

# RESPONSE

Focused on ensuring that the Nation is able to respond effectively to all types of incidents, including those of catastrophic proportion that require marshaling the capabilities of the entire Nation



## Highlights

- The Federal Government supported the response to the Ebola virus disease epidemic in West Africa and cases in the United States.
- The discovery of a major cyber vulnerability called Heartbleed prompted the Federal Government to establish new guidelines to delineate the roles and responsibilities of Federal cyber response assets.
- Increasingly violent and frequent mass shooting incidents prompted whole community partners to develop new response planning, training, and exercise initiatives for managing active shooter events.
- The large increase in unaccompanied children across the U.S.-Mexico border tested the ability of Federal agencies to expand and coordinate services in a non-Stafford Act event.

## Frameworks in Action

The *National Response Framework* (the Response Framework) guides how the Nation responds to all types of incidents by describing the principles, roles and responsibilities, and coordinating structures for delivering the 14 core capabilities—and 29 associated critical tasks—necessary in incident response.

The whole community response to the March 2014 mudslide in Snohomish County, Washington, demonstrated the execution of several critical tasks. The American Red Cross provided 142 overnight stays in shelters for victims, highlighting the ability **to establish, staff, and equip emergency shelters**. Northwest Regional Aviation, an aircraft-sharing consortium created with support from the Seattle Urban Areas Security Initiative, **conducted mass search and rescue operations** and, in cooperation with the U.S. Navy, **rescued** 16 survivors. Additionally, the Governor activated more than 100 Air National Guardsman to assist in search and extraction operations. A collaborative effort among local, state, and Federal agencies **established operations** leading to the recovery of all 43 human remains. This collaboration also **established physical access** to the area through debris removal efforts, supported efforts to decontaminate responders and equipment exposed to spilled fuel and other hazardous liquids, and helped to dispose of animal remains. In addition, mental health professionals from various organizations (e.g., American Red Cross, Green Cross, Critical

## Core Capabilities in the Response Mission Area

- Critical Transportation
- Environmental Response/Health and Safety
- Fatality Management Services
- Infrastructure Systems
- Mass Care Services
- Mass Search and Rescue Operations
- On-scene Security and Protection
- Operational Communications
- Operational Coordination
- Planning
- Public and Private Services and Resources
- Public Health and Medical Services
- Public Information and Warning
- Situational Assessment

Incident Stress Management response teams) provided counseling and support services to the families of victims.

The Response mission area also comprises several mature capabilities—including Mass Search and Rescue Operations, which focuses on **conducting search and rescue operations to locate persons in distress**. For the past seven years, USCG has consistently deployed assets to support search and rescue operations within two hours, meeting this target more than 95 percent of the time. The past year also saw emerging challenges for some mature capabilities. For example, the increasing frequency of wildfires and the length of the fire season stressed the highly capable wildfire response community in 2014. Nearly 3,000 more wildfires occurred in 2014 than 2013. Recognizing the need to **provide support to state and local wildfire operations**, the U.S. Forest Service continued to modernize its airtanker fleet in 2014, operating 18 next-generation and older airtankers and over 100 exclusive-use helicopters. An additional 100 helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft were on-call for the 2014 fire season.

## USCG Expands Search and Rescue Capability to New Operating Environment

USCG continued to expand their operating environment, exercising new methods and technologies in the Arctic Circle. During [Arctic Shield 2014](#), USCG focused on delivering search and rescue capabilities to Western Alaskan tribal regions and the Bering Strait, while testing new unmanned aerial systems, radars, and specialized ice-cutting tools.



## By the Numbers

**90**  
percent  
of Federal  
Departments  
and Agencies

Approximately 90 percent of Federal departments and agencies responding to a 2014 preparedness survey reported that they were developing operational plans supporting the Response Framework, and nearly 50 percent have developed an inventory of incident management assets conforming to nationally standardized definitions (i.e., resource typing).

**127**  
Chemical  
Industry  
Outreach  
Workshops

FBI conducted 127 Chemical Industry Outreach Workshops to present information on preventing terrorists from acquiring bomb-making chemicals, and provide integrated response training among chemical industry personnel, academia, law enforcement, and first responder communities.

**200**  
tribes

FEMA, with support from DOI's Bureau of Indian Affairs, engaged 200 tribes during 60 in-person meetings to inform new guidance for tribes seeking presidential disaster declarations.

