



GRANT PROGRAMS DIRECTORATE POLICY

- I. **TITLE:** Purchase of Ballistic Protective Equipment (BPE) for Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Personnel in Support of Active Shooter and Mass Casualty Incidents (AS/MCIs).

- II. **DATE OF ISSUANCE:** April 10, 2014

- III. **POLICY STATEMENT:** State Administrative Agencies (SAAs) and tribal governments are authorized and encouraged to use Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) and Tribal Homeland Security Grant Program (THSGP) funding to enable the purchase of BPE for fire/rescue and EMS personnel whose duties may include response to AS/MCIs and entry into a “warm zone” to support the rapid triage, treatment, and extrication of the wounded. In addition to funding the necessary equipment, HSGP and THSGP funding may also be used to support associated AS/MCI planning, training, and exercise requirements. This policy does not affect the use of HSGP and THSGP funding to support tactical law enforcement (LE) teams (i.e., LE teams qualified for “hot zone “entry) as funding used for this purpose remains an allowable expense.

- IV. **PURPOSE:** State, tribal, and local authorities must be prepared to respond to AS/MCIs. In addition to developing the necessary LE response capabilities, they must build sufficient public safety resources and capabilities to quickly triage, treat, and evacuate victims located within or near an AS/MCI area. Providing fire and EMS teams with proper BPE, along with the requisite training, directly supports this critical capability. To that end, this policy provides clarity on the authorized use of HSGP funding and THSGP funding. Furthermore, FEMA encourages SAAs and tribal governments to allocate such funding to support development of AS/MCI capabilities and specifically to support the purchase of BPE and the associated AS/MCI planning and training for fire and EMS personnel.

This policy is not intended to address the tactical aspects of AS/MCI planning, training, and operations. Rather, the focus of the policy is on establishing funding eligibility criteria in support of AS/MCI response preparedness. Preparedness and operational guidelines for fire and EMS personnel can be found on the U.S. Fire Administration website at:

http://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/active_shooter_guide.pdf.



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- V. **SCOPE AND EXTERNAL AUDIENCE:** This policy shall apply to all currently open HSGP awards and to all future HSGP and THSGP awards. SAAs should refer to Grant Programs Directorate (GPD) Information Bulletin #379 titled *Guidance to State Administrative Agencies to Expedite the Expenditure of Certain DHS/FEMA Grant Funding*, issued on Feb. 17, 2012, for guidance on re-scoping and reallocating open awards
[\(<http://www.fema.gov/pdf/government/grant/bulletins/info379.pdf>\)](http://www.fema.gov/pdf/government/grant/bulletins/info379.pdf).

Emergency Managers, Fire Chiefs and Fire Commanders, EMS Chiefs, On-Scene Incident Commanders, Police and Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team Commanders, Bomb Squad Commanders, Public Health entities who oversee occupational and workplace safety, and all state, tribal, and local homeland security planners and grants managers should be made aware of this new equipment allowability.

- VI. **AUTHORITY:** This policy is governed by the following authority:

§ 2008 of the *Homeland Security Act of 2002*, as amended (Pub. L. 107-296) (6 U.S.C. § 609)

- VII. **OBJECTIVES:** The objective of this policy is to authorize the use of HSGP and THSGP funding to support the proper training and equipping of fire/rescue and EMS personnel who may be required to deploy to an AS/MCI incident and enter a potentially unsecure area where an ongoing ballistic or explosive threat exists and where rapid triage, treatment, and extrication of the wounded may be necessary.

- VIII. **DEFINITIONS, ABBREVIATIONS, AND FORMATTING:**

A. Definitions

- 1) **Active Shooter and Mass Casualty Incident (AS/MCI):** This is a general term intended to cover active shooter incidents involving one or more subjects who participate in an ongoing, random or systematic shooting spree, demonstrating their intent to harm others with the objective of mass murder.



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- 2) **Hot Zone:** Area where there is a known hazard or a direct and immediate life threatening situation, i.e., any uncontrolled area where an “active shooter” could directly engage a rescue team.
- 3) **Warm Zone:** Area of indirect threat, i.e. an area where LE officials have either cleared or isolated the threat to a level of minimal or mitigated risk. This area can be considered clear but not secure.
- 4) **Ballistic Protective Equipment (BPE):** Ballistic protective gear, including body armor, for the head and body; i.e., vests, gloves, knee pads, helmets, and shields.

