

Catastrophic Incident Annex

Coordinating Agency:

Department of Homeland Security

Cooperating Agencies:

All Federal departments and agencies (and other organizations) with assigned primary or supporting Emergency Support Function (ESF) responsibilities

Introduction

Purpose

- The Catastrophic Incident Annex to the National Response Plan (NRP-CIA) establishes the context and overarching strategy for implementing and coordinating an accelerated, proactive national response to a catastrophic incident.
- A more detailed and operationally specific NRP Catastrophic Incident Supplement (NRP-CIS) that is designated “For Official Use Only” will be approved and published independently of the NRP Base Plan and annexes.

Scope

- A catastrophic incident, as defined by the NRP, is any natural or manmade incident, including terrorism, that results in extraordinary levels of mass casualties, damage, or disruption severely affecting the population, infrastructure, environment, economy, national morale, and/or government functions. A catastrophic incident could result in sustained national impacts over a prolonged period of time; almost immediately exceeds resources normally available to State, local, tribal, and private-sector authorities in the impacted area; and significantly interrupts governmental operations and emergency services to such an extent that national security could be threatened. All catastrophic incidents are Incidents of National Significance. These factors drive the urgency for coordinated national planning to ensure accelerated Federal/national assistance.

- Recognizing that Federal and/or national resources are required to augment overwhelmed State, local, and tribal response efforts, the NRP-CIA establishes protocols to preidentify and rapidly deploy key essential resources (e.g., medical teams, urban search and rescue teams, transportable shelters, medical and equipment caches, etc.) that are expected to be urgently needed/required to save lives and contain incidents.
- Accordingly, upon designation by the Secretary of Homeland Security of a catastrophic incident, Federal resources—organized into incident-specific “packages”—deploy in accordance with the NRP-CIS and in coordination with the affected State and incident command structure.

Policies

- The NRP-CIA strategy is consistent with NRP and National Incident Management System protocols and Incident Command System conventions.
- Only the Secretary of Homeland Security or designee may initiate implementation of the NRP-CIA.
- All deploying Federal resources remain under the control of their respective Federal department or agency during mobilization and deployment.

- Federal resources arriving at a Federal mobilization center or staging area remain there until requested by State/local incident command authorities, when they are integrated into the incident response effort.
- Federal assets unilaterally deployed in accordance with the NRP-CIS do not require a State cost-share. However, in accordance with the Stafford Act, State requests for use of deployed Federal assets may require cost-sharing.
- Unless it can be credibly established that a mobilizing Federal resource identified in the NRP-CIS is not needed at the catastrophic incident venue, that resource deploys.
- The occurrence or threat of multiple catastrophic incidents may significantly reduce the size, speed, and depth of the Federal response. If deemed necessary or prudent, the Federal Government may reduce the availability or allocation of finite resources when multiple venues are competing for the same resources, or hold certain resources in reserve in case of additional incidents.

Situation

Incident Condition: Normal procedures for certain ESFs may be expedited or streamlined to address the magnitude of urgent requirements of the incident. All ESFs must explore economies of scale to maximize utilization and efficiency of scarce resources. In the case of catastrophic incident, it is expected that the Federal Government or other national entities provide expedited assistance in one or more of the following areas:

- **Mass Care, Housing, and Human Services (ESF #6):** The ability to provide temporary shelter, food, emergency first aid, clothing, and other essential life support to people may be complicated by contaminated resources or facilities.
- **Urban Search and Rescue (ESF #9):** Resources and personnel to perform operational activities (e.g., locating, extricating, and providing onsite medical treatment to victims trapped in collapsed structures) are limited. If search and rescue operations are required in areas of contamination, the limited availability of properly equipped resources supports or underscores the need for prompt Federal response.
- **Decontamination (ESFs #8 and #10):** Incidents involving a weapon of mass destruction (WMD) may require decontamination of casualties, evacuees, animals, equipment, buildings, critical infrastructure, and other areas. Given the potentially large numbers of casualties and evacuees, resulting decontamination requirements may quickly outstrip local and State capabilities.
- **Public Health and Medical Support (ESF #8):** There is a significant need for public health and medical support, including mental health services. Medical support is required not only at medical facilities, but at casualty evacuation points, evacuee and refugee points and shelters, and at other locations to support field operations. In addition, any contamination requirement increases the requirement for technical assistance.
- **Medical Equipment and Supplies (ESF #8):** Shortages of available supplies of preventive and therapeutic pharmaceuticals and qualified medical personnel to administer available prophylaxis are likely. Timely distribution of prophylaxis may forestall additional illnesses, and reduce the impact of disease among those already exposed.
- **Casualty and Fatality Management and Transportation (ESF #8):** Federal resources may be required to manage the transportation and storage of deceased, injured, and exposed victims if their numbers are extremely high. In addition, the immense numbers of casualties are likely to overwhelm the bed capacities of local and State medical facilities.
- **Public Information (ESF #15):** When State and local public communications channels are overwhelmed during a catastrophic incident, the Federal Government must immediately provide

resources to assist in delivering clear and coherent public information guidance and consistent messages to the affected areas.

