9 AAR recommended that all personnel possess credentials that include photo identification to allow security officers to verify the identity of people accessing the facility. Further, badges can be color-coded so that security officers can visibly identify what areas of a secure site a person is authorized to enter. These changes would facilitate security procedures by "ensuring [that] appropriate people are in authorized areas."

Facility managers should ensure that all personnel have photo identification visible in order to make certain that only appropriate personnel are in authorized areas. A colored badge system can be used to visibly identify which access areas the individual is authorized to enter.

CITATION

Washington State Department of Health. *Washington State Annual Bioterrorism Exercise – Region 9 (WASABE 9) After Action Report*. 31 Dec 2007.

<https://www.llis.dhs.gov/docdetails/details.do?contentID=30826>

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