

Excerpt: National Planning Scenarios⁷

The fifteen all-hazards National Planning Scenarios are an integral component of DHS's capabilities-based approach to implementing Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8: National Preparedness (HSPD-8). The scenarios serve as the foundation for the development of homeland security tasks, target capabilities, and standards and performance metrics against which capabilities and tasks will ultimately be measured. The scenario-derived capabilities and standards serve as a basis for assessing national preparedness; help guide Federal preparedness assistance to State, local, and tribal governments; and assist in development of national exercises and training programs.

Development of the National Planning Scenarios

In November 2003, the Homeland Security Council (HSC) and DHS convened an inter-agency Scenario Working Group (SWG). The objective was to develop the minimum number of representative scenarios required to develop and test the range of required prevention, protection, response, and recovery resources. The SWG refined and vetted fifteen all-hazards planning scenarios. Twelve represent terrorist attacks; three represent natural disasters or naturally-occurring epidemics. This ratio reflects the fact that the Nation has recurring experience with natural disasters but faces newfound dangers, including the increasing potential for use of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists. Each of the 15 scenarios follows the same outline to include a detailed scenario description, planning considerations, and implications.

The scenarios form the basis for coordinated Federal planning, training, exercises, and grant investments needed to prepare for all-hazards. DHS employed the scenarios as the basis for a rigorous task analysis of prevention, protection, response and recovery missions and identification of key tasks that supported development of essential all-hazards capabilities. The task analysis was used to develop the Target Capabilities List (TCL). The TCL defines 37 specific capabilities that communities, the private sector, and all levels of government should collectively possess in order to respond effectively to all-hazards.