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Homeland Security

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TO: All State Administrative Agency Heads
All State Administrative Agency Points of Contact
All State Homeland Security Directors

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SUBJECT: Providing Homeland Security Knowledge Resources to Emergency Responders

As part of the Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP) efforts to provide needed homeland security knowledge resources to emergency responders, ODP has initiated a number of programs. These include System Assessment and Validation for Emergency Responders (SAVER); Lessons Learned Information System (LLIS); Responder Knowledge Base (RKB); Terrorism Knowledge Base (TKB); and the Terrorism Library (TL).

System Assessment and Validation for Emergency Responders Program

Emergency responders nationwide know first-hand how important reliable, unbiased performance and cost information is to the successful completion of their mission. ODP recognized this requirement and established the SAVER program to provide emergency responders with the information necessary to obtain the best value when purchasing equipment.

The SAVER program is designed to assist emergency responders by providing impartial, practitioner relevant, operationally oriented assessments and validations on the performance of critical equipment. SAVER assessments are made of Commercial Off-Of-The-Shelf (COTS) equipment for effectiveness, quality, and safety under conditions closely simulating actual use. The SAVER reports can then be used by decision makers and responders to better select, procure, use, and maintain their equipment.

The SAVER website http://saver.tamu.edu is used to provide these assessment reports and other equipment related information to emergency responders. As pertinent information becomes available, such as assessment results, project initiation, or hot links, the applicable web pages are updated to reflect the most recent findings. Access to the SAVER website is granted through the Responder Knowledge Base (RKB), and registering at RKB will allow a responder to obtain access to SAVER.

The SAVER website, which went live in August 2004, now has over 12,000 registered users. In March 2005, SAVER had an average of 107 users per day (3,345/month) visiting the site and those users viewed an average of 9.84 pages during their visit. There were over 2,000 hits on SAVER

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reports and over 32,900 page views during March 2005. The SAVER Program Support Office is managed by the Texas Engineering Experiment Station at Texas A&M University.

Lessons Learned Information System

The National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT), Oklahoma City, OK, is a non-profit organization funded by ODP. Working in coordination with ODP, MIPT has created a national information sharing capability on lessons learned in managing terrorist or critical incidents. The Lessons Learned Information System (LLIS) provides a national repository of terrorism preparedness and mitigation knowledge. The LLIS database is available through http://www.LLIS.gov and offers the following types of original content:

• Lessons Learned: knowledge and experience, positive or negative, derived from actual incidents as well as observations and historical review of operations, training, and exercises.
• Best practices: peer-validated techniques, procedures, ideas, or solutions that work and are solidly grounded upon actual experience in operations, training, and exercises.
• Good Stories: exemplary, but non-peer-validated, initiatives implemented by various jurisdictions that have shown success in their specific environments and that may provide useful information to other communities and organizations.

While initially focused on the traditional emergency responder community, LLIS provides the cornerstone of a National Center of Excellence for sharing best practices and lessons learned that includes various sub-sectors of homeland security and counterterrorism.

More than 16,000 have applied for membership to LLIS since the launch in April 2004, and 13,264 have been approved. The membership roles have increased significantly in the last few months with 3,862 applications for membership in March 2005 and 3,000 approved for membership. There were some 80,163 user visits in the month of March 2005. During a recent one week period, there were more than 1,300 logins to LLIS.

Responder Knowledge Base

The Responder Knowledge Base (RKB) has been designed to provide emergency responders with a single source for integrated information on current equipment, including organizing information such as the Inter-Agency Board's Standardized Equipment List (SEL) and ODP's Authorized Equipment List (AEL). The RKB is available through http://www.rkb.mipt.org/ and answers such questions as:

• What equipment is out there?
• Has it been certified, and does it meet standards?
• Are there federal funds available to pay for it?

The RKB also includes a number of reports and web-links that will provide the emergency responder with a variety of useful information on equipment. MIPT also manages the RKB program. RKB recently provided application and equipment information for the Commercial Equipment Direct Assistance Program (CEDAP). In one day, over 6,000 applications for CEDAP were downloaded. The application process for CEDAP equipment was open for 30 days, and over 1,300 applications were received for a total of $30 million in equipment.

To-date, the RKB has about 12,000 registered users. In March 2005, the website experienced an average of 700 users per day, with each user spending an average of 12 minutes on the site during their visit. The system now has updated information on over 3,500 emergency responder products.

Terrorism Knowledge Base

The Terrorism Knowledge Base (TKB) aids responders and others in their understanding of terrorist groups, attacks, and legal action against them. TKB is available through http://www.tkb.org/ and offers access to over 35 years of international terrorism data, five years of worldwide domestic terrorism data, 20 years of terrorist indictments, GIS mapping capabilities, and profiles of groups and leaders. The TKB includes remarkable analytical capabilities such as statistical summaries, trend graphing, and side-by-side group comparisons.

March 2005 was a record month for the TKB with 52,038 visits and 34,496 unique visitors. Using figures from TKB's launch on September 2, 2004 through April 1, 2005, TKB has received 157,695 unique visitors accounting for 299,951 total visits and 4,512,405 total pages visited. The Department of Homeland Security represents the single largest user of the site in terms of time spent on the TKB, with one DHS server registering 1 week, 3 days, and 16 hours (from 1,637 visits) and another registering one week, 2 days, and 21 hours (from 188 visits). Other major government users include all branches of the armed services including US Northern Command and the Army Special Operations Command, CIA, DIA, DOJ, State, Treasury, and the Coast Guard. Major international users included Canada's Department of National Defense, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Customs and Revenue Agency, and Government Telecommunications and Informatics Services; the Australian Government Department of Defense and Victoria Police; and Spain's Ministry of the Interior.

Terrorism Library

The Terrorism Library (TL) of MIPT has one of the largest publicly available print collections of terrorism-related resources, which includes over 2,000 books, 1,100 reports and articles, and 600 electronic resources. MIPT's library staff also monitors over 30 electronic mailing lists on topics such as terrorism, emergency responders, emergency management, and weapons of mass destruction, and makes available any other information that is deemed pertinent. Reference service is available by telephone at (405) 278-6311 or e-mail at library@mipt.org.

Summary

In summary, ODP and its partners have established programs to provide a wealth of critically needed information to the emergency responder community. The SAVER, LLIS, RKP, TKB, and TL are readily available through the internet, reports, or direct contact with the programs and are designed to provide knowledge resources needed by emergency responders to accomplish their homeland security mission.