

# DHS Science and Technology Directorate

## First Responder Support Tools (FiRST) Application

### During bomb threats, time is of the essence when evaluating and sharing critical information

When suspected bomb devices are found, amid the probable chaos and confusion, the first step for responders is to isolate the threat and evacuate the area. Responders must be able to quickly evaluate the incident area and determine which regions are most at risk. Just as important is coordinating plans among responders *in real time*.

By analyzing former bomb responses, it was clear that incident commanders needed a fast and convenient way to evaluate bomb attacks in various environments. They needed a way to share information on-scene in order to identify incident areas to isolate and safely evacuate the population in harm's way.

### Providing responders with a simple tool to use during bomb threats

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) developed the First Responder Support Tools (FiRST) bomb response application (app)—a simple yet powerful bomb response tool that provides map-based information directly to responders on their laptop computers and smartphones.

The app provides information about safe standoff distances, damage and injury contours, nearby areas of concern (e.g., schools, daycare centers), and suggested roadblocks to isolate the area. Improvised explosive device (IED) standoff data is based on the DHS bomb-standoff guide. This IED standoff data is restricted to validated users with a .gov, .mil, or .us e-mail address. *All other users* can send a short justification and their FiRST application ID to [first@ara.com](mailto:first@ara.com) to obtain access to the tool.

Drawing on information from the HazMat Evac app, 2012 Emergency Response Guidebook, and online weather sources, FiRST also provides standoff data for hazardous material spills and reference information, guidelines, and critical contacts for IED and hazardous materials.

The power of FiRST is in its simplicity of use—it requires minimal-to-no training and, because it is available on mobile devices, is accessible anywhere. FiRST app relays clear, contextual incident information on a user-friendly digital map that users can annotate with their own data.

Users can also save images of the maps for later reference and distribute incident details (including map images and attachments) via e-mail.



FiRST smartphone application for iOS and Android

### Enhancements Added to the FiRST App

FiRST is fully commercialized and is available for purchase on iTunes and Google Play (search for “IED”). The app is listed on the Responder Knowledge Base Authorized Equipment List, enabling responders to use grant funding to purchase the app for their agency. To date, the FiRST app has been purchased by more than 5,000 users.

Prompted by the initial success and feedback of the app, S&T sponsored the development of the FiRST Sharing Service, a capability that allows organizations to establish FiRST user groups. Through these groups, users can share incident data with other members and external information systems, such as Virtual USA®, thereby ensuring a more coordinated response. Group members can also be alerted when new incident data is posted.

In addition, S&T and its partners developed a new capability for the app: Improvised Nuclear Device/Radiological Dispersion Device (IND/RDD) Incident Reporting, a password-protected function focused on National Nuclear Security Agency radiological detector use. The team also added two Flex apps for IED and Hazmat Standoff and Roadblock Analysis that will provide functionality similar to FiRST within a Flex Viewer.

For additional information about the FiRST app, visit <https://www.firstsupporttools.com>.



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To learn more about the FiRST application, contact  
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