

# COURTHOUSE PREPAREDNESS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES

CRITICAL ISSUES FOR  
BIOTERROR/BIOHAZARD  
PREPAREDNESS  
PLANNING

JANUARY 2006



University of Pittsburgh  
*Graduate School of Public Health*  
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SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF PENNSYLVANIA COURTS



University of Pittsburgh  
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*Center for Rural Health Practice*

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SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

December 21, 2005

*Dear President Judges and Chairs of the Board of Commissioners,*

Threats to public employees and public facilities from bio-hazards cannot be ignored. Whether it comes in the form of a white powder incident, a chlorine tanker tipped over in front of the courthouse, a terrorist attack, or food poisoning in the courthouse cafeteria, a bio-hazardous incident can present a very real danger.

The Committee on Judicial Safety and Preparedness of the Judicial Council of Pennsylvania has convened a taskforce to develop planning advice for county government officials responsible for addressing these and related issues.

Enclosed you will find a case study, based on actual experience, demonstrating how Pennsylvania counties have been affected in very significant ways by such incidents. Also enclosed is a suggested planning template and planning resources to help you plan for what might happen in your county. We strongly encourage you to consider undertaking this planning process.

It is important to understand that, given the unique nature of these bio-hazardous incidents, it may take hours until properly trained responders arrive on the scene. Until then, local officials must be prepared to act on their own to protect employees, the public and public facilities.

*At a minimum it is suggested you do the following:*

1. Identify a county Courthouse Incident Commander, and at least one backup. These people should receive appropriate specialized training to enable them to make immediate decisions about evacuating the building, quarantining employees, sheltering in place, appropriate first aid, or other issues which may have to be addressed in the first few minutes of any bio-hazardous incident.
2. Determine how the appropriate emergency response level decision will be made. Someone, perhaps the Courthouse Incident Commander, should be authorized to decide what the appropriate emergency response level should be. Depending on the facts of the particular incident, the matter may be handled in-house without any police or emergency services involvement. On the other hand, if the facts of the incident warrant, the appropriate response might be a call to 911 to sound the generalized alarm that will be spread throughout the local and state emergency services.
3. Educate employees about how a bio-hazard incident should be reported.
4. Become familiar with the resources available from the websites of the Center for Disease Control, the World Health Organization, the Office of Homeland Security, and other similar information sources.

Anthrax, smallpox, dirty bomb radiation, overturned trucks and railcars carrying hazardous chemicals, and domestic or international terrorism are all issues county government officials must be prepared to face — and in the earliest stages, to face alone. Preparation and planning are critical to assuring an appropriate initial response.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Sandra Schultz Newman in blue ink.

SANDRA SCHULTZ NEWMAN  
Justice, Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

Handwritten signature of John M. Cleland in blue ink.

JOHN M. CLELAND  
President Judge - Forty-Eighth Judicial District

Handwritten signature of Zygmunt A. Pines in blue ink.

ZYGMONT A. PINES  
Court Administrator of Pennsylvania

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction . . . . .	3
Learning From Experience . . . . .	4
Planning Checklist: What You Need To Know To Prepare For Bio-Hazard Threats and Events	
Pre-event - Convene Team . . . . .	7-9
- Threat Assessment	
Event - Threat Response . . . . .	10-12
- Internal Communication	
- External Communication	
- Security	
Post-event - Continuation of Operations . . . . .	13
Pennsylvania Planning & Response Resources by County . .	14-15
Emergency Planning & Response References & Resources . .	16-17
Task force Membership . . . . .	18

## CD Rom:

Courthouse Preparedness for Public Health Emergencies –  
Critical Issues for Bioterror/Biohazard Preparedness Planning

Pennsylvania Emergency Preparedness Guide

FBI - DHS - HHS/CDC Coordinated Document: Guidance on  
Initial Response to a Suspicious Letter

American Red Cross Family Disaster Plan

All-Hazards Plan for Buildings

# THE TIMELINESS AND QUALITY OF INITIAL ENGAGEMENT DETERMINE THE COURSE AND DURATION OF THE CRISIS AS WELL AS THE CHARACTER AND MAGNITUDE OF THE CONSEQUENCES.

## INTRODUCTION

While generally recognized as a period of chaos, actions taken during the first 0-20 minutes of a biological or chemical terrorist event or accident, the time before trained responders arrive on the scene, can make the difference between life and death. During this initial “chaos phase”, steps must be taken to characterize the danger, contain the hazard, protect people and property and marshal needed assistance. Defining the actions associated with each of these steps and determining how they will be done and by whom are key components of preparedness planning. Such planning is most effective when completed **before** a crisis occurs – to help control the chaos and reduce the inevitable fear and anxiety – enabling a rapid, coordinated, effective response.

Pennsylvania courts became acutely aware of the need to plan for such events during 2004 when a number of Commonwealth courts experienced actual incidences of potential bioterrorism first-hand. A compilation of the facts from these events are presented herein, highlighting the actions taken by courts receiving suspicious white powder in the mail. The analysis reveals that had the powder been a bioweapon, the actions taken were not optimal and could have further jeopardized the health and safety of the staff and public involved. To guide future decision-making in such events, information regarding appropriate planning and response is described in the following document.

