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

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The joke's on you: local agencies preparing for "Storm Area 51"

The "Storm Area 51, They Can't Stop All of Us" Facebook event started as a joke by a college student suggesting people storm the military facility and see what it may be hiding. He never thought the event would get so much attention. By the end of August, however, over 2 million people said they were going to Nevada to "see them aliens," and authorities have made it clear they are not laughing.

Joke or not, authorities have no choice but to take this seriously. Though some criticized military and law enforcement preparations for this event, the fact is that there is too much interest in this event for authorities to ignore it. Even if only ten percent of the Facebook group show up, Lincoln County, Nevada, (population: 5,000) will be overrun and they have to plan for the possibilities.

Officials have been very proactive. State and county agencies have an Incident Action Plan in place, coordinating law enforcement, EMS, fire, air operations, and search and rescue under a general unified command. They are coordinating with several federal agencies as well, but the county has jurisdictional authority.

The county fire chief/emergency manager requested a pre-signed emergency declaration from the board of commissioners, giving them the option to declare the emergency at any time during this situation. It requests aid from the state if the county has depleted all its resources and funding. Right now the county is footing the bill for overtime pay and other necessary expenses.

The Lincoln County Sheriff is working on three temporary command posts and one main command post in different parts of the county. The Air Force has said any attempt to access the site "is dangerous."

All involved agencies had to look for ways to address shortfalls in staffing and resources:

- The fire/EMS in the county only has two full-time paid employees and is otherwise entirely volunteer. Staffing is a serious concern, and mutual aid agreements are in place.
- The county is extremely remote; wireless communications outages and fuel or food shortages had to be addressed.
- The sheriff's office had to look for alternative ways to handle small crimes because of the limited jail space in the county.

The Storm Area 51 event has since been changed to a music festival ("Alienstock"), and now even that has been cancelled due to lack of infrastructure and security concerns. It is still anyone's best guess whether or not people are going to show up on September 20, or how many, but authorities will be ready and waiting.

(Sources: Various)

Recent lung illnesses linked to vaping

E-cigarettes and vaping are considered a healthier alternative to tobacco – and can be a way to quit smoking cigarettes. However, with the legalization of marijuana,

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U.S. Fire Administration

The U.S. Fire Administration operates 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.

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many cannabis products and derivatives are now easily available for vaping. Long-term health effects of vaping liquids are not yet known, and public health officials are concerned both about the use of vaping in general and about the skyrocketing use among teens.

Last week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and several states issued warnings on recent severe lung illnesses seemingly connected with vaping and the use of cannabis products in e-cigarettes. Specifically, clinicians say a chemical used in cannabis vaping products, vitamin E acetate, was also found in almost all the samples from patients.

Vitamin E acetate is grease-like and must be heated extremely hot to vaporize. Once inhaled, it cools down in the lungs and coats the inside surface of the lungs with that "grease." Lungs are not designed to handle oils or grease. Clinicians in several states report patients with lipoid pneumonia presenting "abnormal immune cells filled with lipids."

Over 450 cases have been reported from 33 states so far. All have a reported history of e-cigarette use, most using cannabis products, and there is no infectious link between patients. Symptoms include cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, chest pain, nausea, vomiting and fever.

Some patients have been placed in intensive care and there are six reported fatalities. Doctors are unsure if some patients will ever fully recover, and they do not know why this is happening now when e-cigarettes have been on the market for 10 years. The CDC recommends people consider not using e-cigarettes until a definitive cause is known.

First responders should be aware of the symptoms and the possible cause – not only when treating patients, but also in their own health. There are still many unknowns with this illness. Firefighters especially have enough to worry about with the toxins in smoke on the fireground, think carefully before intentionally adding to the chemicals you're inhaling.

