

Project Responder is a longitudinal and iterative study of the capability needs, shortfalls, and priorities of emergency responders. The study brings together representatives of traditional fields (e.g., fire service, law enforcement, emergency medical services, emergency management) and non-traditional agencies (e.g., public health, public works, medical examiner/coroner, search and rescue) to focus on identifying needs across disciplines. More than 500 emergency responders from federal, state, local, and tribal agencies have participated in Project Responder since 2001.

## THE CHALLENGE

Due to the decentralized nature of the local, regional, state, and federal public safety community, no one agency has the financial or organizational capacity to fund the development of new equipment or develop processes and procedures that are suitable across the diverse set of response environments in the United States. For this reason, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) sponsors Project Responder to guide research, development, and acquisition decisions for the response community. The resulting reports are also used by academia, private industry, and other domestic and international agencies and associations to guide the development of new capabilities.

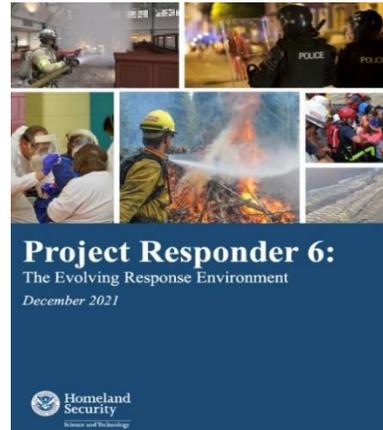
## PURPOSE

The purpose of Project Responder 6 (PR6) is to identify emergency response capability needs in the context of current and future threats and hazards. Identifying these needs in the context of the evolving response environment can provide DHS S&T with a detailed list of needs that — if addressed — could enable the responder of today and tomorrow. The latest report, published in December 2021, is available at: <https://www.dhs.gov/science-and-technology/publication/project-responder-6>.

## PR6 CAPABILITY NEEDS

The PR6 report describes the critical capability needs identified by responders through a series of interviews, focus group meetings, and virtual workshops. Each need is characterized by a description of the gap between existing capability and what is necessary to respond safely and effectively;

operational requirements for potential solutions; potential barriers; and a correlation between the need and the operating environment.



## THE EVOLVING RESPONSE ENVIRONMENT

The capability needs of today and tomorrow are impacted by many factors. An examination of these factors provides context to the capability needs, rationale for why they exist, and interest among responders, and an understanding of how needs may change in the future. The study identified multiple distinct factors that may have an impact on responders' operating environment, (e.g., human behavior, technology advancement, environment, infrastructure). The report addresses 56 distinct issues, providing an overview, a discussion of the impacts on the responder operating environment, and correlation to associated PR6 capability needs.

## PARTNERS AND PERFORMERS

PR6 was prepared by FirstLink Research and Analytics (Erie, Pennsylvania) under contract with DHS S&T's Office of Science and Engineering's Operations and Requirements Analysis (ORA) Division. ORA Portfolio Managers work with DHS components to identify capability gaps and mission needs for a more secure and resilient homeland.