As a CDC-funded Academic Center for Public Health Preparedness, the University of Pittsburgh Center for Public Health Preparedness (UPCPHP) works to enhance public health preparedness across the Commonwealth. The Center for Rural Health Practice at the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford supports the health concerns of Pennsylvania’s 2.7 million rural citizens. Together, at the request of and in partnership with the Judicial Security Committee of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court’s Judicial Council, a task force was convened in 2005 to develop a framework to guide Pennsylvania’s bioterrorism (BT) courthouse preparedness planning efforts. Task force members included public health, medical, judicial, law enforcement, transportation, and emergency response experts.

The task force first acknowledged that across the Commonwealth, courthouse preparedness planning could not be a “one size fits all” proposition. County courthouses vary in location, size, structure, and occupancy, with a wide range of professional roles represented within each building. Accordingly, responsibility for key areas of biohazard emergency detection and response

*Dr. William Raub, Deputy Assistant Secretary  
Office of Public Health Preparedness  
Department of Health and Human Services  
University of Pittsburgh, Sept. 30, 2003*

will naturally fall to different individuals/roles in different buildings, at different times. Therefore, the task force utilized a format developed by the CDC that separates preparedness planning into three categories: 1) Pre-event; 2) Event and; 3) Post-event. Employing this approach, the task force identified the key steps to be taken for courthouse preparedness planning in each phase.

Based upon actual experience, the pamphlet provides information that courthouse personnel need to know *now* if faced with a potential biohazard/bioterror event and what they need to know to adequately plan for effective response to such an event in the future. The issues included are those that the task force determined to be the most important for protecting court personnel and the public; issues that apply in the bioterrorism preparedness context but are equally relevant in an all-hazards preparedness context as well. Good “All-Hazards” plans, whether for communication, training, or actions such as evacuation, can be used in a wide variety of disasters from floods to storms to blizzards to anthrax threats.

The pamphlet concludes with a review of the agencies having authority and responsibility for the various components of public health emergency response in each Pennsylvania county. Since planning, like response, must be a collaborative effort, it is highly recommended that these agencies be included in each courthouse planning process.

Lastly, it is duly noted that the AOPC has developed a Safety and Security Manual for the Pennsylvania Courts, which provides planning directions in a number of areas vital to court security. This pamphlet, however, provides information related to planning and preparing for incidents of bioterrorism or biohazards not specifically discussed in the Safety and Security manual, and as such, can serve as a companion piece to the manual and may also be integrated into, or serve as a resource for, other existing plans.

True preparedness for public health emergencies takes Dr. Raub’s statements one step further: The timeliness and quality of planning and practice before a crisis will yield a timely and quality initial engagement that reduces the course and duration of the crisis and the magnitude and character of its consequences.

It is hoped that the following information will enable each Pennsylvania courthouse to be better prepared for a biohazard or bioterror incident.

## LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

### Experience is the best teacher.

With that adage in mind, the following composite scenario has been created based on white powder incidents that recently occurred in several Pennsylvania counties. Although the various incidents have been intermingled, the facts are accurate and they demonstrate that while the actions taken were well intended, they were unfortunately ill-conceived.

The annotations and notes are intended to illustrate the kinds of unexpected issues that can arise when a bio-hazard incident occurs. Even well-developed disaster or emergency response plans may not be adequate to address the unique issues and problems bio-hazard incidents present. Although the scenario involves a white powder incident, similar questions and issues could arise in any type of bio-hazard event. In conjunction with first responder, law enforcement, medical and local public health staff, each courthouse will necessarily need to develop its own response plan.

### FACTUAL SCENARIO

*The judge's secretary opened a letter addressed to the judge that arrived in the morning mail. When the letter was opened the secretary noticed a white powder inside. A small amount spilled out onto the desk.*

#### Question:

Was there anything about the letter that was suspicious? Could the secretary or another person doing mail sorting have identified the letter in advance as unusual? Should there be a centralized mail opening procedure?

#### Fact:

Judges and courthouses, because of the nature of legal work, are at higher risk for both threatened and actual harm. It is in the interest of court systems to have safeguards in place to protect personnel and property.

#### Recommended Response:

Train staff in proper mail opening procedures and in recognition of suspicious letters and packages. Develop procedures and institute a regularly occurring follow-up process to ensure that procedures are followed. Make sure that the assessment for threats includes chemicals and bombs in the mail.

*Alarmed, the secretary called the Court Administrator and the Judge for that office. The Court Administrator notified the President Judge. The President Judge, who was picking a jury, left the courtroom to return to the office, arriving at the same time as the Court Administrator. Both of them inspected the white powder.*

#### Question:

What are the chances that this powder represents a dangerous substance? What can be done to assess the risks right now in the office? What should the secretary do next?

#### Fact:

White powder in an envelope may be innocuous (cornstarch to keep magazine pages from sticking together), a hoax (sugar or salt along with a threatening letter), or a real danger. Actual anthrax is very rare and it is important to remember this when facing this kind of a situation and not overreact.

#### Fact:

Anthrax does not cause immediate illness. It typically takes several days for illness to begin after exposure, regardless of route. This is more than enough time to have the material analyzed and to start preventive antibiotics if needed. Although anthrax can manifest as a respiratory, gastrointestinal, or skin infection, it is not contagious from one person to another.

#### Recommended Response:

Put the letter back down. Do not try to clean up the powder. Cover it with a basket or empty trash can. Turn off any local fans or ventilation units in the area. Close the office door. Do not let anyone else enter the office and be possibly exposed to the powder. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water. Immediately notify your immediate supervisor and/or the designated security officer for the building for that day. Turn off the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system. Write down the names and contact information of all persons who have touched the letter and/or envelope and have this information available for the authorities. DO NOT mix people who have had close contact with the powder with others who have not.