## Resilience Innovations

- DoD and partner organizations collaboratively developed the [Geospatial capabilities for Security, Humanitarian Assistance, Partner Engagement \(GeoSHAPE\)](#). This mapping technology supports disaster relief by giving users the ability to create and dynamically display the locations of disaster response resources and the extent of damage in near real time.
- The [Guardian Indoor Gunshot Detection System](#) adapts military technology that identifies gunshot locations for use in schools, public spaces, and airports. The system links to smartphones and provides real-time "shots fired" information on an interactive map, helping potential victims avoid encounters with shooters and directing law enforcement to the shooter's location.
- NOAA employed a novel aerial photographic technique to conduct post-storm surveys for Hurricane Arthur. By taking photographs at an angle, the technique captures more comprehensive ground images, allowing users to document storm damage and erosion, identify hazards and effects on navigation routes, and support damage assessments.
- The DHS Office of Health Affairs (OHA) publicly released two products that provide guidance and lessons learned to the whole community on how to respond to a large-scale chemical release: (1) an [abridged after-action report](#) from the Baltimore Demonstration Tabletop Exercise; and (2) [Patient Decontamination in a Mass Chemical Exposure Incident: National Planning Guidance for Communities](#).

# Whole Community Accomplishments

**Honolulu, Hawaii** Building on the previous year's success, the second annual "Ready 2 React Whole Community Emergency Preparedness Event" provided an opportunity for over 25 city, state, Federal, and nongovernmental agencies to engage with the public to discuss preparedness activities for emergencies or disasters that may affect the island.

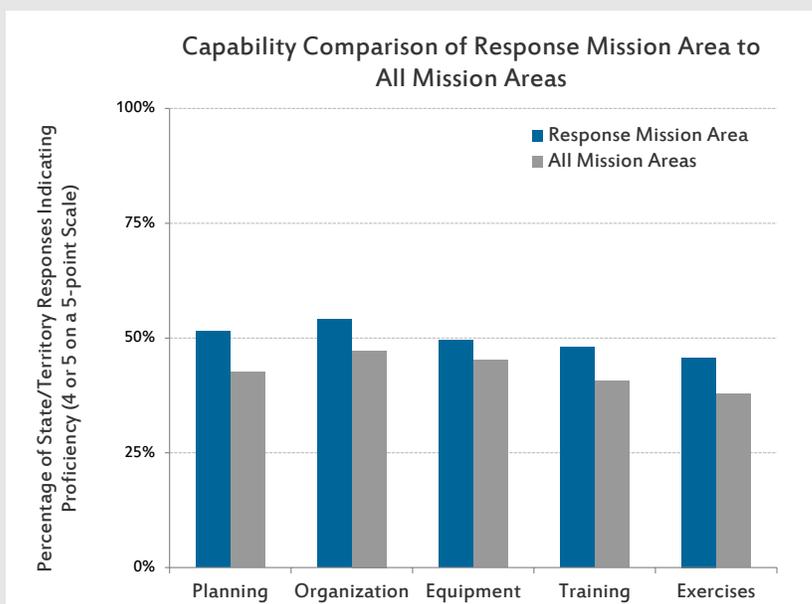
**Galveston Bay, Texas** In March 2014, as part of the whole community's response to an oil spill in Galveston Bay, over 200 volunteers supported Federal, state, and local government agencies in surveying more than 100 miles of beachfront and identifying areas and wildlife in need of cleaning.

**Raleigh, North Carolina** The North Carolina Office of Emergency Medical Services deployed a mobile medical facility to Mississippi after Mississippi's governor requested assistance through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact.

**San Francisco, California** In October 2014, the City of San Francisco used Fleet Week to teach and improve whole community disaster preparedness and enhance coordination between first responders and the military for a large-scale disaster in the Bay Area. As a precursor to Fleet Week, more than 150 officials from Federal, state, and local government agencies and the military participated in a tabletop exercise focused on military support in response to a 7.8-magnitude earthquake on the San Andreas Fault.

## State Perspectives on Preparedness 2014 State Preparedness Report Results

- Ratings for the Response mission area in planning, organization, training, and exercises were superior to those for all other mission areas. Equipment ratings for the Response mission area were slightly lower than for the Prevention mission area.
- Response core capabilities accounted for 6 of the 10 core capabilities with the highest self-assessment ratings.
- States and territories reported the lowest ratings for Fatality Management Services among all Response mission area core capabilities, with approximately 60 percent identifying gaps in mortuary services and body recovery.



Notes: The chart and statements do not include contributions from the three common core capabilities—Planning, Operational Coordination, and Public Information and Warning.