

Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response

An Overview of the Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response

CDC Prepares the Nation for Public Health Threats and Emergencies

A health threat can appear at any moment, and the U.S. must be ready to respond. As America's health protection agency, CDC is ready 24/7 and able to rapidly deploy disease detectives, lifesaving vaccines and medicines, and other support during a public health emergency. Whether natural disasters, disease outbreaks, or deliberate attacks, CDC provides critical data, people, funds, and training to improve state and local preparedness capabilities. The Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response (PHPR) is committed to strengthening the nation's health security by saving lives and protecting against public health threats, whether at home or abroad, natural or man-made.

Working Every Day to Prepare and Respond

Health security depends on the ability of our nation to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from public health threats. PHPR leads the agency's preparedness and response activities by providing strategic direction, support, and coordination for activities across CDC as well as with local, state, tribal, territorial, national, and international public health partners.

Supporting State and Local Preparedness Activities

CDC coordinates technical assistance from subject matter experts across CDC to help public health departments develop critical public health preparedness capabilities. CDC's Division of State and Local Readiness, administers funds for preparedness activities to state and local public health systems through the Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) cooperative agreement. Through the PHEP, CDC helps public health departments strengthen their abilities to respond to all types of public health incidents and build more resilient communities. The cooperative agreement currently funds 62 awardees including all 50 states, 4 major cities, and 8 territories.

RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY FOR PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY RESPONSE

National emergency preparedness requires a coordinated effort involving every level of government as well as the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and individual citizens. CDC, an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, executes public health response activities. Our work in preparedness supports the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, which has overall authority for emergency response activities as laid out in the [National Response Framework](#).



WHAT ARE PUBLIC HEALTH THREATS?

- **Biological threats** can be natural, accidental, or deliberate. They include viruses, bacteria, parasites, fungi or their toxins that can cause illness or death in people, animals, or plants. They are spread through air, water, or food. Examples of biological threats include flu viruses or bacteria that contaminate foods.
- **Natural disasters** include heat waves, snow or ice storms, earthquakes, hurricanes, and floods.
- **Chemical and radiological materials** released accidentally or intentionally could create large-scale public health emergencies, especially in densely populated areas.
- **Explosions** by far the most common cause of casualties associated with terrorism – can result in large numbers of casualties with complex injuries not commonly seen after natural disasters such as floods or hurricanes.

For more information on CDC's Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response, please visit:

www.cdc.gov/phpr

*People's Health Protected –
Public Health Secured*

Ensuring Availability of Critical Medical Assets during Emergencies

PHPR manages and maintains the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS), the national repository of critical medicines and medical supplies established to protect the American public if there is a public health emergency severe enough to cause state and local supplies to run out. The Division of Strategic National Stockpile prepares and supports partners, state and local health departments, as well as private-sector organizations to ensure that medicine and supplies get to the people who need them most during an emergency.

Managing CDC's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for Monitoring and Response Coordination

When a disaster occurs, CDC must respond effectively to support international, national, state, local, tribal, territorial, and private sector public health emergency response partners. PHPR's Division of Emergency Operations manages the EOC, which serves as CDC's command center for monitoring and coordinating CDC's emergency response to public health threats in the United States and abroad. Staffed 24/7/365, the EOC provides worldwide situational awareness and coordinates CDC's preparedness, assessment, response, recovery, and evaluation of public health emergencies. The EOC organizes CDC scientific experts in one location during an emergency response to efficiently exchange information and connect with partners. The EOC also coordinates the deployment of CDC staff and equipment to support local, state, and international efforts during emergencies.

Regulating Biological Agents and Toxins to Protect Public Health and Safety

Scientific research in laboratories is an important part of our nation's defense against naturally occurring diseases and bioterrorism. The research done on biological and select agents and toxins leads to discoveries that can save lives and help protect the health, safety, and security of the American people. Because this research is critical, CDC works to ensure that it is conducted as safely and securely as possible. To accomplish this, CDC's Division of Select Agents and Toxins oversees the Federal Select Agent Program (FSAP) and the Import Permit Program. CDC partners with USDA and FBI to administer the full scope of work included in the FSAP.

CDC's Role in Public Health Emergencies

- Emergency response begins at the local level. CDC prepares local and state public health departments by providing funding and technical assistance to strengthen their abilities to respond to all types of emergencies and build more resilient communities.
- When local and state resources become overwhelmed, CDC responds and supports national, state, and local partners to save lives and reduce suffering. This includes providing scientific and logistic expertise, and deploying personnel and critical medical assets to the site of an emergency.
- CDC also helps these partners recover and restore public health functions after the initial response.