*The Court Administrator called the County Sheriff to report the incident. The President Judge returned to the courtroom, dismissed the jury without explanation and adjourned court. The President Judge returned to chambers to join the secretary, the judge, the Court Administrator, and the court reporter that had walked into the office.*

**Question:**

Was this the correct thing to do? What other information is important to know before calling for a law enforcement response? Who should perform the threat assessment?

**Fact:**

The FBI has published a 2004 Guidance on Initial Responses to a Suspicious Letter/ Container with a Potential Biological Threat (see cd-rom). In very brief summary, the FBI recommends responses in the following scenarios:

<i>Mail contains:</i>	<i>You should:</i>
1. Powder + Threat	Call 911 and report. This is a federal crime.
2. Powder only	Assess. If a reasonable and defensible explanation can be given as to the source of the substance, then no further action is necessary. If not, respond as in #1.
3. Threat only	Same as in #1. The threat by itself is a federal crime.

For an anonymous caller indicating a biological or chemical threat, you should follow the same procedures as for a bomb threat.

**Recommended Response:**

Immediately notify your immediate supervisor and/or the designated security officer for the building for that day. He/she should be trained in "threat assessment." Each courthouse should also have a backup security officer in case the first person is unavailable. Both of these persons should receive appropriate training in threat assessment as well as proper FBI/EMS/Public Health notification. Designated person should call 911 when indicated by the guide above.

*Meanwhile the Sheriff had called the HazMat unit. Sheriff's deputies were posted on the second floor of the courthouse, which housed the judge's chambers, preventing anyone from entering or leaving the floor. HazMat personnel instructed the court personnel to remain in chambers and await further instructions. Approximately 90 minutes later, HazMat requested a list of names of everyone confined to the floor of the courthouse.*

**Question:**

Was this the appropriate chain of events? Should other people in the building be notified? If so, how? And then what? Should the facility evacuate or "shelter in place"?

**Fact:**

For white powder exposures, there is typically no immediate threat to health. An important lesson from the anthrax attacks of 2001 was that small particles of anthrax moved into the HVAC system and potentially exposed people in other rooms or other floors. Thus, it is important to know who is in the building at the time the letter is opened.

**Recommended Response:**

Staff and members of the public should remain in the building where the environment can be reasonably controlled. Do not evacuate or go outside to see what is happening. Stay calm and await the arrival of help, and follow the directions given by emergency personnel. If the area where the exposed staff members are located is unsafe, move them as far away as safely possible, maintaining isolation to prevent others from coming into contact with the white powder.

*The judges and court staff in the office were told to remain in place and await further instructions. One hour later they were informed they would be required to undergo decontamination.*

**Question:**

Who determines who/when people are required to undergo decontamination? What is the purpose of decontamination? Is it appropriate in all situations?

**Fact:**

Decontamination is typically used as part of the immediate treatment at the scene of chemical exposure(s) to reduce exposure and prevent more extensive injury. It can be used in white powder incidents to minimize the chance that white powder on a person's clothes or skin might be carried away from the scene and expose others at distant sites. CDC and FBI do not typically recommend decontamination for white powder events unless symptoms are present.

**Recommended Response:**

Work with Hazardous Material, Law Enforcement, and Public Health staff to ensure that the process, if necessary, goes smoothly.

*Television satellite trucks were set up at both the courthouse and the hospital parking lot, broadcasting live reports from the scene, including interviews with court employees.*

**Question:**

Who is responsible for communication with the media?  
How can this situation be handled to minimize anxiety and maximize useful communication?

**Fact:**

Bioterror incidents are typically disruptive not because of the biological agent – in the 2001 anthrax attacks, a total of 22 people became ill. They are disruptive because of the panic they can cause as people worry that they or their loved ones may have been unknowingly exposed to an infectious agent which can be life-threatening. Effective, reassuring, and prompt communication is the best way to counter fear and panic resulting from uncertainty.

**Recommended Response:**

Local authorities should have previously agreed upon both who will be the “incident commander” in bioterrorism incidents and who will speak to the press. The press person should have a good understanding of the nature of the threat and of appropriate ways to provide reassuring information to the broader public.

*Meanwhile the courthouse had been classified as a crime scene by the FBI and U.S. Postal Inspectors. All county employees and members of the public were ordered to leave and the building was sealed.*

**Question:**

How will this be communicated to the staff? How can it be handled without causing panic or unnecessary disruption? Can staff return to their office for car keys, cell phones, or wallets? Should they turn off computers and coffee makers?

**Fact:**

Not all white powder threats require the entire building to be closed down. In some situations, isolation of a specific office or wing may be all that is necessary. Decisions are based on the specifics of the incident and will be made by law enforcement authorities in consultation with HazMat experts and local public health.

**Recommended Response:**

It is important for courthouse leadership to have an easy way of effectively communicating with all staff inside a building in the event of an emergency. There should be clear protocols as to what actions staff should and should not take prior to exiting the building. It is also important that staff know what items are okay to take with them as they leave.

*Two hours after the initial call, two men dressed in white masked bio-uniforms arrived at the judge’s office to collect the white powder still lying on the desk and carpet.*

**Question:**

Can the powder be tested at the scene? How long does it typically take to fully test the powder? Who will notify everyone once the result is known?

