Homeland Security
Science and Technology

Highlight

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

SAVER
System Assessment and Validation for Emergency Responders

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) established the System Assessment and Validation for Emergency Responders (SAVER) Program to assist emergency responders making procurement decisions.

Located within the Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) of DHS, the SAVER Program conducts objective assessments and validations on commercial equipment and systems, and provides those results along with other relevant equipment information to the emergency response community in an operationally useful form. SAVER provides information on equipment that falls within the categories listed in the DHS Authorized Equipment List (AEL). The SAVER Program mission includes:

- Conducting impartial, practitioner-relevant, operationally oriented assessments and validations of emergency responder equipment;

- Providing information that enables decision makers and responders to better select, procure, use, and maintain emergency responder equipment.

Information provided by the SAVER Program will be shared nationally with the responder community, providing a life- and cost-saving asset to DHS, as well as to federal, state, and local responders.

The SAVER Program is supported by a network of technical agents who perform assessment and validation activities. Further, SAVER focuses primarily on two main questions for the emergency responder community: "What equipment is available?" and "How does it perform?"

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Common Operating Picture for Emergency Responders

According to the FEMA National Response Framework (NRF), a common operating picture (COP) is "a continuously updated overview of an incident compiled throughout an incident's life cycle from data shared between integrated systems for communication, information management, and intelligence and information sharing." In short, a COP achieves real-time situational awareness across all levels of incident management and jurisdictions. A COP can provide emergency operations centers, incident commanders, and response personnel accurate and timely information concerning equipment distribution, location of personnel, on-site intelligence, and incident mapping when responding to and managing an incident.

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) and NRF suggest that agencies develop a COP for responding to a large-scale incident or an incident involving multiple agencies. Specifically, the NRF states that local governments should "gain and maintain situational awareness" in their response actions during a crisis event. Developing a COP system which incorporates advanced technology such as mapping tools, sensors, and video feeds, can improve incident response by dramatically enhancing information sharing, situational awareness, and data transfer during emergency incidents.

To assist emergency responders in developing a COP for their jurisdiction, the Space and Naval Warfare Systems Center (SPAWARSYSCEN), Charleston, has prepared the *Creating a Common Operating Picture for Emergency Responders TechNote* and the *Common Operating Picture Systems and Tools in Action Application Note*. These reports are available on the SAVER Web site (https://www.rkb.us/SAVER).

Example of a COP System Portal