

BUSINESSSAFE

BusinessSafe is designed to aid businesses in protecting the safety and well-being of Florida's residents and visitors from threats. BusinessSafe provides private sector partners with open source information, analysis and resources to help protect their businesses and communities.

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BusinessSafe Highlight: Emergency Services Sector

The Emergency Services Sector is comprised of mainly public entities, some private resources, and roughly 4.6 million highly-skilled paid professionals and volunteers who work in law enforcement, fire and rescue services, emergency medical services, emergency management, and public works. The sector also includes facilities and equipment, systems, and networks that are critical to maintaining, protecting, and preserving the nation's safety and health in case of natural or manmade threats and hazards.

Manmade Threats

The Emergency Services Sector may be an attractive target for criminal activity due to its role in supporting other critical infrastructure sectors. Fire, police, hazardous materials, and other emergency service units respond to criminal threats, violent extremists, suspected terrorist events, and the aftermath of terrorist attacks. Emergency services personnel may be targeted for violence due to the sensitive functions they perform. Targets may include individuals in positions of authority as well as symbolic institutions.

1. **Cyber threats** – Communication systems and equipment standards for emergency services have improved dramatically in the last several years. Cyberattacks may threaten the security of the sensitive information housed in emergency services entities' networks. Cyber threats like phishing attacks and ransomware continue to impact this sector, in some instances, causing disruptions in services.

[Another city hit by ransomware attack. This time the police department is the target.](#)
[Hack of Baltimore's 911 dispatch system was ransomware attack, city officials say](#)

2. **Targeted Violence and Extremism** – Emergency services personnel are on the front lines when it comes to responding to suspected terrorist attacks and dealing with the aftermath of those events. Emergency services personnel have been targeted by attackers when responding to mass casualty incidents, and in some instances have been directly targeted in violent plots.

[Tampa Islamic State supporter rehearsed attack, tried to buy gun before arrest, FBI says](#)
[Man shot by deputy in Fountain Hills accused of terrorism on behalf of ISIS](#)
[Jersey City Shooting Updates: 6 Killed, Including an Officer](#)



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Other Threats and Hazards

The Emergency Services Sector may also face challenges due to its complex structure and sensitive functions which may impact the sector's physical security. Emergency services personnel may deal with situations that expose them to harmful chemicals or infectious diseases.

- 1. Hazardous Materials** – Emergency services personnel including first responders, transportation carriers, and healthcare workers are at risk of health impacts from hazardous materials. Methods of exposure include inhalation, skin contact, ingestion, and other methods. There are protective measures and safety precautions that can be taken, but emergency services personnel continue to face challenges.
[Firefighters Exposed to More Harmful Chemicals Than Previously Thought](#)
[9/11 first responders begin to feel attack's long-term health effects](#)
- 2. COVID-19** – The COVID-19 pandemic has become an added danger for those who work in the Emergency Services Sector. COVID-19 exposure poses health risks to emergency services personnel and may impact staffing capabilities.
[With staffing shortages, first responders ask Minnesotans to follow COVID-19 guidelines](#)
[More than 10% of Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department personnel in coronavirus quarantine](#)

Resources

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) provides multiple resources relating to the Emergency Services Sector.

[Emergency Services Sector](#)

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) provides a variety of tools and resources to support first responders working during the COVID-19 pandemic.

[COVID-19 Information for the First Responder Community](#)

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