**Fact:**

HazMat protocols vary somewhat based on resources available. The HazMat response team may be able to perform “rule-out” testing at the site and provide the all-clear. More typically, a serious threat will have to be evaluated at the Pennsylvania Department of Health Laboratory in Lionville. This may take a day or more depending on transportation time.

**Recommended Response:**

Have a system in place to keep employees and visitors who were in the facility at the time the letter was opened up to date on the test results and on any public health recommendations. Have a plan prepared in advance for re-opening of any closed offices or buildings, including notification of staff and reassurance of the public.

**Hazardous Materials Incident**

Response to hazardous materials such as from a gas leak, spilled tanker truck or overturned rail car, is different from white powder exposures and/or threats. Standard guidelines are:

**Suspicious Odor – Outside of the building**

- Stay inside until an assessment of the situation is conducted. Modern building ventilation systems are generally able to control the environment inside of a building. Therefore, it is safer to remain inside instead of evacuating out of the building into a potentially more hazardous atmosphere or environment.

**Suspicious Odor – Inside of the building**

- If the odor is strong, offensive, irritating, or causing acute illness, call security and evacuate the area immediately as per the facility evacuation plan.

**Chemical exposure – Liquid splash**

- Notify appropriate staff and ensure that no one else comes into contact with the chemical
- Remove any contaminated clothing
- Wash affected area thoroughly with warm water for 15 minutes
- Call poison control for immediate advice and assistance
- Follow guidance from first responders

# **PLANNING CHECKLIST:**

## **What You Need To Know To Prepare For Bioterror/Biohazard Threats And Events**

<b>PRE-EVENT PLANNING</b>	Responsible person	Date Assigned	Date completed
<p><b>CONVENE LOCAL PLANNING TEAM</b></p> <p>Form a bioterror/biohazard response planning team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite committee participation by representatives from the local court security committee – the president judge, court administrator, facilities manager – as well as local law enforcement and representatives from clinical medicine, public health, Emergency Management Agency (EMA), HazMat, Emergency Management Services (EMS), and other relevant collaborators in your geographic area.</li> <li>• Define your planning team structure, process, and expected outcome(s) and clearly identify respective preparedness responsibilities and authority</li> </ul>			
<p><b>THREAT ASSESSMENT</b></p> <p>Conduct a thorough risk assessment of the area where the courthouse is located:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify groups and individuals in the area that could pose threats to the Court</li> <li>• Identify vulnerable food sources, water sources, and physical structures in your area</li> <li>• Identify transportation, highways &amp; railways that transport hazardous materials in your area</li> <li>• Create a process for logical inquiry into the validity of the threat</li> <li>• Determine the likely signs and symptoms of a bioterror/biohazard event that must be recognized</li> </ul>			
<p>Conduct an assessment of the courthouse physical structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define contiguous building spaces</li> <li>• Identify safe interior rooms</li> <li>• Identify alternative routes for ingress and egress from each department</li> <li>• Determine if there are special considerations to be taken related to               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– type of structure</li> <li>– type of HVAC</li> <li>– type of internal communication system</li> <li>– any other issue unique to your building</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Determine how to manage airflow and how to shut it off. Can the buildings outside air supply be shut down independently of the electrical system?</li> <li>• Assess the physical courthouse communication systems, e.g. PA, alarm, and phone system, discern whether phones work independently of electricity</li> </ul>			

# **PLANNING CHECKLIST:**

## **What You Need To Know To Prepare For Bioterror/Biohazard Threats And Events**

<b>PRE-EVENT PLANNING</b>	Responsible person	Date Assigned	Date completed
<p>Establish procedures for proper mail handling and receipt of packages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train staff in CDC/FBI/USPS procedures</li> <li>• Incorporate such training into new employee orientation</li> <li>• Include “all-hazards” and naturally occurring disasters approach (biological, chemical, bombs, threats)</li> </ul>			
<p>Determine if proactive surveillance or other types of procedures can be established to help detect, mitigate, or prevent an event, e.g. monitor absenteeism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are different security measures needed based upon national and/or state threat levels?</li> <li>• Should procedures be implemented for tracking personnel absenteeism for conditions indicative of exposures to bio agents?</li> </ul>			
<p>Establish an emergency property management plan based upon facility assessment and EMS/EMA/Public Health planning input (See cd-rom: All-Hazards Plan for Buildings)</p>			
<p>Identify training needs related to courthouse personnel biohazard event/ incident recognition and assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a plan for training current and future personnel</li> <li>• Secure needed training                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Contact your County EMA Coordinator for recommendations</li> <li>– Contact FBI for recommended law enforcement skills and training</li> <li>– Contact University of Pittsburgh Center for Public Health Preparedness for recommended health and public health training resources</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ensure training is updated regularly and as needed in response to new threats or needs</li> </ul>			
<p>Create a comprehensive list of staff, work, cellular, internal and home phone numbers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute to appropriate supervisory personnel</li> <li>• Establish procedure and responsibility for review and updating contact list every six months</li> </ul>			
<p>Identify your community's bioterror/ biohazard incident first responders, establish ongoing working relationships with each, and include them in your planning efforts (This may include EMS, EMA, Fire, HazMat, Public Health)</p> <p>Key issues to discuss include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information needed to communicate rapidly</li> <li>• Response capacity (who responds, what equipment they will have, what level of training they have received, and how long it will take to arrive on the scene)</li> </ul>			

