



FEMA

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## LESSON LEARNED

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### Private Sector Emergency Operations: Ensuring the Availability of Information Technology Systems Following an Emergency

#### SUMMARY

Private sector entities should ensure that their information technology (IT) systems will be available and operational during the first hour following an emergency. This can help to ensure that private sector entities are prepared to provide assistance to emergency response operations.

#### DESCRIPTION

The New Jersey Business Force (NJBF) conducted its Looking Glass table-top exercise (TTX) from October 17 to 18, 2007, at the New Jersey Institute of Technology in Newark, New Jersey. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) sponsored the Looking Glass initiative, a private sector component of the Top Officials 4 full-scale exercise (T4), to assess private sector preparedness and recovery plans and procedures. The Looking Glass TTX remained completely separate from other T4 venues and events. DHS encouraged Looking Glass TTX participants to monitor T4 exercise play via the Virtual News Network in order to construct similar exercise scenarios.

Fifteen private sector and non-profit organizations participated in the NJBF TTX. Ten public sector representatives from federal, state, and county agencies provided subject-matter expertise on government preparedness and recovery activities. The TTX assessed the ability of participants to execute critical business emergency operations center (BEOC) functions, including alert and warning, data collection and analysis, information sharing, and resource registration and mobilization.

The Looking Glass TTX scenario called for the detonation of a radiological dispersal device (RDD) in the "Gold Coast" financial district of Jersey City, New Jersey, directly across the river from Manhattan, New York. The RDD caused major disruptions to New Jersey's health care, financial services, transportation, and utility sectors. Exercise facilitators raised the Homeland Security Advisory System threat level to "orange" and then "red" and simulated

The New Jersey Business Force is a partnership between the state of New Jersey and leading New Jersey companies. It leverages private sector expertise to enhance the state's preparedness and response efforts. For more information, please refer to the [NJBF Web site](#).

T4 was the fourth exercise in the Top Officials (TOPOFF) series, a congressionally mandated exercise program. For more information about the T4 exercise, please refer to the [T4 After-Action Quick Look Report](#).

A BEOC is an emergency operations center that is organized, managed, and staffed by the private sector and designed to promote self-reliance and self-sufficiency during emergencies. For more information on BEOCs, please refer to the [NJBF BEOC Concept Overview](#).

the activation of the New Jersey Regional Operations Center. The state requested that private sector entities provide resources to aid response and recovery operations, including water, refrigerator trucks, tyvex suits, respirators, light generators, front-end loaders, dump trucks, and bulldozers.

Participants used private sector IT systems during the TTX to bridge gaps in responder capabilities by providing alerts and warnings, rapid resource identification and mobilization, and strategic collaboration services. However, participants raised concerns that these technologies could be disrupted during the first hour following the RDD explosion, either due to a communications surge or the explosion itself. Such problems could prevent the private sector from providing critical assistance to emergency response operations. To ensure continuity of operations for private sector IT systems, the Looking Glass after-action report recommends businesses prepare and plan for these types of disruptions.

The private sector should ensure that its IT systems will be available and operational during the first hour following an emergency. This can help to ensure that private sector entities are prepared to provide assistance to emergency response operations.

#### **CITATION**

New Jersey Business Force. *TOPOFF 4 Looking Glass Exercise After-Action Report*. 21 Nov 2007.

<https://www.llis.dhs.gov/docdetails/details.do?contentID=30167>

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