(Source: CDC)

Fall 2019 IPSA Webinar Week line-up announced

The International Public Safety Association (IPSA) released the line-up for the Fall 2019 Webinar Week, a week first responders nationwide can take advantage of some free training on a variety of topics. Scheduled for the week of October 7, this season's live webinar topics are:

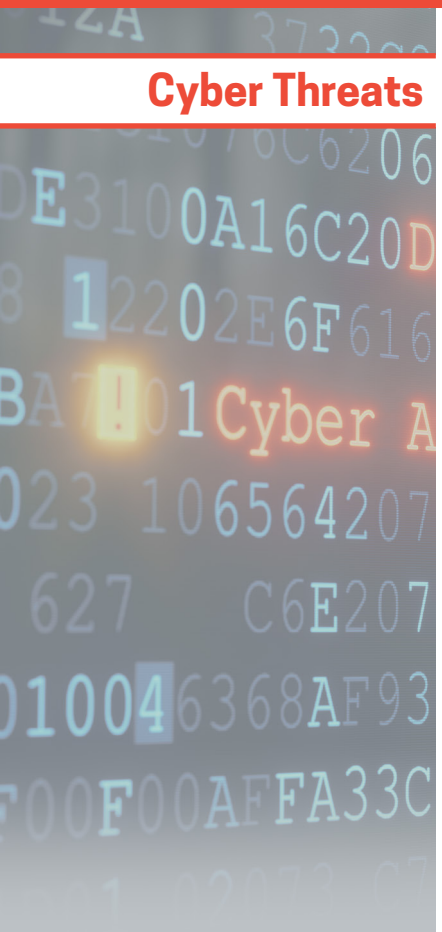
- What emergency responders need to know about continuity of operations (and why they should care).
- Active shooter intruder response for houses of worship.
- What law enforcement needs to know about "Connected Cop" - a wearable MDC.
- Integrated response Q&A: one team, one mission, several agencies.

IPSA is also making available six previously recorded webinars on topics such as cyberattack, mental health resilience for first responders, K9 medicine and 9-1-1 dispatchers role in hostage negotiation teams.

Please see the Fall 2019 Webinar Week page on the IPSA website for detailed information and registration links.

(Source: IPSA)

Cyber Threats



Hackers wanted $25 million ransom for Texas ransomware attacks

The threat actor that hit multiple Texas local governments with file-encrypting malware last month may have done it by compromising a managed service provider. **The attacker demanded a collective ransom of $2.5 million**, one mayor said.

New details from the Department of Information Resources (DIR) announce that the number of victims has been established to 22, with evidence pointing to a single party responsible for the attacks.

Things appear to be on the right track, as some entities have already resumed normal activity. More than 25% of the victims have moved from the response and assessment stage to remediation and recovery.

(Source: BleepingComputer)

Hackers exploit websites to push spyware on iPhones

Unidentified attackers have been compromising websites for nearly three years, equipping them with exploits that would **hack visiting iPhones without any user interaction** and deliver a stealthy implant capable of collecting much of the sensitive information found on users' iOS-powered devices.

It can access users' photos, contacts, location data (GPS); the device's Keychain (containing credentials, certificates and access tokens); and container directories containing all unencrypted messages sent and received via popular end-to-end encryption apps and mail apps (including, Gmail, Whatsapp, WeChat and Apple's own iMessage app).

The implant is primarily focused on stealing files and uploading live location data. Interestingly, the implant does not persist on the device once the device is rebooted.

(Source: HelpNetSecurity)

Webinar: Ransomware, To Pay or Not to Pay?

It's been a summer of ransomware, with devastating incidents shutting down governments in Florida and Texas, ongoing fallout from the Baltimore attack and reports of increased targeting elsewhere.

A huge debate is brewing over ransomware: to pay or not to pay. Technology and training to defend against ransomware is critical, but what if the defenses fail?

Join the "Ransomware: To Pay or Not to Pay" webinar on Tuesday, September 17, 2019, at 2 p.m. Eastern to discuss this issue. This event will cover:

- Recent incidents and their ransom amounts.
- What happened to those who paid and what it cost for those who didn't.
- The logic behind the FBI recommendations on ransomware.
- Insurance and ransomware payments.
- Ransomware's incentives for cybercriminals.

(Source: MCPmag)

Cyber Information and Incident Assistance Links

MS-ISAC
SOC@cisecurity.org
1-866-787-4722

IdentityTheft.gov

IC3

Cybercrime Support Network

General Information Links

FTC scam list

CISA alerts

Law Enforcement Cyber Center

TLP Information

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