



Southwest Missouri Homeland Security Planning Region D Bioterrorism/ Emergency Response Team (BERT) Update

News and Resources

Pan Flu Infection Control

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) releases a report to help health workers prepare for and respond to pandemic influenza. The guide includes information on infection control, workplace planning and OSHA standards. It also includes communication tools, links to resources and sample infection control programs.

www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA_pandemic_health.pdf

Border Security

The recent case of a man with drug-resistant tuberculosis crossing international borders, against the advice of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, raises questions about the effectiveness of border security and current screening policies. http://wcbstv.com/local/local_story_152170905.html

Border Security

The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) makes its Global Terrorism Database (GTD) available to the public, including data on about 80,000 international and domestic terrorist incidents that occurred since 1970.

It lists the date and location of the incident, the weapons used and nature of the target, the number of casualties, the identity of the perpetrator if known, and more.

www.start.umd.edu/data/gtd

New Trailer Available to Assist with Emergency Response in Region D

The Christian County Office of Emergency Management has purchased a new trailer for use in responding to emergencies.

The trailer was leftover from the Hurricane Katrina response through Hope Arkansas. It had never been used and was purchased through the Missouri State Surplus program for \$2,500.

Emergency Management Director Phil Amtower says the trailer is available for anyone in the region to use, when needed.

The 34-foot Trail Vision is currently equipped with 2 VHF radios, 1 VHF - 800-megahertz radio cross band interoperability box, a weather station and a wireless network. It has four workstations, a conference area that seats six and a backup generator.

Bunk beds, a bathroom and two shower areas enhance the living conditions, along with kitchen appliances including a refrigerator, stove and microwave.

The trailer has heating and air conditioning and a solid roof that can double as an observation deck.

Requests to use the trailer should go through Phil Amtower at the Christian County Office of Emergency Management. ☒



Courtesy: Phil Amtower, Christian County Office of Emergency Management

Regional Joint Information System Tested During Flooding

Closed roads, washed out bridges, temporary shelters opening — multiple problems caused by flooding that struck southwest Missouri June 11th led to the early launch of the Region D Joint Information System, or DJIS.

The DJIS was created to help responders in the region quickly get important information to the public through the media during emergencies.

When the DJIS is activated, a staff of volunteer public information officers contact each county emergency management director (EMD) in the 18-county southwest region — Region D. EMDs provide a situation update and any information they need to get to their public. DJIS staff then compile the information, add a local contact for each county and send the report to media. These reports are created at least twice a day during activation.

During the week of heavy flooding in June, the media was able to quickly and efficiently report on changing road conditions and closings throughout the region because the information was provided to them in comprehensive reports.

This was the first true test of the DJIS, which was actually scheduled to be introduced and tested during the state earthquake exercise the following week. It was a great opportunity to assist responders and identify ways to improve what had previously been just a plan on paper.

To date five area public information officers have been trained on how to launch and operate the DJIS. Staff met with several media outlets to discuss the system and get their input and suggestions. Also, responders in the region have learned of the DJIS through area networking meetings. ☒

Tips for Working with Interpreters

As the Ozarks grows and the population becomes more diverse, the first responder community will begin communicating more frequently with people who may not speak English very well, or at all.

Language Line Services lists the following tips for 9-1-1 operators working with interpreters in an emergency situation. The tips can be utilized by anyone communicating with a person with limited English.

BRIEF THE INTERPRETER. Identify the name of your organization. Give clear instruction. Be specific about what information you need or what needs to be done: "What is your address?" "Is there an emergency?"

SPEAK DIRECTLY TO THE CALLER. Communicate directly with the Limited English Proficient (LEP) caller, not the interpreter. Rather than saying, "Tell him to give you his address," say, "What is your address?" The interpreter will relay the information and communicate the caller's response directly back to you, ensuring a smoother call flow.

SPEAK NATURALLY. Speak at your normal pace, not slower. If reading a prepared text, allow the interpreter to keep up. Remember the following:

✓ **TONE.** Speaking louder or yelling can be counterproductive. An interpreter's task is to obtain information from a person who may be in distress. The interpreter will convey your sense of urgency by listening to your tone of voice. Likewise, calmness and compassion will also be conveyed.

✓ **GROUP YOUR THOUGHTS.** Speak in short sentences. Your interpreter is trying to understand your meaning, so express whole thoughts if possible. Interpreters may ask you to slow down or repeat. Pause to make sure you give the interpreter time to deliver your message.

OFFER CLARIFICATIONS. If something is unclear, or if the interpreter is given a long statement, the interpreter may ask you to repeat or clarify your statement.

AVOID JARGON OR TECHNICAL TERMS. Don't use jargon, slang, idioms, acronyms, or technical medical terms. Clarify unique vocabulary, and provide examples if they are needed to explain a term.

ASK IF THE LEP CALLER UNDERSTANDS. Don't assume that a caller always understands the interpretation. In some cul-

tures a person may say 'yes', not because they understand but rather so they can try to follow the conversation. Remember that a lack of English skill does not necessarily indicate a lack of education.



DEALING WITH INCOHERENT CALLERS. If the LEP caller is incoherent, the interpreter may not be able to convey the caller's message and may resort to rendering the exact words heard, even if they are not part of a cohesive message (i.e. simply "knife", "weapon", "wound" etc.)

WORK WITH YOUR INTERPRETER. At times the interpreter will seek your assistance in controlling an uncooperative or abusive LEP caller. The interpreter will advise you when it becomes challenging or impossible to obtain the information being requested.

AVOID ASKING THE INTERPRETER'S OPINION. The interpreter's job is to convey the meaning of what is said— not to inject personal opinion. Do not ask the interpreter questions (i.e. "Is the caller lying? Intoxicated?").

AVOID SIDE CONVERSATIONS. Whatever the interpreter hears will be interpreted. If you feel that the interpreter has not interpreted everything, ask the interpreter to do so. Avoid interrupting the interpreter.

EXPECT LONGER CONVERSATIONS. An interpreted conversation may take longer, compared with an English conversation. Many concepts have no equivalent in other languages, so the interpreter may describe or paraphrase. Grammar and syntax of the target language also add to the interpretation.

WORK AROUND CULTURAL ISSUES. Professional interpreters understand differences of culture and customs, and may clarify cultural issues for you. If a particular question is culturally inappropriate, the interpreter may suggest that you rephrase the question or ask in a more appropriate way.

CLOSE THE CALL. The interpreter will wait for you to end the call. When appropriate, the interpreter will offer further assistance and will be the last to disconnect from the call. Remember to thank the interpreter for his or her efforts at the end of the session. ☺

The Bioterrorism / Emergency Response Team (BERT) was formed in late 2002 when the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) received a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for bioterrorism preparedness.

The grant divided Missouri into nine regions, following the Highway Patrol's region divisions. Southwest Missouri's Highway Patrol Region D became "Homeland Security Planning Region D." Region D was then further divided into four service areas, based on population and geography.

BERT's goals are to improve preparedness for a bioterrorism event or other public health emergency. BERT members work with individuals and partner agencies on mitigation, planning and exercising a response to a bioterrorist attack or other public health emergency.

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