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Whitepaper: Lessons Learned Information Sharing (LLIS)

An Opinionated Discussion about Government Efforts on Improving National Security

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Introduction

Since 9/11 (and more recently), both government agencies and businesses have begun taking initiatives in national security. New fears from Washington, D.C. have indicated that the federal government is becoming increasingly more concerned about security efforts throughout the United States. Recently, Secretary of Department of Homeland Security Tom Ridge emphasized and stressed the need for partnerships both at local and at state government levels, as well as businesses, offering a \$8 billion grant towards this large undertaking.

The Department of Homeland Security has recently endorsed (as of 2004), and supported through the National Memorial for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT), which is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to preventing terrorism or mitigating its effects. MIPT was established after the April 1995 bombing of the Murrah Building in Oklahoma City, OK. The web site focuses mostly towards government agencies (and their staff members) at local, state and federal levels but has recently begun to include members from critical infrastructure industries, such as healthcare and financial institutions. The web site, Lessons Learned Information Sharing (LLIS - <http://www.llis.gov>) was designed to develop and share ideas, concepts and possible solutions to prevent, prepare for, respond to, defend, and recover (possibly) from acts of aggression and terrorism. Other not-for-profit organizations share similar ideals as MIPT, supporting and endorsing the LLIS web site.



About LLIS

The web site is actively monitored and protected by an assigned username and password. Staff members from the web site technical support center (ESP Group, LLC - <http://www.espgroup.net>) request initial information from respondents and post information that may be valuable to LLIS members. The technical support staff have been fairly attentive to end-user support needs, and are usually resolved within as short as one hour, but not usually exceeding one day.

While the federal government has believed in sharing lessons learned information, policies, procedures and tactics to emergency management, the information gathering and its dissemination methods have been informal (at best), with no centralized repository to act as a systematic resource in sharing and disseminating information to emergency management. LLIS hopes to ensure that this database will act as a stopping-point for all information dissemination efforts from the federal government. To date, over 4000 emergency management and critical infrastructure staff members, public officials, and corporate executives are participating in the information sharing efforts.

Information is broken down in several categories:

- ❖ **LESSONS LEARNED:** This represents knowledge and experience—positive or negative—derived from actual incidents (similar to the 1995 Oklahoma City, OK bombing and the September 11th attacks) as well as observed and historical studies of current operations, training classes, exercises and drills.
- ❖ **BEST PRACTICES:** This area provides peer-validated techniques, procedures, ideas, or solutions that are used and working; some of the information is based upon experience obtained from current operations, training courses, and exercises/drills.
- ❖ **GOOD STORIES:** This area provided non-peer-validated initiatives implemented throughout the nation that have shown success in their specific environments and may provide useful information to other communities, organizations and government agencies.

LLIS members are encouraged to participate in information dissemination efforts also by sharing through an in-house, secured electronic mail system that is tied into their individual electronic mail accounts outside of the LLIS environment. The mail accounts are not shared with other members, only their names and function with the LLIS area, maintaining a high level of privacy. Members can read their email securely through strong encryption. The LLIS members area is actively monitored to prevent unauthorized access and use.

The LLIS area also includes a rather largely comprehensive library of federal documents, reports, manuals, as well as news articles, web site links (to relevant web sites pertaining to emergency management, both at federal and state levels), and events (such as seminars, course events, or media events).



Conclusion

The LLIS web site is a good start, and offers quite a plethora of valuable information to emergency management, critical infrastructure staff members, public officials and corporate executives from critical infrastructure industries. For more information, please visit the web site at: <http://www.llis.gov>, or at: <http://www.llis.dhs.gov>.

Some other LLIS web sites that aren't related to the LLIS.GOV web site:

United States Coast Guard:

<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/moa/safea.htm>

United States Air Force:

<http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/awc-lesn.htm>

United States Army (PRIVATE):

<http://call.army.mil>

Department of Health and Human Services (Cancer Research)

<http://www.usability.gov/lessons/learned.html>

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA):

<http://llis.nasa.gov>

Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL):

http://www.llnl.gov/es_and_h/lessons/lessons.shtml

Department of Energy:

<http://tis.eh.doe.gov/ll/>

Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center:

<http://www.wildfirelessons.net>

The Canadian Army Nation Defense Lessons Learned Center:

<http://armyapp.dnd.ca/allc/Default.asp>



Bibliography

NOTE: Some context has been taken from the LLIS web site for this whitepaper.

1. ref: <http://www.mipt.org>.
2. ref: <http://www.llis.gov>.
3. ref: <http://www.espgroup.net>.