Planning Assumptions

- A catastrophic incident results in large numbers of casualties and/or displaced persons, possibly in the tens of thousands.
- The Secretary of Homeland Security designates the event an Incident of National Significance and directs implementation of the NRP-CIA.
- A catastrophic mass casualty/mass evacuation incident triggers a Presidential disaster declaration, immediately or otherwise.
- The nature and scope of the catastrophic incident may include chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or high-yield explosive attacks, disease epidemics, and major natural or manmade hazards.
- Multiple incidents may occur simultaneously or sequentially in contiguous and/or noncontiguous areas. Some incidents, such as a biological WMD attack, may be dispersed over a large geographic area, and lack a defined incident site.
- A catastrophic incident may occur with little or no warning. Some incidents, such as rapid disease outbreaks, may be well underway before detection.
- The incident may cause significant disruption of the area's critical infrastructure, such as energy, transportation, telecommunications, and public health and medical systems.
- The response capabilities and resources of the local jurisdiction (to include mutual aid from surrounding jurisdictions and response support from the State) may be insufficient and quickly overwhelmed. Local emergency personnel who normally respond to incidents may be among those affected and unable to perform their duties.
- A detailed and credible common operating picture may not be achievable for 24 to 48 hours (or longer) after the incident. As a result, response activities must begin without the benefit of a detailed or complete situation and critical needs assessment.
- Federal support must be provided in a timely manner to save lives, prevent human suffering, and mitigate severe damage. This may require mobilizing and deploying assets before they are requested via normal NRP protocols.
- Large-scale evacuations, organized or self-directed, may occur. More people initially are likely to flee and seek shelter for attacks involving chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear agents than for natural events. The health-related implications of an incident aggravate attempts to implement a coordinated evacuation management strategy.
- Large numbers of people may be left temporarily or permanently homeless and may require prolonged temporary housing.
- A catastrophic incident may produce environmental impacts (e.g., persistent chemical, biological, or radiological contamination) that severely challenge the ability and capacity of governments and communities to achieve a timely recovery.
- A catastrophic incident has unique dimensions/characteristics requiring that response plans/strategies be flexible enough to effectively address emerging needs and requirements.
- A catastrophic incident may have significant international dimensions. These include potential impacts on the health and welfare of border community populations, cross-border trade, transit, law enforcement coordination, and other areas.
- If the incident is the result of terrorism, the Homeland Security Advisory System (HSAS) level likely may be raised regionally, and perhaps nationally. Elevation of the HSAS level carries additional local, State, and Federal security enhancements that may affect the availability of certain response resources.

Concept of Operations

Local and State Response: Local and State response operations and responsibilities are covered in the NRP and the NRP-CIS. This annex addresses the proactive Federal response to be taken in anticipation of or following a catastrophic incident to rapidly provide critical resources to assist and augment State, local, and tribal response efforts.

Federal Response

- In accordance with NRP provisions for proactive Federal response to catastrophic incidents, the NRP-CIA employs an expedited approach to the provision of Federal resources to save lives and contain the incident.
- Guiding principles for a proactive Federal catastrophic incident response include the following:
 - The primary mission is to save lives, protect property and critical infrastructure, contain the event, and protect the national security;
 - Standard procedures outlined in the NRP regarding requests for assistance may be expedited or, under extreme circumstances, temporarily suspended in the immediate aftermath of an incident of catastrophic magnitude, pursuant to existing law;
 - Preidentified Federal response resources are mobilized and deployed, and, if required, begin emergency operations to commence life-safety activities; and
 - Notification and full coordination with States occur, but the coordination process should not delay or impede the rapid mobilization and deployment of critical Federal resources.
- Upon recognition that a catastrophic incident condition (e.g., involving mass casualties and/or mass evacuation) exists, the Secretary of Homeland Security immediately designates the event an Incident of National Significance and begins, potentially in advance of a formal Presidential disaster declaration, implementation of the NRP-CIA. Upon notification from the Homeland Security Operations Center (HSOC) that the NRP-CIA has been implemented, Federal departments and agencies:
 - Take immediate actions to activate, mobilize, and deploy incident-specific resources in accordance with the NRP-CIS;
 - Take immediate actions to protect life, property, and critical infrastructure under their jurisdiction, and provide assistance within the affected area;
 - Immediately commence those hazard-specific activities established under the appropriate and applicable NRP Incident Annex(es), including the NRP-CIA; and
 - Immediately commence functional activities and responsibilities established under the NRP ESF Annexes.
- NRP-CIA actions that the Federal Government takes in response to a catastrophic incident include:
 - All Federal departments and agencies and the American Red Cross initiate actions to mobilize and deploy resources as planned for in the NRP-CIS;
 - All Federal departments, agencies, and organizations (e.g., the American Red Cross) assigned primary or supporting ESF responsibilities immediately begin implementation of those responsibilities, as appropriate or when directed by the President;
 - Incident-specific resources and capabilities (e.g., medical teams, search and rescue teams, equipment, transportable shelters, preventive and therapeutic pharmaceutical caches, etc.) are activated and prepare for deployment to a Federal mobilization center or staging area near the incident site. The development of site-specific catastrophic incident response strategies (as detailed in