# **PLANNING CHECKLIST:**

## ***What You Need To Know To Prepare For Bioterror/Biohazard Threats And Events***

<b>PRE-EVENT PLANNING</b>	Responsible person	Date Assigned	Date completed
<p>Identify who will be responsible for determining that an event is occurring/ has occurred:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a process which clearly identifies this individual every day and communicates this information to all building staff</li> <li>• Identify who will serve in this capacity when the designated person(s) is/are not available</li> </ul>			
<p>Designate a person to have responsibility for the physical plant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify who will serve in this capacity when the designated person(s) is/are not available</li> <li>• Determine training needed for physical plant manager</li> <li>• Establish training plan</li> <li>• Secure needed training</li> </ul>			
<p>Determine what special considerations must be addressed based upon where in the building the event occurs, e.g. basement, at doorways, in public vs. private spaces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish appropriate procedures based on location</li> <li>• Determine who will be responsible for implementing these procedures</li> <li>• Identify who will serve in this capacity when the designated person(s) is/are not available</li> </ul>			
<p>Determine what special considerations need to be made for individuals in the courthouse at the time of the incident, e.g., prisoners, minors, jurors, and individuals with special needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish appropriate procedures</li> <li>• Determine who will be responsible for implementing these procedures</li> <li>• Identify who will serve in this capacity when the designated person(s) is/are not available</li> </ul>			
<p>Ensure that an adequate (24-48 hours) supply of water and non-perishable foods are available on site, should a prolonged shelter in place be required</p>			

# **PLANNING CHECKLIST:**

## **What You Need To Know To Prepare For Bioterror/Biohazard Threats And Events**

<b>EVENT PLANNING</b>	Responsible person	Date Assigned	Date completed
<p><b>THREAT RESPONSE</b></p> <p>Once a bioterror/biohazard incident or threat has been confirmed, it is essential to determine who is to receive information and in what detail. Plans should allow for the quick establishment of an internal/in-courthouse team to provide a clear chain of command and to coordinate the response. The team should consist of an:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incident commander</li> <li>• Public information officer</li> <li>• Security officer</li> <li>• Property management officer</li> <li>• Internal communication officer</li> </ul> <p>Persons likely to be in these roles should have the opportunity to train and practice in advance of an actual event. References describing these positions and functions can be found at <a href="http://www.fema.gov/nims">www.fema.gov/nims</a></p>			
<p>Establish procedures to implement the human protective measures recommended by Police, HazMat, or Public Health:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shelter-in-Place</li> <li>• Evacuation</li> <li>• Decontamination</li> <li>• Isolation and Quarantine</li> </ul>			
<p>Determine who will be responsible for the implementation and enforcement of each protective measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish back-up</li> </ul>			
<p>Establish property management-related procedures for implementation of the protective measures recommended</p>			
<p>Establish a procedure to provide food, a change of clothing, and medical care, if necessary, for individuals required to remain in the building (sheltering in place or quarantined)</p>			

# **PLANNING CHECKLIST:**

## **What You Need To Know To Prepare For Bioterror/Biohazard Threats And Events**

<b>EVENT PLANNING</b>	Responsible person	Date Assigned	Date completed
<p><b>INTERNAL COMMUNICATION</b></p> <p>Establish a procedure for notifying all building occupants that a biohazard event or incident, or threat thereof, has occurred:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure an efficient system of communication with all building staff</li> <li>• Identify who will be responsible for doing this</li> <li>• Test this system on a regular basis</li> <li>• Establish back-up</li> </ul>			
<p>Ensure that this notification includes specific recommendations about what to do next:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shelter-in-place (this can mean remaining in place or moving to a safer location within the building)</li> <li>• Evacuate</li> <li>• Other action (as recommended by Police, HazMat or Public Health)</li> </ul>			
<p>Establish a procedure to ensure ongoing communication with individuals required to remain in the building (sheltering in place or quarantined) and provide regular updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine who will have this responsibility</li> <li>• Determine communication equipment needs</li> <li>• Procure needed communication equipment</li> <li>• Test periodically</li> </ul>			
<p><b>EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION</b></p> <p>Determine who will make the first contact with the county 911 system</p>			
<p>Define what information must be communicated to 911</p>			
<p>Clarify communication role of 911 in your county:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine if your county's 911 system can provide the health information and direction related to next protective steps or if this information must be obtained elsewhere</li> <li>• Determine if contact with the 911 system in your county will initiate contact with all necessary response agencies</li> <li>• If additional contacts by courthouse personnel are required to activate appropriate emergency response,             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Establish policies as to what agency is to be called and when</li> <li>– Maintain an up-to-date contact list of necessary external response/support agencies</li> <li>– During a response, ensure that a staff member is designated to contact these agencies with all appropriate information</li> </ul> </li> </ul>			

# **PLANNING CHECKLIST:**

## ***What You Need To Know To Prepare For Bioterror/Biohazard Threats And Events***

<b>EVENT PLANNING</b>	Responsible person	Date Assigned	Date completed
<p>Identify internal or external resources for medical/public health information that can provide immediate direction as to appropriate protective measures to institute based upon observations and reporting of event and/or symptoms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External, local, readily accessible, medical or public health expert on-call</li> <li>• In-house resource</li> <li>• Determine person(s)/role(s) that will be responsible</li> <li>• Identify needed training and establish and implement a training plan</li> </ul>			
<p>Establish an alternative communication method should traditional telecommunication systems fail, e.g. two-way radio</p>			
<p>Establish a procedure to ensure ongoing contact between individuals required to remain in the building (sheltering in place or quarantined) and family:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine who will have this responsibility</li> <li>• Determine communication equipment needs</li> <li>• Procure needed communication equipment</li> <li>• Test periodically</li> </ul>			
<p>Establish a communications plan with media, the public and the Bar;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designate appropriate individuals to be responsible for each</li> <li>• Identify training needs, establish and implement a training plan</li> </ul>			
<p><b>SECURITY</b></p> <p>Establish plan and procedures for maintaining security of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Courthouse</li> <li>• Courthouse records</li> <li>• Personnel</li> <li>• Public during the chaos phase</li> <li>• Individuals in custody of the court</li> </ul>			
<p>Establish plan and procedures for maintaining security of the courthouse if the building is closed</p>			

