



# Emergency Services Sector

U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Office of Infrastructure Protection

## Sector Overview

Protecting and ensuring the continuity and resilience of the critical infrastructure and key resources (CIKR) of the United States are essential to the Nation's security, public health and safety, economic vitality, and way of life. To that end, Homeland Security Presidential Directive 7 (HSPD-7) has identified the Emergency Services Sector (ESS) as one of the Nation's 18 CIKR Sectors. CIKR are the physical or virtual public or private assets, systems, and networks so vital to the United States that the incapacity or destruction of any of the elements would have a debilitating impact on security, national economic security, public health or safety.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) serves as the Sector-Specific Agency (SSA) to lead the protection of the ESS. SSAs are responsible for developing and implementing a Sector-Specific Plan (SSP), which defines sector goals and objectives and provides sector-level performance feedback to DHS.

The ES SSA is responsible for implementing the National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP) sector partnership model and risk management framework. Additionally, it develops protective programs and related requirements and provides sector-level protection guidance for the disciplines that comprise the ESS.

A system of prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery elements, the ESS represents the Nation's first line of defense in the prevention and mitigation of risk from terrorist attacks and

man-made and natural disasters. Additionally, the ESS serves in a unique capacity as the primary protector for all CIKR Sectors.

Encompassing a wide range of emergency response functions, the primary mission of the ESS is to save lives, protect property and the environment, assist communities impacted by disasters, and aid recovery from emergencies. These functions, the majority of which are performed at the State, local, tribal, and territorial level, are defined by the five disciplines listed below. Additionally, the sector consists of six specialized capabilities.

## ESS Disciplines

- Law Enforcement
- Fire and Emergency Services
- Emergency Management
- Emergency Medical Services
- Public Works

## ESS Specialized Capabilities

- Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT)
- Search and Rescue (SAR)
- Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD)
- Special Weapons and Tactics and Tactical Operations (SWAT)
- Aviation Units
- Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs)

For questions or more information, please contact: [ESSTeam@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:ESSTeam@hq.dhs.gov)

## Partnership

The Critical Infrastructure Partnership Advisory Council (CIPAC) enables the free sharing of information between government and CIKR owners and operators. CIPAC allows sector partners to collaborate on sensitive security issues in a protected environment. The partnership framework fosters open communication, which facilitates the development of protective programs, plans, and processes designed to secure the sector.

The Emergency Services Sector Coordinating Council (ES SCC) is a self-organized, independent, unfunded coalition of organizations that represent the emergency response and security elements primarily across State, local, tribal and territorial emergency responder communities. The Council

has organized itself through professional associations that represent the five emergency service disciplines. Working collaboratively with the SSA and the sector's Government Coordinating Council (GCC), the ES SCC identifies vulnerabilities and develops policies and programs to benefit the sector.

Chaired by DHS, the Emergency Services GCC (ES GCC) is comprised of Federal departments and agencies integral to the sector. The ES GCC assists in coordinating CIKR strategies, activities, policies, and communication internally within DHS; between other agencies of government at all levels; as well as between public and private sector members across the ESS.

## Distinguishing Sector Characteristics

The following characteristics contribute to the sector profile and represent important factors for consideration in addressing sector security:

<p><input type="checkbox"/> The most critical feature of the sector is its large, geographically distributed base of facilities, equipment, and highly skilled personnel who provide services in both paid and volunteer capacities.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> It has dependencies and interdependencies with multiple CIKR sectors and the National Response Framework's Emergency Support Functions that supply elements for both operations and protection of ESS assets.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> The sector is largely organized at the State, local, tribal, and territorial levels of government, which corresponds to the scales on which emergencies generally occur. On the one hand, the complex and dispersed nature of the sector makes it difficult to disable the entire nationwide system. On the other hand, this presents challenges in coordinating emergency responses across disciplines, regions, and levels of government.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> The primary focus of the ESS is protecting other sectors, which creates unique challenges and obstacles to protecting the assets and personnel of the ESS itself.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> The ESS relies heavily on complex communication and information technology (IT) systems to enable robust communications and appropriate coordination and management of diverse elements during emergencies.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> The ESS primarily involves the public sector, but does include private sector holdings, such as industrial fire departments, sworn private security officers, and private EMS providers.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> The sector uses specialized transportation vehicles and secure transportation routes to facilitate sector operations because sector partners often must transfer personnel, equipment, aid, and victims to and from the scene of emergencies.</p>	



# Homeland Security

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