

DHS Science and Technology Directorate

S&T Standards Improving the Level of Preparedness and Resilience in the Private Sector Against All-Hazards

Responding to the events of 9/11

The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon left many questions regarding the state of homeland security in the United States. Of the several questions and assertions presented in the 9/11 Commission's report to the U.S. Congress, some were targeted directly at the private sector, raising concerns about its level of preparedness for disasters, both natural and man-made. In response, Congress passed into law Title IX of Public Law 110-53, "Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007" (the 9/11 Act). This Act directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to "establish and implement the voluntary private sector preparedness accreditation and certification program." This program, known as PS-Prep™, is intended to improve private sector preparedness by encouraging conformance to preparedness and business continuity standards adopted by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). By implementing the requirements defined in these standards private sector businesses and non-profit organizations are better equipped to incorporate business continuity principles into their daily operations.



Aerial view of Minot, North Dakota flooding. FEMA is providing disaster assistance to those affected by the flooding. (David Valdez/FEMA)

Ushering in a New Culture of Preparedness

DHS Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) has partnered with the ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board (ANAB) to support the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) with the standards and conformity assessment activities of the program that are mandated by the 9/11 Act.

S&T's standards-based support provides a formal and systematic way to address private sector preparedness needs that reinforce both the Obama Administration's approach to strengthening the security and resilience of the U.S. through Presidential Policy Directive 8 (PPD-8) and FEMA Administrator Fugate's "Whole Community" philosophy that focuses on community resilience.

Both initiatives aim to strengthen the security and resilience of the U.S. through systematic preparation against the threats the nation can potentially face. To help private sector organizations get prepared, DHS adopted four preparedness standards that specify requirements for setting up and managing an effective Business Continuity Management System:

- ASIS SPC.1-2009, Organizational Resilience: Security Preparedness, and Continuity Management Systems – Requirements with Guidance for Use
- BS 25999, Business Continuity Management
- NFPA 1600, Standard on Disaster / Emergency Management and Business Continuity Programs, 2007 & 2010 Editions

Enabling a Business Case for Preparedness

In March 2012, AT&T Inc. became the first private sector company to be certified to a DHS-adopted standard under PS-Prep™. AT&T's certification to BS 25999 will help the organization and its customers effectively continue operations during and after emergencies and disruptions.

Throughout the program's five-year development, DHS S&T has provided standards and conformity assessment expertise to FEMA, including the management of arrangements with private sector organizations involved with standards, accreditation and certification for the program. Specifically, DHS S&T developed a standards adoption and retirement process in accordance with DHS Management Directive 078-01, assessed policy and technical aspects of proposed standards, developed accreditation and certification guidelines for private sector partners, and managed the recognition components of the program.



Joplin, Mo. – The Medicine Shoppe store was able to reopen in a new location just six days after the tornado by working together with community partners. (FEMA NEWS PHOTO)



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To learn more about the PS-Prep™ Program, contact Peter Shebell, Standards Policy Manager, Test and Evaluation and Standards Office, Science and Technology Directorate, Peter.Shebell@hq.dhs.gov.