# **PLANNING CHECKLIST:**

## ***What You Need To Know To Prepare For Bioterror/Biohazard Threats And Events***

<b>POST-EVENT PLANNING</b>	Responsible person	Date Assigned	Date completed
<p><b>CONTINUATION OF OPERATIONS</b></p> <p>Create a continuation of business plan that enables relocation of offices within the building if only portions of the building must be closed</p>			
<p>Create a continuation of business plan to enable off-site court operations for up to 72 hours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine court and county activities which are of highest priority</li> <li>• Identify needed resources required to continue off-site operations, e.g. court reporter equipment, lap top computers</li> <li>• Plan for continuation of those activities</li> <li>• Secure off-site facility</li> <li>• Create procedures for access to vital court documents and forms, support staff, and equipment</li> </ul>			
<p>Develop a plan to re-open the building when the emergency is resolved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify person(s) authorized to make a formal decision that the emergency is over</li> <li>• Ensure that this decision is communicated to all partner agencies</li> <li>• Ensure that this decision is communicated to all staff and the public</li> <li>• Determine responsibility and process for communicating this information</li> </ul>			

# PLANNING AND RESPONSE RESOURCES: PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES: AGENCIES WITH AUTHORITY IN PENNSYLVANIA COUNTIES & CITIES

COUNTY	FOOD SAFETY:		INFECTIOUS DISEASE	REGIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT (COUNTER TERRORISM TASK FORCE)	PA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY	EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
*ACT 315 HEALTH DEPT.	Handling & Distribution	Eating & Drinking Establishment				
Adams		PDA Region 6	PA-DOH south central	South Central	South Central	EHS Federation
<b>ALLEGHENY*</b>	PDA Region 4	County Health	County Health	Southwestern	Southwestern	EMS Institute
Armstrong	PDA Region 4		PA-DOH southwest	Southwestern	Southwestern	EMS Institute
Beaver	PDA Region 4		PA-DOH southwest	Southwestern	Southwestern	EMS Institute
Bedford	PDA Region 5		PA-DOH south central	South Central Mountain	South Central	Southern Alleghenies EMS Council
Berks	PDA Region 7		PA-DOH southeast	East Central	South Central	Eastern Pa. EMS Council
Blair	PDA Region 5		PA-DOH south central	South Central Mountain	South Central	Southern Alleghenies EMS Council
Bradford	PDA Region 3		PA-DOH north central	North Central	North Central	Bradford Susquehanna EMA Council
<b>BUCKS*</b>	PDA Region 7	County Health	County Health	Southeast	Southeastern	Bucks County EHS Council
Butler	PDA Region 4		PA-DOH southwest	Southwestern	Northwestern	EMS Institute
Cambria	PDA Region 5		PA-DOH southwest	Southwestern	Southwestern	Southern Alleghenies EMS Council
Cameron	PDA Region 2		PA-DOH northwest	NW Central	North Central	EMMCO East
Carbon	PDA Region 3		PA-DOH northeast	Northeast PA	Northeastern	Eastern Pa. EMS Council
Centre	PDA Region 5		PA-DOH north central	South Central Mountain	North Central	Seven Mountains EMS Council
<b>CHESTER*</b>	PDA Region 7	County Health	County Health	Southeast	Southeastern	Chester County EMS Council
Clarion	PDA Region 1		PA-DOH northwest	NW Central	Northwestern	EMMCO West
Clearfield	PDA Region 5		PA-DOH northwest	NW Central	North Central	EMMCO East
Clinton	PDA Region 2		PA-DOH north central	North Central	North Central	Seven Mountains EMS Council
Columbia	PDA Region 2		PA-DOH north central	East Central	North Central	Susquehanna EHS Council
Crawford	PDA Region 1		PA-DOH northwest	Northwestern	Northwestern	EMMCO West
Cumberland	PDA Region 6		PA-DOH south central	South Central	South Central	EHS Federation
Dauphin	PDA Region 6		PA-DOH south central	South Central	South Central	EHS Federation
Delaware	PDA Region 6		PA-DOH southeast	Southeast	Southeastern	Delaware County EHS Council
Elk	PDA Region 1		PA-DOH northwest	NW Central	Northwestern	EMMCO East
<b>ERIE*</b>	PDA Region 1	County Health	County Health	Northwestern	Northwestern	EMMCO West
Fayette	PDA Region 4		PA-DOH southwest	Southwestern	Southwestern	EMS Institute
Forest	PDA Region 1		PA-DOH northwest	Northwestern	Northwestern	EMMCO West
Franklin	PDA Region 6		PA-DOH south central	South Central P	South Central	EHS Federation
Fulton	PDA Region 5		PA-DOH south central	South Central Mountain	South Central	Southern Alleghenies EMS Council
Greene	PDA Region 4		PA-DOH southwest	Southwestern	Southwestern	EMS Institute
Huntingdon	PDA Region 5		PA-DOH south central	South Central Mountain	South Central	Southern Alleghenies EMS Council
Indiana	PDA Region 4		PA-DOH southwest	Southwestern	Southwestern	EMS Institute
Jefferson	PDA Region 1		PA-DOH northwest	NW Central	Northwestern	EMMCO East
Juniata	PDA Region 5		PA-DOH south central	South Central Mountain	South Central	Seven Mountains EMS Council
Lackawanna	PDA Region 3		PA-DOH northeast	Northeast	Northeastern	EMS of Northeastern PA
Lancaster	PDA Region 6		PA-DOH southeast	South Central	South Central	EHS Federation

