**Identifying Potential Targets**

While developing the homeland security annex to Anywheresville’s emergency operations plan, the region’s homeland security experts and emergency manager must identify potential targets within the region and develop risk assessments to determine which targets would be considered most likely to be vulnerable to a man-made or natural emergency. This assessment should also consider the potential for human and financial losses when determining which targets will be considered to be priorities and how homeland security assets will be distributed.

When determining target identification, the town’s emergency manager or homeland security staff must understand the fiscal reality that some assets will not be priorities, and therefore, they will not be provided additional assets. “While it is not possible to protect or eliminate the vulnerability of all critical infrastructure and key resources…strategic improvements in security can make it more difficult for attacks to succeed and can lessen the impact of attacks that may occur” (Homeland Security, 2010, p. 1). While determining which of the region’s assets will be prioritized, there will be some areas of concern that must be addressed regardless of outside funding.

All facilities that receive funding for military research should be considered high-profile targets. Medical or educational facilities that conduct testing in bioterrorism research must be included in any homeland security emergency operations plan. Because the University of Anywheresville has several facilities that receive military or government funding related to weapons research or chemical and biological agent research, they must be considered targets and should be included in the region’s emergency plans. Other high-profile targets in the region include the federal office building and courthouse, along with an office complex which is owned by an American oil company.

Infrastructure must also be considered when determining potential targets. Anywheresville has several bridges connecting various sections of the city. Should one or more of these bridges become compromised, the ability to evacuate citizens would become challenging at best and potentially impossible at worst. Also, if one of the major highways passing through the city were to be closed by an emergency for an extended period of time, the resulting change in traffic patterns could create a new potential target as traffic is forced to use other routes that might be more difficult to secure or protect.

**Available State and Federal Resources**

For Anywheresville to successfully develop their emergency response plans, they will have to locate funding for training and equipment. Like many other municipalities, Anywheresville has been affected by the fiscal realities of a down turned economy and high unemployment. Both of these factors have forced Anywheresville to search for alternative sources of funding to continue their homeland security initiatives. While financial constraints are certainly a concern, there are funding sources available through state and federal initiatives. For example, “(T)he Department of Homeland Security enhances the ability of states, local and tribal jurisdictions…in the preparation, prevention, and response to terrorist attacks and other disasters, by distributing grant funds. Localities can use grants for planning, equipment, training and exercise needs” (Department of Homeland Security, 2010, p. 1).

State and local anti-terrorism funding is available from outside sources as well. The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) provides grant money to both local and state governments. “The Office of Grants and Training (G&T) is responsible for providing training, funds for the purchase of equipment, support for the planning and execution of exercises, technical assistance and other support to assist states and local jurisdictions” (NVFC, 2010, p. 1).

Grant money is often available in the form of matching funds from both state and federal agencies. Very simply, local governments can receive grants specific to homeland security expenses provided that the local municipality can come up with matching funds. Admittedly, some municipalities miss out on these types of grants because they cannot produce the matching funds, but Anywheresville is proactive in its response to homeland security issues and will make every attempt to acquire state and federal matching grants.

Terrorism Threat and Response Plan Overview (Why be concerned and the benefits of preparation.)

Since 9-11, Al-Qaida has vowed to increase attacks on American soil. Terrorists prefer to use large explosives to create mass casualties but terrorists are using other tactics. Tactics range from explosives to multiple terrorists seizing and area and shooting people, similar to the attacks that occurred in Mumbai. Terrorists have demonstrated their commitment when failed New York Time Square bomber Faisal Shahzad was captured for an attempted bombing in New York.

**Terrorism Response Plan**

Proper planning will assist all responding agencies in mitigation, prevention, and recovery from a terrorist attack. A response plan will provide direction to all responding state and local agencies with protocols to recover from a terrorist attack. According to Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (n.d.), the objectives of a response plan include,

1. Establishes and maintain a reality based assessment for a potential threat.
2. Establishes the roles, responsibilities, and capabilities of responding federal and state agencies during a terrorist attack.
3. Establishes and plan for recovering, responding, and planning to a terrorist attack consistent with Presidential Decision Directive 39.
4. Identifies the need for future training for emergency personnel along with state, local, and federal agencies.

(California Terrorism Response Plan Purpose, Scope, and Objectives, Para. 3).

An agency without an operations plan will have a poorly timed response and this will inevitably lead to the catastrophic loss of life.

Potential Threat of Biological Weapon in High Population Density Building HVAC

Systems

**Biological Threat**

Explosives appear to be the weapon of choice for terrorists. Explosives create mass casualties and fear however, the threat of a biological weapon use in populated areas or buildings can potentially create more casualties than an explosion. According to National Academies and U.S. Department of Homeland Security, March 2006, “A biological attack is the intentional release of a pathogen (disease causing agent) or biotoxin (poisonous substance produced by a living organism) against humans, plants, or animals.” (Biological Attack, Para. 1).

Biological attacks are easily transported and very deadly. Anthrax and small pox are the two most available and widely studied pathogens. A terrorist can filter biological agents through a ventilation system in a hospital or shopping mall creating mass casualties. Biological attacks can be filtered through aerosol dissemination, food, water, infected animals, and human contact.