



Preparedness News and Information

From FEMA's Office of National Preparedness

June 6, 2003

NATIONAL NEWS

Report Says Proposed Passenger-Screening System Flawed and Invasive

GovExec, May 30, 2003

Though Transportation Security Administration officials continue to assure critics that its proposed airline passenger-screening system is not invasive, a **report** released Thursday claims the system will unnecessarily infringe on privacy rights.

- [Homeland Security Chief Confronts Doubts on Passenger Screening System](#), *GovExec*, May 30

Ridge Seeking Fewer Changes in Terror Alerts

Washington Post, June 6, 2003

Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge said yesterday that his frequent raising and lowering of the nation's threat-alert level has created the risk that citizens are growing jaded about terrorism, adding that he hopes to move the color-coded index to orange, or "high risk," less often in the future.

Coast Guard Defends Security Efforts

Associated Press, June 3, 2003

The commandant of the Coast Guard parried lawmakers from both parties who accused the Bush administration Tuesday of moving too slowly to secure the nation's ports against terrorism.

Ashcroft Wants Broader Anti-Terror Powers

Associated Press, June 5, 2003

Attorney General John Ashcroft asked Congress for expanded powers to hold suspected terrorists indefinitely before trials and to let him seek the death penalty or life imprisonment for any terrorist act.

- [Ashcroft Defends Department's Use of Expanded Antiterror Powers](#), *GovExec*, June 5

Health System Unprepared for Water Terrorism

Science Daily, June 5, 2003

National public health experts reported that front-line health care responders are not adequately prepared to identify and control major outbreaks of waterborne disease, including outbreaks resulting from acts of terrorism.

Bush Administration to Unveil Cybersecurity Initiative

GovExec, June 5, 2003

The Bush administration is set to announce a cybersecurity initiative this week, prompting speculation by technology industry experts that officials will unveil the hierarchy of a new government office on the subject.

CONGRESS

Antiterrorism Measures Under Scrutiny

The Hill, June 4, 2003

At two recent House hearings, members expressed skepticism that administration antiterror measures could be effective against terrorists while protecting privacy and other civil liberties.

Lawmakers Jockey for Homeland Security Regional Offices

GovExec, June 2, 2003

As the Homeland Security Department decides how many regional offices to open and where to put them, officials are preparing for high stakes lobbying from lawmakers who want the offices, and the jobs, in their districts.

Congressman Speaks up for E911

Federal Computer Week, June 4, 2003

Congressman Fred Upton called for the creation of an Enhanced 911 office within the Homeland Security Department and a major block grant program to help state and local governments complete their E911 systems.

Officials Urge Lawmakers Not to Divert Port Security Funds

GovExec, June 4, 2003

Security officials from two of the nation's largest seaports on Tuesday urged lawmakers to prevent any of the \$58 million appropriated over the past two years for Operation Safe Commerce from being diverted to aviation security or any other Homeland Security Department programs.

Constitutional Change is Urged in Case Terror Strikes Congress

Philadelphia Inquirer, June 4, 2003

A blue-ribbon bipartisan commission will recommend this week that the Constitution must be amended to ensure the continuity of government in case Congress is wiped out by a terrorist attack.

- [Panel Calls for Amendment to Fill House Seats in Emergency](#), *NY Times*, June 4
- [Report: Amend Constitution to Cover Terror](#), *The Hill*, June 4

BILLS RECENTLY INTRODUCED

- **H.R.2301:** To direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to provide for the installation of chemical and biological detection devices in the enclosed passenger boarding stations of each heavy rail transit system in the United States, *House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee*, June 3
- **H.R.2329:** To provide for global pathogen surveillance and response, *House International Relations Committee*, June 4

RECENT HEARINGS

- [Port Security](#), House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, June 3
- [Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Firefighters Act of 2003](#), House Committee on Science, June 4
- [Wireless E911 Implementation: Progress and Remaining Hurdles](#), House Committee on Energy and Commerce, June 4
- [The Spectrum of Our Nation's First Responders](#), House Committee on Energy and Commerce, June 4
- [Examining the Homeland Security Department and Biowarfare Threats](#), Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, June 4

STATE AND LOCAL ACTIVITIES

[Readiness for Chemical Attack Criticized](#)

Washington Post, June 4, 2003

Despite repeated warnings by the Bush administration that chemical agents are among the most readily available terrorist weapons, the nation's public health laboratories are "dangerously unprepared" for a chemical attack, according to a [state by state analysis](#) released yesterday.

[New York Places Sensors to Track Biochemicals](#)

Reuters, June 3, 2003

A new set of high-tech sensors will join more than a dozen already in place designed to track biological, chemical and radiological agents in Manhattan, New York security officials said on Tuesday.

[3 Municipalities Eligible for Homeland Security Funds](#)

Jersey Journal, June 5, 2003

Jersey City, Secaucus and Hoboken could receive a portion of the \$472,144 in federal Homeland Security funds going to New Jersey municipalities for training local citizens to be better prepared to respond to emergencies such as natural disasters and terrorist attacks.

[Event to Overview Emergency Preparedness for Local Area](#)

Starline, June 4, 2003

A Grand Coulee Dam area fair's objective is to "educate people about the emergency preparedness program already in place in their communities, as well as how to create their own personal and family emergency plans."

[Mass-Casualty Drill to Test Area Emergency Preparedness](#)

Baltimore Business Journal, May 30, 2003

Emergency personnel from the Baltimore County Fire Department, Emergency Medical Services, Maryland Transit Administration, Baltimore County Police Department and neighboring counties' responders will participate in a mass casualty drill at a county Metro Station.

Tennessee Gets \$29 Million More For Homeland Security

Chattanooga, June 4, 2003

U.S. Senators Bill Frist and Lamar Alexander announced that Tennessee Emergency Management Agency has been awarded \$29 million through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to aid in first responder preparedness.

➤ [Helping Tennessee's First Responders](#), *Department of Homeland Security*, June 4

Are Disabled People Prepared for Disasters?

Disaster News Network, June 4, 2003

The National Organization of the Disabled Emergency Preparedness Initiative's main goal is twofold: first, to educate emergency and relief workers about the special, and heterogeneous, needs of the disabled, and, second, to bring the disabled to the table with first responders.

Kentucky Gets \$23.8 Million for First Responders

Business First, June 4, 2003

The Department of Homeland Security has awarded the state of Kentucky \$23.8 million to help fund initiatives for first responders in the state.

A Day in the Life: For Coordinator, Preparedness is Job 1

Amarillo Globe-News, June 2, 2003

The geographic isolation of Amarillo from other major metropolitan areas such as Dallas, Oklahoma City, Denver and Albuquerque, N.M., make it critical that the city's emergency management structure is capable of handling major emergencies on its own.

Edgefield Hospital Holds Mock Hostage Situation

Augusta Chronicle, June 4, 2003

Edgefield County Hospital participated in a mock terrorist drill to test the emergency reflexes of Edgefield County's law enforcement agencies and fulfill a requirement for the hospital's accreditation and state license.

RELATED INFORMATION

RECENT REPORTS

- [Information Security: Although Progress Made, Weaknesses at the Internal Revenue Service Continue to Pose Risks](#), GAO-03-44, May 2003
- [Public Health Laboratories: Unprepared and Overwhelmed](#), Trust for America's Health, June 2003
- [A Risk Based Airport Security Policy](#), Reason Public Policy Institute, May 2003

The information contained in this newsletter was collected from Internet sources. Opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the official position of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Office of National Preparedness.