# PLANNING AND RESPONSE RESOURCES:

## PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES: AGENCIES WITH AUTHORITY IN PENNSYLVANIA COUNTIES & CITIES

COUNTY	FOOD SAFETY: Handling & Distribution   Eating & Drinking Establishment	INFECTIOUS DISEASE	REGIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT (COUNTER TERRORISM TASK FORCE)	PA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY	EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
<b>*ACT 315 HEALTH DEPT.</b>					
Lawrence	PDA Region 4	PA-DOH northwest	Southwestern	Northwestern	EMS Institute
Lebanon	PDA Region 6	PA-DOH south central	South Central	South Central	EHS Federation
Lehigh	PDA Region 7	PA-DOH northeast	Northeast	Northeastern	Eastern Pa. EMS Council
<b>ALLENTOWN*</b>	PDA Region 7   City Health	City Health	Northeast	Northeastern	Eastern Pa. EMS Council
Luzerne	PDA Region 3	PA-DOH northeast	Northeast	Northeastern	EMS of Northeastern Pa.
<b>WILLKES-BARRE*</b>	PDA Region 3   City Health	City Health	Northeast	Northeastern	EMS of Northeastern Pa.
Lycoming	PDA Region 2	PA-DOH north central	North Central	North Central	Lycoming, Tioga & Sullivan EMS Council
McKean	PDA Region 1	PA-DOH northwest	NW Central	Northwestern	EMMCO East, Inc.
Mercer	PDA Region 1	PA-DOH northwest	Southwestern	Northwestern	EMMCO West
Mifflin	PDA Region 5	PA-DOH south central	South Central Mountain	South Central	Seven Mountains EMS Council
Monroe	PDA Region 3	PA-DOH northeast	Northeast	Northeast	Eastern Pa. EMS Council
<b>MONTGOMERY*</b>	PDA Region 7   County Health	County Health	Southeast	Southeast	Montgomery County EMS
Montour	PDA Region 2	PA-DOH north central	East Central	North Central	Susquehanna EHS Council
Northampton	PDA Region 7	PA-DOH north central	Northeast	Northeast	Eastern Pa. EMS Council
<b>BETHLEHEM*</b>	PDA Region 7   City Health	City Health	Northeast	Northeast	Eastern Pa. EMS Council
Northumberland	PDA Region 2	PA-DOH north central	East Central	North Central	Susquehanna EHS Council
Perry	PDA Region 6	PA-DOH south central	South Central	South Central	EHS Federation
<b>PHILADELPHIA *</b>	PDA Region 7   County Health	County Health	Southeast	Southeast	Philadelphia EMS Council
Pike	PDA Region 3	PA-DOH northeast	Northeast	Northeast	EMS of Northeastern Pa.
Potter	PDA Region 2	PA-DOH north central	North Central	North Central	EMMCO East
Schuylkill	PDA Region 7	PA-DOH southeast	East Central	Northeast	Eastern Pa. EMS Council
Snyder	PDA Region 2	PA-DOH north central	South Central Mountain	North Central	Susquehanna EHS Council
Somerset	PDA Region 5	PA-DOH southwest	Southwestern	Southwestern	Southern Alleghenies EMS Council
Sullivan	PDA Region 3	PA-DOH north central	North Central	North Central	Lycoming, Tioga & Sullivan EMS Council
Susquehanna	PDA Region 3	PA-DOH northeast	Northeast	Northeast	Bradford Susquehanna EMA Council
Tioga	PDA Region 2	PA-DOH north central	North Central	North Central	Lycoming, Tioga & Sullivan EMS Council
Union	PDA Region 2	PA-DOH north central	North Central	North Central	Susquehanna EHS Council
Venango	PDA Region 1	PA-DOH northwest	Northwestern	Northwestern	EMMCO West
Warren	PDA Region 1	PA-DOH northwest	Northwestern	Northwestern	EMMCO West
Washington	PDA Region 4	PA-DOH southwest	Southwestern	Southwestern	EMS Institute
Wayne	PDA Region 3	PA-DOH northeast	Northeast	Northeast	EMS of Northeastern Pa.
Westmoreland	PDA Region 4	PA-DOH southwest	Southwestern	Southwestern	EMS Institute
Wyoming	PDA Region 3	PA-DOH northeast	Northeast	Northeast	EMS of Northeastern Pa.
York	PDA Region 6	PA-DOH south central	South Central	South Central	EHS Federation
<b>YORK CITY*</b>	PDA Region 6   City Health	City Health	South Central	South Central	EHS Federation

Developed by University of Pittsburgh Center for Public Health Preparedness  
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# EMERGENCY PLANNING AND RESPONSE REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

