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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 or contact the EMR-ISAC office at: (301) 447-1325 and/or emr-isac@fema.dhs.gov.

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Firefighting Advice from the Arctic Circle

A recent article on FireFightingInCanada.com discusses some of the [perils unique to extreme cold weather firefighting](#) and how the departments above the Arctic Circle deal with them. These tips can be integrated into standard practices of departments in the north and in departments [dealing with extreme cold only occasionally](#).

Personnel safety is the most important concern when dealing with very low temperatures, ice, and snow. Some things to consider:

- Dressing in layers head-to-toe is recommended,
- Moisture-wicking base layers help keep sweat from the skin,
- Frostbite hits extremities first and can cause severe damage without the victim realizing it until it's too late,
- Extreme cold speeds up the onset of fatigue; rotate personnel to rehab often,
- Head, ear, or neck layers should allow for ease of hearing at the fire scene,
- Scarves can be a choking hazard if snagged; neck warmers are preferred.

Freezing hoses and nozzles can be an issue if not properly mitigated. The arctic departments suggest leaving nozzles near apparatus exhaust to keep them from freezing and draining hoselines immediately to keep ice from forming inside.

(Source: FireFightingInCanada.com)

Inventory Finds U.S. Levee System Deficient

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is inspecting the levee systems in the United States, the first full inspection ever to be completed. The process is approximately 60 percent finished and an Associated Press article states that so far the [majority fall into either the “unacceptable” or “minimally acceptable” categories](#).

[Levee inspections](#) by the USACE include evaluating the overall condition, identifying problems, and ensuring needed maintenance is happening. The preliminary findings of the USACE inspections so far parallel the D-minus overall grade the levee systems earned in a 2009 report from the American Society of Civil Engineers.

The USACE's "[Levee Inspection](#)" video mentions the misunderstanding that levee systems are the responsibility of the federal government to maintain. This is not true; in fact, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) [Levee Factsheet](#), 85 percent of levees are locally owned and maintained.

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

USACE maintains the [National Levee Database](#) to be used for searching by ZIP code to find the levee systems in your jurisdiction, the last time they were inspected, and their rating. It also shows the size of the levee system in acres, length in miles, and includes a link to a map of the area.

The detailed maps in National Levee Database are dynamic and incorporate GIS data layers that can be added or removed, including FEMA floodplain details, real-time weather, precipitation accumulation, and geological data like fault lines.

(Source: [Sandusky Register](#))

Emergency Management on Tribal Lands

The 30-minute video "[Strength and Resiliency: Emergency Preparedness for Tribal Leaders and Program Directors—Your Roles and Responsibilities](#)" was released recently to give tribal leaders an introduction to emergency management. [The video covers the basics](#) of risk identification and analysis, communications, Incident Command System and Unified Command, public health emergencies, and the creation and roles of the Tribal Emergency Response Committee (TERC).

A National Volunteer Fire Council article states the video can "[help educate non-Indian firefighting agencies](#) about tribal communities and their unique firefighting needs and coordination efforts."

While the video was produced for tribal emergency managers and leaders, it also serves as a guide for local, state, and federal officials whose jurisdictions border tribal lands. Many of the 566 federally recognized tribes "have what is known as 'checker-boarded' reservation landbase." For example, New York has 10 reservations across the state and one spans the U.S.-Canadian border.

The collaborative video was developed by the [University of Minnesota School of Public Health](#), Eagle Clan Productions, and FEMA Region V with a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

(Source: [National Volunteer Fire Council](#))

Response to Pipeline Ruptures and Explosions

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) released an 18-page report identifying [variables affecting the response times to pipeline ruptures](#). The report is based on testimony before Congress after the December 11, 2012 [natural gas pipeline rupture and explosion in West Virginia](#), one of several bad explosions in the past few years.

The report talks mostly about response of pipeline operators and industry recommendations. However, it does touch on fire operations saying that improving pipeline operator response times will help fire departments minimize property damage and loss of life due to secondary fires after a pipeline explosion.

One variable listed that falls within pipeline operators' control was "*Relationships with local first responders*. Operators that have already established effective communications with local first responders—such as fire and police departments—may respond more quickly during emergencies."

(Source: [GAO](#))

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