the NRP-CIS) that include the preidentification of incident-specific critical resource requirements and corresponding deployment/employment strategies accelerate the timely provision of critically skilled resources and capabilities;

- Regional Federal facilities (e.g., hospitals) are activated and prepared to receive and treat casualties from the incident area. Federal facilities are directed to reprioritize services (in some cases reducing or postponing certain customary services) until life-saving activities are concluded. The development of site-specific catastrophic incident response plans that include the

preidentification of projected casualty and mass care support requirements and potentially available facilities expands the response architecture and accelerates the availability of such resources;

- Supplementary support agreements with the private sector are activated; and
- Given the projected high demand for Federal augmentation support, as well as the potential national security implications of a catastrophic incident, Federal departments and agencies may be asked to redirect efforts from their day-to-day responsibilities to support the response effort.

Responsibilities

This section summarizes Federal department and agency responsibilities under the NRP-CIA. For a complete listing of Federal department and agency responsibilities under the NRP-CIA, refer to the NRP-CIS, which is designated For Official Use Only and maintained as a separate document. For additional Federal department and agency responsibilities, refer to the individual ESF Annexes and hazard-specific Incident Annexes in the NRP.

Coordinating Agency: Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

- Establish that a catastrophic incident has occurred and implement the NRP-CIA.
- Notify all Federal departments and agencies to implement the NRP-CIA and the NRP-CIS.
- Upon implementation of the NRP-CIA:
 - Activate and deploy (or prepare to deploy) DHS-managed teams, equipment caches, and other resources in accordance with the NRP-CIS;
 - Identify, prepare, and operationalize facilities critical to supporting the movement and reception of deploying Federal resources;

- Activate national-level facilities and capabilities in accordance with the NRP-CIS and standard NRP protocols;
- Establish and maintain communications with incident command authorities to ensure a common and current operating picture regarding critical resource requirements. As specific resource requirements are identified, advise the Department of Transportation to reprioritize and adjust accordingly the schedule of execution for resource flow in the NRP-CIS; and
- Make every attempt to establish contact with the impacted State(s) to coordinate the employment of Federal resources in support of the State.

Cooperating Agencies

- When notified by the HSOC that the Secretary of Homeland Security has implemented the NRP-CIA, Federal departments and agencies (and the American Red Cross):
 - Activate and deploy (or prepare to deploy) agency- or ESF-managed teams, equipment caches, and other resources in accordance with the NRP-CIS;

- Commence ESF responsibilities as appropriate;
- Commence assessments of the probable consequences of the incident and projected resource requirements; and
- Commence development of shorter and longer term response and recovery strategies.
- The NRP-CIS provides a list of the specific actions that are initiated upon activation of the NRP-CIA. The following Federal departments and agencies and other organizations are assigned specific responsibilities as cooperating agencies:
 - Department of Agriculture
 - Department of Defense
 - Department of Energy
 - Department of Health and Human Services
 - Department of Homeland Security
 - Department of Transportation
 - Department of Veterans Affairs
 - Environmental Protection Agency
 - American Red Cross
- Departments and agencies assigned primary responsibility for one or more functional response areas under the NRP-CIS appendixes are identified below.
 - **Mass Care:** American Red Cross
 - **Search and Rescue:** Department of Homeland Security
 - **Decontamination:** Department of Homeland Security, Environmental Protection Agency, and Department of Health and Human Services
 - **Public Health and Medical Support:** Department of Health and Human Services
 - **Medical Equipment and Supplies:** Department of Health and Human Services
 - **Patient Movement:** Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Defense
 - **Mass Fatality:** Department of Health and Human Services
 - **Housing:** Department of Homeland Security
 - **Public and Incident Communications:** Department of Homeland Security
 - **Transportation:** Department of Transportation
 - **Private-Sector Support:** Department of Homeland Security
 - **Logistics:** Department of Homeland Security