B. Abbreviations

- 1) **AEL:** Authorized Equipment List
- 2) **AS/MCI:** Active Shooter and Mass Casualty Incidents
- 3) **BPE:** Ballistic Protective Equipment
- 4) **EMS:** Emergency Medical Services
- 5) **FEMA:** Federal Emergency Management Agency
- 6) **GPD:** FEMA Grant Programs Directorate
- 7) **HSGP:** Homeland Security Grant Program
- 8) **IC:** Incident Commander
- 9) **LE:** Law Enforcement
- 10) **NTED:** FEMA National Training and Education Division
- 11) **SAA:** State Administrative Agency
- 12) **THIRA:** Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment

IX. POLICY DETAILS: BPE is essential for the safety of first responders, such as fire/rescue and EMS personnel, who may be called upon to support LE teams during an active shooter incident, and enter an unsecured active shooter area (warm or hot zone). Fire/rescue and EMS personnel who are not members of a tactical LE response team have traditionally not entered an active shooter area until the “all clear sign” is given by the Incident Commander (IC). However, expert analysis of recent AS/MCI incidents has revealed the value of having medical and rescue personnel who are properly trained and equipped to enter the warm zone to maximize victim survival. FEMA therefore encourages first responder agencies to develop this capability. This policy allows state, tribal, and



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local response agencies to procure BPE for fire/rescue and EMS personnel using HSGP and THSGP funds for these purposes and for the purposes described in sections III and IV, above. In addition to the purchase of required equipment, HSGP and THSGP funding may be used to support the associated AS/MCI planning, training, and exercise requirements.

State and local fire and EMS organizations are encouraged to establish joint interagency plans, policies, and procedures that address AS/MCI response operations. The development of such doctrine should be coordinated among the fire/EMS response organizations; LE, public safety, and private sector responder agencies; and regionally with hospitals and receiving medical facilities. In addition, fire and EMS personnel should be properly trained and qualified in the use of the ballistic protection equipment and AS/MCI tactics and procedures. Interagency training and exercises are highly encouraged. As a condition of funding, such investments should directly link to capability targets and resource requirements identified by the State, Tribe, or relevant Urban Area Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) and related capability gaps as identified in the State Preparedness Report.

Agencies can learn more about developing a program related to AS/MCI coordinated response by contacting the FEMA National Training and Education Division (NTED). Course catalog and scheduling information can be accessed through <https://www.firstrespondertraining.gov/content.do>. The Grant Programs Directorate (GPD) can provide information on how other jurisdictions in the country have used HSGP funding to establish this capability in their response and recovery protocols for all hazards events. Agencies also are encouraged to review GPD Policy FP 207-008-064-1 titled *Review and Approval Requirements for Training Courses Funded Through Preparedness Grants*, issued on Sept. 10, 2013 for further guidance (<http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/34856>).

The Authorized Equipment List (AEL), which is located at <https://www.llis.dhs.gov/knowledgebase/ael>, provides information on allowable equipment expenditures for the various preparedness grant programs, including BPE and other personal protective equipment. SAAs and tribal governments must ensure that BPE purchased with HSGP and THSGP funds meets the applicable standards outlined in the AEL, including NIJ Standard-0101.06, *Ballistic Resistance*



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of *Body Armor*, which is cited as a mandatory standard. The publication can be found at: <http://www.nij.gov/publications/pages/publication-detail.aspx?ncjnumber=223054>. GPD will update the AEL to reflect the expanded authorization as detailed in this policy.

- X. **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:** SAAs and tribal governments are asked to disseminate this information with their stakeholders as soon as possible. State, tribal, and local agencies will need to anticipate and plan for their agency's equipment procurement and training needs. Additionally, response agencies, including fire/rescue and EMS organizations, may need to develop new policies and procedures to effectively implement the guidance and recommendations contained in this policy.
- XI. **MONITORING AND EVALUATION:** The acquisition of BPE and related training expenses will be monitored by GPD through desk reviews and site visits. SAAs are encouraged to report these purchases in the Biannual Strategy Implementation Report (BSIR). Planned purchases should also be reported in future HSGP and THSGP applications.
- XII. **RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** FEMA Grant Programs Directorate
- XIII. **SUPERSESSION:** This policy does not supersede other policy on the subject.
- XIV. **REVIEW DATE:** This policy expires three years from the date of issuance in accordance with Directive 112-12.

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