

## The Changing Face of Emergency Management

The attacks of September 11, 2001, reveal the new face of 21<sup>st</sup> century warfare and its revolutionary arsenal. Federal, state, and local emergency preparedness and response must also don a new face. The dilemma of today's emergency managers is how to anticipate the unexpected threats, prepare for the unfathomable outcomes, and gauge the unknown nature and magnitude of future attacks.



In the face of terrorism's rapidly changing and evolving schemes, people have come to anticipate the worst. Of the worst scenarios imaginable, few approach the horror of an attack on a nuclear power plant; many people fear the uncontrolled release of radioactive material into the environment.

Emergency management experts have grappled with the threat of a potential radioactive release for many years. The U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency created the Radiological Emergency Preparedness (REP) Program to ensure public health and safety in communities surrounding nuclear power plant facilities. ICF Consulting and its team of more than 130 evaluators work with the REP Program to assess the planning, emergency preparedness, and response capabilities of federal, state, and local governments and the private sector in the event of a peacetime radiological emergency. These evaluations, mandated by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, are conducted through a series of biennial exercises, drills, and other activities at U.S. commercial nuclear power plants.

The Program requires conducting exercises and drills that simulate the occurrence of an accident and the resultant

failure of multiple layers of redundant safety systems. The malfunctioning of these safety systems then creates a simulated, uncontrolled release of radioactive material to the external environment, which necessitates emergency response from federal, state, and local agencies. The training derived from these simulated exercises and drills provides critical experience and confidence to emergency personnel, whether events are caused by terrorist or other activities. Although the

nuclear power industry was not directly affected by the recent terrorist attacks, the implications demand that REP exercises focus on varied releases and continue to forge strong partnerships among industry and government to protect our communities. Now, more than ever, the REP exercises that train responders for a wide-range of releases are imperative.

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