## Office of the Governor

Website: [www.governor.state.pa.us](http://www.governor.state.pa.us)  
Governor's office . . . . . 717-787-2500

## Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

Web site: [www.agriculture.state.pa.us](http://www.agriculture.state.pa.us)  
Secretary's office. . . . . 717-772-2853  
General information. . . . . 717-787-4737  
Emergency Management . 717-783-3577  
Region 1. . . . . 814-332-6890  
Region 2. . . . . 570-433-2640  
Region 3. . . . . 570-836-2181  
Region 4. . . . . 724-443-1585  
Region 5. . . . . 814-946-7315  
Region 6. . . . . 717-346-3223  
Region 7. . . . . 610-489-1003

## Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

Web site: [www.depweb.state.pa.us](http://www.depweb.state.pa.us)  
Secretary's office. . . . . 717-787-2814  
General information. . . . . 717-783-2300

Southeast . . . . . 484-250-5900  
Northeast . . . . . 570-826-2511  
South Central . . . . . 717-705-4700  
North Central. . . . . 570-327-3636  
Southwest . . . . . 412-442-4000  
Northwest . . . . . 814-332-6945

## Pennsylvania Department of Health

Web site: [www.health.state.pa.us](http://www.health.state.pa.us)  
Secretary's office. . . . . 717-787-6436  
Emergency line. . . . . 717-737-5349  
(after hours, weekends, and holidays)

## Pennsylvania Department of Health Office of Public Health Preparedness

. . . . . 717-346-0640

## Pennsylvania Department of Health District Health Offices:

Northeast District . . . . . 570-826-2062  
Southeast District . . . . . 610-378-4352  
North Central District. . . . . 570-327-3400  
South Central District. . . . . 717-787-8092  
Northwest District . . . . . 724-662-6068  
Southwest District . . . . . 412-565-5101

## Pennsylvania Office of Homeland Security

Web site: [www.homelandsecurity.state.pa.us](http://www.homelandsecurity.state.pa.us)  
Director's office . . . . . 717-651-2715

## Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency

Web site: [www.pema.state.pa.us](http://www.pema.state.pa.us)  
EMA Managers by county:<http://www.pema.state.pa.us/pema/cwp/view.asp?a=354&q=252367&pemaNav=1>  
Director's office . . . . . 717-651-2007  
Western Area Director's office . . . . . 724-357-2990  
Central Area Director's office . . . . . 800-272-7362  
Eastern Area Director's office. . . . . 610-562-3003

## Pennsylvania State Police

Web site: [www.psp.state.pa.us](http://www.psp.state.pa.us)  
Pennsylvania State Police stations by county  
<http://www.psp.state.pa.us/psp/cwp/view.asp?A=2&Q=85200>  
Information line: . . . . . 717-783-5599

## Additional Emergency Management Planning Resources

Department of Homeland Security - [www.whitehouse.gov/homeland](http://www.whitehouse.gov/homeland)  
Federal Emergency Management Agency - [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)  
Federal Bureau of Investigation - [www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov)  
United States Postal Service - [www.usps.gov](http://www.usps.gov)  
United States Department of Defense - [www.dod.gov](http://www.dod.gov)  
Environmental Protection Agency - [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)  
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration - [www.noaa.gov](http://www.noaa.gov)  
American Red Cross - [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)  
The Salvation Army - [www.salvationarmy.org](http://www.salvationarmy.org)

## Chemicals

*Niosh Pocket Guide to Chemical Hazards*. Retrieved 05-25-2005, from <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npg>

## Communication

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) (2001). *A Primer on Health Risk Communication Principles and Practices*. Retrieved 08-18-2005, from <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/HEC/primer.html>

## Emergencies

United States Department of Health and Human Services (2005). *Disasters and Emergencies*. Retrieved 06-01-2005, from <http://www.os.dhhs.gov/emergency/index.shtml>

# EMERGENCY PLANNING AND RESPONSE REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

## **Emergency Management**

U.S. Department of Homeland Security. *Emergencies & Disasters: Response & Recovery*. Retrieved 08-16-2005, from <http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?theme=15>

## **Emergency Planning**

Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (2005). *Advice for Safeguarding Buildings against Chemical or Biological Attack*. Retrieved 06-02-2005, from <http://securebuildings.lbl.gov/>.  
Pennsylvania Department of Health (2004). *Emergency Preparedness Guide and Survey*. Retrieved 06-01-2005, from <http://www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health/cwp/view.asp?a=333&q=234776&healthRNavrad2F756=l>

## **Public Health Emergencies**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2005). *Emergency Preparedness and Response*. Retrieved 08-04-2005, from <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/>

## **Response Planning**

Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA). *Emergency Preparedness and Response: Responders*. Retrieved 05-25-2005, from <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/emergencypreparedness/responder.html>

## **Training**

U.S. Department of Homeland Security. *Emergencies & Disasters: First Responders*. Retrieved 08-16-2005, from <http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?theme=63>

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Department of Emergency Medicine

The Honorable John M. Cleland  
President Judge  
McKean County

The Honorable Erick J. Coolidge  
Tioga County Commissioner

Martha C. Davidson  
District Court Administrator  
Armstrong County

Bruce Dixon, M.D.  
Director  
Allegheny County Health Department

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Executive Director  
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Graham W. Hess  
Emergency Management Specialist  
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## NOTES

## NOTES

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**SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA**



**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF PENNSYLVANIA COURTS**



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