



# The InfoGram

Volume 12 – Issue 46

November 15, 2012

## Highlights:

[National Homeland Security Consortium Report](#)

[Advances in Wildfire Simulators Technology](#)

[Child Care During Disaster Recovery](#)

## Disclaimer of Endorsement:

The EMR-ISAC does not endorse the organizations sponsoring linked websites, and does not endorse the views they express or the products/services they offer.



The U.S. Fire Administration maintains 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](http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/emr-isac) or contact the EMR-ISAC office at: (301) 447-1325 and/or [emr-isac@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:emr-isac@fema.dhs.gov).

## National Homeland Security Consortium Report

The [National Homeland Security Consortium](#) (NHSC) released their 2012 White Paper "[Protecting Americans in the 21st Century: Priorities for 2012 and Beyond](#)" (PDF, 858 Kb) earlier this week. Its purpose is to highlight growing areas of concern the Consortium believes could impact homeland security in the future and aid the continuing dialog of the 22 member organizations.

Subject areas discussed in the paper include cyber hazards, changing social demographics, global resource demands, violent extremist ideologies, catastrophic events and their cascading consequences, and others. The press release states "leaders must recognize and begin to understand the interaction and intersection of these threats and vulnerabilities."

The NHSC enables coordination between state and local emergency management, law enforcement, fire, public works, emergency communications, elected officials, and the private sector. Currently administered by the [National Emergency Management Agency](#) (NEMA), the Consortium is an example of how organizations with different focuses and interests can work together to solve larger issues.

Member associations realize there is no one comprehensive answer for threat and vulnerability issues facing rural and urban areas. The NHSC fosters open communication to enable problem solving without judgment, helping support first and secondary responders in their work.

(Source: [International Association of Fire Chiefs](#))

## Advances in Wildfire Simulators Technology

Simulator training has been used in pilot instruction and in the medical field for years with very good results. Wildland firefighting is now benefiting from advanced and more affordable technology to train firefighters and incident commanders using realistic imagery.

A [Fire Engineering article](#) states "inadequate situational awareness is often cited as a primary contributor to accidents." One way to help develop situational awareness is simulated exercises, which gives commanders opportunities to learn pattern identification based on certain parameters. They then can plan courses of action and make decisions based on that experience.

*The InfoGram is distributed weekly to provide members of the Emergency Services Sector with information concerning the protection of their critical infrastructures.*

Three main types of simulators are currently being used:

- Human-controlled simulations like “sand tables” are inexpensive and can be used just about anywhere. A drawback is that the simulation is usually scripted from beginning to end, making it difficult for students to learn from mistakes or unexpected variables.
- Animation-based training is also often scripted, but is more realistic using “virtual reality” style computer training. They are more engaging and can be performed in real time, but are more expensive due to the technology involved.
- Agent-based digital training is much more elaborate, using overlapping GIS layers enabling the user to create virtual models of specific geographical areas with variables like weather patterns. These systems can run preset programs, but also give the user the opportunity to virtually start a fire in a spot and then let the program run giving participants an opportunity to work through a unique event.

Agent-based training programs have an added benefit of being useful during public presentations or briefings to higher-level government officials. The downside is the cost, as these systems use the more advanced technology.

(Source: [Fire Engineering](#))

#### Fair Use Notice:

This InfoGram may contain copyrighted material that was not specifically authorized by the copyright owner.

The EMR-ISAC believes this constitutes “fair use” of copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the U.S. Copyright Law.

If you wish to use copyrighted material contained within this document for your own purposes that go beyond “fair use,” you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

DHS and the FBI encourage recipients of this document to report information concerning suspicious or criminal activity to the local [FBI office](#) and also the [State or Major Urban Area Fusion Center](#).

For information specifically affecting the private sector critical infrastructure contact the **National Infrastructure Coordinating Center** by phone at **202-282-9201**, or by email at [nicc@dhs.gov](mailto:nicc@dhs.gov).

## Child Care During Disaster Recovery

After a community has been devastated by a catastrophic event and the adults are fully involved in the recovery and rebuilding efforts, long- or even short-term childcare can become a pressing issue. The [Children’s Disaster Services](#) (CDS) has been working since 1980 to provide volunteer disaster child care in shelters and disaster assistance centers.

Volunteers from CDS have received extensive training in what is considered typical behavior for children after a disaster and how to create a safe environment. Teams arrive on scene with “kits of comfort” containing fun but therapeutic toys and activities.

Volunteers spending time with the children can give parents an account of [how their children are coping](#) (PDF, 1.74 Mb). They also offer reassurance and support to parents and the community through peace-of-mind and mental health support.

A special 6-person [Critical Response Childcare team](#) is also on-call every month, ready to deploy with 4 hours notice to work in an American Red Cross Family Assistance Center. Since 1980, the CDS has responded to 200 events including 7 aviation accidents, the September 11 attacks, the [Joplin, MO tornado](#), and is currently working in New Jersey in the wake of Hurricane Sandy.

[Training for CDS volunteers](#) is open to anyone over the age of 18 and incorporates rigorous screening which includes both criminal and sex-offender background checks. Training incorporates a simulated shelter experience with an overnight stay and can be scheduled for groups meeting certain criteria. The CDS also offers resources for regions that would like to work with the issue. CDS is one of the services provided by the [Brethren Disaster Ministries](#).

(Source: [Children’s Disaster Services](#))