

Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Resources for First Responders

For a variety of reasons, there is a renewed concern about acts of terrorism, both from domestic and international perpetrators. There is a wide range of possibilities, from very simple, easily controlled threats to state-sponsored (instigated and/or funded by a foreign country) massive and complex events resulting in many injuries, casualties and damage/destruction to property. And, while terrorism is one cause of these events, it's not the only one. These events can happen naturally, like gas explosions/fires after an earthquake or by accident, when a cooling system fails at a nuclear power plant.

The one thing that all these potential events, including the threats that are thwarted, is that First Responders will be called to respond, and, most often, first on the scene. This applies to Police, Fire, EMS, volunteer or paid, urban or rural, ready or not.

The question is, Are We Ready? In the 1990s and early 2000s, there was money available and an emphasis on training for First Responders, having practice drills, both tabletop & live action, sometimes with outside evaluators. Everyone was required to have ICS/ICM training and be certified to the level that they would need, based on their role or command level within their agency. Some of the threats have changed, become more sophisticated, harder to detect.

We're also a generation or more away from the initial training and, I fear, many of those that became first responders in the last decade or so, have had little to no terrorism education or training. So, outside of the requirement for firefighters to have basic hazardous materials training/certification, and specialized units within agencies such as bomb squads, haz-mat teams, and intelligence or terrorism sections, many may not even have this on their radar.

Any of these events can not only threaten the lives of the responders, but if not managed/mitigated properly, can expand the threat to others in the community. In truth, that can happen even if everyone does everything exactly right.

So, for those that are interested and haven't been able to maintain the level of training they would like in this area, here is a collection of some recently updated resources regarding Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear threats and plans for management & mitigation, available by URL or QR Code.

Almost all of these are Index pages, meaning that they are the initial page to access the links to resources on the subjects covered including recommended gear & equipment, planning, recommended partners, training opportunities, samples of tabletop and live exercises, lists & books for drilling down into specifics, etc. There are resources for all potential First Responders, starting with the first link below. This is only a handful of those available. Many states and local governments have their own resources too.

CDC/NIOSH for Public Safety & First Responders (9/15/21):
<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/PublicSafetyFirstRespond.html>



QR Code - CDC/NIOSH for Public Safety & First Responders All Hazards Resources

ASPR/TRACIE CBRN Resources (10/27/22):
<https://asprtracie.hhs.gov/cbrn-resources>



QR Code for Link to ASPR/TRACIE CBRN Resources

HHS Chemical Hazards Emergency Medical Management (9/1/22):
https://chemm.hhs.gov/firstresponder_sources.htm



QR Code for Link to HHS Chemical for Emergency Responders Resources

FEMA Tools for CBRN Hazards (9/2/22):
<https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/practitioners/hazardous-response-capabilities/cbrn-tools>



QR Code for Link to FEMA CBRN Hazards Tools for Emergency Responders Resources

EPA CBRN Consequence Management (1/6/22):

<https://www.epa.gov/emergency-response/chemical-biological-radiological-and-nuclear-consequence-management>



QR Code for Link to EPA CBRN Consequence Management Resources

EPA CBRN Quick Reference Guides (11/10/21):

<https://www.epa.gov/emergency-response/chemical-biological-radiological-and-nuclear-quick-reference-guides>



QR Code for Link to EPA CBRN Quick Reference Guides

HHS/REMM (Radiation Emergency Medical Management) – Radiological Dispersal Devices (RDDs) (9/1/22): <https://remm.hhs.gov/rdd.htm>



QR Code for link to HHS/REMM Radiological Dispersal Devices

Maximizing Domestic CBRN Response & Recovery Efforts FEMA Chemical, Biological, Radiological & Nuclear Office DHS/CISA/Chemical Security Seminar (12/16/20):

<https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/2020-seminars-fema-cbrn-508.pdf>