



EMERGENCY SERVICES SECTOR SNAPSHOT



Sector Information

The Emergency Services Sector is a system of prevention, protection, response, and recovery elements that serve and protect the public. The sector is comprised of law enforcement, fire and rescue services, emergency management, emergency medical services, and public works.

There are several specialized capabilities within the Emergency Services Sector, including hazardous materials, search and rescue, explosive ordnance disposal, special weapons and tactical teams, aviation units, and public-safety answering points.



Officers respond to the attack in Dallas, Texas on July 7, 2016

Intelligence Gaps

- What hacktivist groups or other malicious actors are attempting to compromise law enforcement networks in New Jersey?
- What emerging tactics will cyber criminals use to access and compromise law enforcement communications systems?
- How are malicious actors monitoring law enforcement tactics to counter response efforts?

Threat

Terrorism: High

The threat to law enforcement officers from domestic extremists and homegrown violent extremists (HVEs) is high, while the threat to other disciplines within the sector, including emergency medical services and fire and rescue services, is low. In July 2016, during a Black Lives Matter protest in Dallas, Texas, Micah Johnson killed five police officers, and wounded nine additional officers and two civilians. Johnson died after a standoff with police. A search of his home revealed bomb-making materials and a journal indicating Johnson had additional attack plans.



Micah Johnson

The FBI is investigating the shooting of a police officer in Philadelphia in early 2016 as a terror attack. In 2015, HVEs in New York and Massachusetts assaulted law enforcement officers. In 2015, there were four sovereign citizen extremist attacks on officers in Arizona, Florida, Georgia, and West Virginia.

Cyber: High

The cyber threat to first responders is high due to the persistence of anti-police and anti-government sentiment among hacktivists and the increased targeting of law enforcement by cyber criminals and extremist hackers. Any law enforcement organization that becomes the subject of national media coverage over allegations of police brutality or perceived injustices is likely to be targeted by distributed denial of service attacks (DDoS) and the release of officers' personal information, a tactic known as doxing. In April 2015, hacktivists released the names and addresses of the mayor and officers of the Vineland, New Jersey police department in response to the shooting and subsequent death of an unarmed citizen. Other common cyber tactics used against the Emergency Services Sector include website defacements, social engineering, and malware infections such as ransomware. In the future, hackers will likely seek to compromise and release law enforcement case files and emails to discredit investigations and influence public opinion.

Preparedness

Coordination among elements in the Emergency Services Sector is critical because incidents often affect multiple jurisdictions. To support intrastate cooperation, jurisdictions are encouraged to develop mutual aid agreements that address resource sharing among county and municipal units of government. To enable interstate mutual aid, New Jersey has adopted the [Emergency Management Assistance Compact](#). Departments or agencies in need of assistance during an incident can [engage the State Emergency Operations Center](#) to request assistance from other states.

In November 2015, Governor Christie signed a new [law increasing penalties for swatting](#) – the act of falsely reporting an ongoing emergency or threat of violence in order to prompt an immediate law enforcement response. Under the new law, individuals who falsely report an impending catastrophe, such as a hostage situation or bomb threat, will face up to 10 years in prison and a fine up to \$150,000. Additionally, law enforcement agencies must submit annual reports on false public alarms in their jurisdictions.

The [Emergency Management and Response - Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) provides intelligence on emerging threats to Emergency Services Sector agencies.

The US Department of Homeland Security offers a number of free [tools and resources](#) to support the Emergency Services Sector.

Contact Information

For more information, please contact NJOHSP's Preparedness Bureau at preparedness@njohsp.gov.