

IAB's National Priorities for the Next Four Years



ISSUES

1. **Maintain the momentum toward national interoperability and standardization.**

- Need for continued emphasis on national interoperability and standardization, despite pressures to allow State Administrative Agency (SAA) autonomy in approval process
- Build on past success of equipment standardization and interoperability
- Strike appropriate balance between arguments for states' rights/local control and the demonstrated need/benefit for a common approach to planning, organization, equipment training, and exercise when preparing and responding to major incidents that cross political boundaries
- Continue to support the Responder Knowledge Base (RKB) as a single entry point for information concerning grants, grant management, equipment, and standards

Great strides have been made over the past decade to enhance interoperability and standardization of national homeland security capabilities. Federal grants and related guidance have played a critical role in this process by requiring compliance with appropriate standards and preparedness frameworks, while recognizing autonomy of state administrative agencies to address specific state and local needs. This has strengthened local and regional operations, as well as national support mechanisms such as the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), by ensuring that operational partners develop common, core capabilities. However, recent budget constraints appear to threaten critical components of this process. For example, requirements have been reduced for approving state and local training courses, and funding for the Responder Knowledge Base is in question. These shifts will erode our achievements and reverse our progress. Contrary to being a resource burden, effective interoperability and standardization result in force multiplication, as well as better trained and equipped personnel, providing a high return on investment. It is therefore essential to maintain resources and requirements supporting interoperability and standardization.

2. **Focus on improved information sharing through interdisciplinary partnerships at all levels of government, private sector and emergency preparedness disciplines.**

- Must continue to be emphasized and supported across all disciplines
- All-hazards approach, not criminal/terrorism-centric
- Multi-flow of information must be encouraged and supported (i.e. Fusion Centers)
- Classification of information along with security clearance issues between agencies must be further enhanced
- Supports quality analysis, and benefits planning and response

All incidents start locally. To safely manage the hazards of an incident, local officials need information. This information is not only needed post-event to identify the hazard and manage

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the consequences, it is necessary to have pre-event in order to develop strategy and tactics, procure necessary equipment, and effectively train and exercise for emerging threats and hazards. This is particularly important as both federal grant funds and local capital budgets shrink, necessitating policy makers to prioritize limited resources. Longer range, multi-use capabilities must be developed with up to date information. Federal agencies that have information on emerging threats have legitimate concerns about releasing this information too soon, but this must be balanced with the risk to local emergency responders and the public. Faster, more clearly defined tipping points must be developed for the benefit of responder and the citizens they protect.

To share this information, a process that identifies trusted agents at the local level in all emergency disciplines is needed. Trusted agents should be trained to safeguard information but use it to influence and guide local planning, procurement, and training in the five pillar areas of homeland defense: prevention, protection, response, mitigation and recovery. The current security clearance process used is too onerous for the number of local response officials who need access to sensitive information to make this the hallmark process for information sharing.

Recent discussions involving “variations of chemical warfare agents” that may be classified have highlighted this information sharing gap. Federal agencies are working to develop solutions for delivering “just in time guidance” to incident commanders who are managing an incident that does not fall into the traditional hazards on which planning has focused. The solutions include CST units, FBI WMD Coordinators and Fusion Centers reaching out and contacting the IC in the middle of the incident with “new possibilities” that could help to identify the hazard and support mitigation. All three options require time to activate and reach out; time during which emergency responders and the public are at great risk. The number of individuals who are exposed and potentially become casualties during such incidents increases with every minute, let alone hours. A significant problem is created when information on emerging threats is known for several years at the federal level and not shared with local officials who are in the position to make a difference on this impact these threats may have on human life and property.

3. Incorporate State and Local Partners in the development of Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA) policies and plans.

- Interoperability of common equipment, training credentials, and policy standardization
- DoD and other federal capabilities must be shared, known to a tactical and operational level, and then inter-communicated between federal liaisons and civilian incident commanders
- Assess existing command and control similarities, and support development of common command and control structures.

The Department of Defense (DoD) has refocused a component of its resources into responding to catastrophic domestic emergencies. These efforts include leveraging a broader range of DoD Forces and capabilities, developing plans, policies and management tools for DoD responding

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resources, and strengthening DoD preparedness through doctrine, education training and exercising. The IAB acknowledges and applauds efforts to engage state-level planners through the National Governor's Association and similar mechanisms. However, stronger engagement with the local response community is required. This presents a significant gap in coordination with local authorities in the event of a significant emergency where DoD resources are requested and/or dispatched without local input.

4. Move toward a common methodology for risk assessments and management of risks.

- Recognition that effective risk analysis processes (threat/vulnerability/consequence) should drive everything else
- The wide variability of risk methodologies used throughout government has led to disparate conclusions, and challenges unified efforts
- Already recognized by DHS-Policy (SPAR), effort must continue to fruition and remain consistent over time

The Department of Homeland Security has appropriately established risk informed decision making as a fundamental operating principal. Risk assessments support everything from how the Department awards grant funding to its regulatory efforts to how it manages its own resources to respond to homeland security threats. The recognition that good risk analysis should drive most decisions has also spread to state and local planning. However, as offices across the Department have embraced this principal, the variety of risk assessment methodologies they are demanding of stakeholders is leading to wasted effort and conflicting results. Although the data on this phenomenon is anecdotal, it is wide spread. The department should review the number of risk methodologies it requests of its partners and move toward a set of methodologies that are as common as possible to maximize efficiency and effectiveness for the benefit of the entire homeland security enterprise.

5. Institutionalize Strategic Foresight Initiative into policies and programs.

- Long view driver of local, state, federal policies
- Acceptance and implementation across federal government
- Continued outreach to state, local, tribal, and territorial stakeholders
- Federal policies must be vetted by a wider, standardized set of stakeholders
- Ensure that new dimension risks such as climate / adaptation are incorporated into Homeland Security policies and programs
- Address the sustainment issues of capabilities and programs

The First Responder Community sees value in FEMA's Strategic Foresight Initiative (SFI) and the guidance it will provide to the planning process. Our hope is that SFI will incorporate a long-range view into the consideration of state, local, tribal, territorial, and federal policies. In addition, we encourage DHS to support the focus on outreach to the communities by enacting recommendations for a wider vetting of Federal Policies through a standardized set of stakeholders at the state, local, tribal, and territory levels. We feel the SFI should also focus on emerging threats (such as climate change) and ensure they are addressed in all Homeland Security policies and programs. By promoting the SFI as a full spectrum approach, we feel the

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acceptance and implementation will receive a much more favorable reception. This initiative is an important part of the planning process for all levels of government and cannot be done by just one.

By prioritizing the integration of FEMA's Strategic Foresight Initiative (SFI) into IAB policies and programs, the Strategic Planning Committee aims to incorporate a long-range view into IAB's consideration of emergency management policies at all levels of government. We believe that such a perspective would enable us to better explore emerging risks (such as climate change) and ensure that these risks are addressed in Homeland Security policies and programs; develop recommendations for the wider vetting of Federal policies by a standardized set of stakeholders; and support improved outreach to the SLTT communities. We also believe that institutionalizing SFI would allow the IAB to gain a fresh perspective on the important issue of program sustainability. In turn, our adoption of SFI would further the acceptance and implementation of strategic foresight across the federal government.

****Please contact the Interagency at info@interagencyboard.us with any comments, feedback, and questions. Additional information on the Interagency Board is available at www.IAB.gov.**