

The National Preparedness Goal

The Goal represents a significant evolution in the way we approach preparedness and homeland security. The Goal presents a collective vision for national preparedness, and establishes National Priorities that will help guide the realization of that vision. The vision set forth by the Goal encompasses the full spectrum of activities necessary to address a broad range of threats and hazards, including terrorism.

The vision of the National Preparedness Goal is:

To engage Federal, State, local, and tribal entities, their private and non-governmental partners, and the general public to achieve and sustain risk-based target levels of capability to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from major events in order to minimize the impact on lives, property, and the economy.

The Goal provides a common framework for a systems-based approach to build, sustain and improve national preparedness for a broad range of threats and hazards. The Goal and other source documents define the mission areas of this framework as follows:

1. Prevent: Actions to avoid an incident or to intervene or stop an incident from occurring. Prevention involves actions taken to protect lives and property. It involves applying intelligence and other information to a range of activities that may include such countermeasures as deterrence operations; heightened inspections; improved surveillance and security operations; investigations to determine the full nature and source of the threat; public health and agricultural surveillance and testing processes; immunizations, isolation, or quarantine; and, as appropriate, specific law enforcement operations aimed at deterring, preempting, interdicting, or disrupting illegal activity and apprehending potential perpetrators and bringing them to justice (Source: NIMS, March 2004).

2. Protect: Actions to reduce the vulnerability of critical infrastructure or key resources in order to deter, mitigate, or neutralize terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies (Source: HSPD 7, December 2003). It requires coordinated action on the part of Federal, State and local governments; the private sector; and concerned citizens across the country. Protection also includes: continuity of government and operations planning; awareness elevation and understanding of threats and vulnerabilities to their critical facilities, systems, and functions; identification and promotion of effective sector-specific protection practices and methodologies; and expansion of voluntary security-related information sharing among private entities within the sector, as well as between government and private entities. (Source: The National Strategy for the Physical Protection of Critical Infrastructures and Key Assets, February 2003).

3. Respond: Activities that address the short-term, direct effects of an incident. Response includes immediate actions to save lives, protect property, and meet basic human needs. Response also includes the execution of emergency operations plans and of mitigation activities designed to limit the loss of life, personal injury, property damage, and other unfavorable outcomes.

As indicated by the situation, response activities include applying intelligence and other information to lessen the effects or consequences of an incident; increased security operations; continuing investigations into nature and source of the threat; ongoing public health and agricultural surveillance and testing processes; immunizations, isolation, or quarantine; and specific law enforcement operations aimed at preempting, interdicting, or disrupting illegal activity, and apprehending actual perpetrators and bringing them to justice (Source:NIMS,March2004).

4. Recover: Activities that include the development, coordination, and execution of service – and site-restoration plans; the reconstitution of government operations and services; individual, private- sector, nongovernmental, and public-assistance programs to provide housing and to promote restoration; long-term care and treatment of affected persons; additional measures for social, political, environmental, and economic restoration; evaluation of the incident to identify lessons learned; post-incident reporting; and development of initiatives to mitigate the effects of future incidents (Source: NIMS, March 2004).

At the core, success depends upon robust and adaptive collaboration – between the public and private sector, among different levels of government, among multiple jurisdictions, and among departments and agencies within a single jurisdiction. Collaboration encompasses a wide range of activities (i.e., joint planning, training, operations) aimed at coordinating the capabilities and resources of various entities (agencies, organizations, and individuals from many tiers of public and private sectors) for the common purpose of preventing, protecting against, responding to, and recovering from intentional as well as natural threats to people or property. As such a critical element, collaboration can thus be viewed as the foundation upon which success in all four mission areas depends.

Each mission area includes a collection of capabilities that require the integration of multiple agencies, disciplines, processes, and procedures. For example, the prevention mission area includes the capability of intelligence fusion and analysis. This capability requires the interaction of law enforcement investigations, public health surveillance, suspicious activity reports from the public, and other discipline-specific activities.

Integration is needed across mission areas. For example, information learned in intelligence fusion and analysis should inform critical infrastructure protection efforts so that protection strategies fit the threats.

This common framework provides an overarching structure which can guide the establishment and enhancement of homeland security preparedness organizations, programs and processes. While individual components within the framework may change over time, the framework is robust and should not change.

The Seven National Preparedness Goals:

National Priorities

Overarching Priorities

- Implement the National Incident Management System and National Response Plan
- Expand Regional Collaboration
- Implement the Interim National Infrastructure Protection Plan

Capability-Specific Priorities

- Strengthen Information Sharing and Collaboration capabilities
- Strengthen Interoperable Communications capabilities
- Strengthen CBRNE Detection, Response, and Decontamination capabilities
- Strengthen Medical Surge and Mass Prophylaxis capabilities