



VOLUNTARY PRIVATE SECTOR PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM

The Voluntary Private Sector Preparedness Accreditation and Certification Program (PS-Prep) is mandated by Title IX of the *Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 (the Act)*. Congress directed the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to develop and implement a voluntary program of accreditation and certification of private entities using standards adopted by DHS that promote private sector preparedness, including disaster management, emergency management and business continuity programs. The purpose of the PS-Prep Program is to enhance nationwide resilience in an all-hazards environment by encouraging private sector preparedness. The program will provide a mechanism by which a private sector entity—a company, facility, not-for-profit corporation, hospital, stadium, university, etc.—may be certified by an accredited third party, establishing that the private sector entity conforms to one or more preparedness standards adopted by DHS.

PS-Prep provides a comprehensive set of standards by which American businesses and other private sector entities can assess their preparedness for all hazards. Adhering to a standard that will reduce the impact of all hazards on business and protect employees can help ensure that a business is able to recover and reopen following a disaster or other emergencies.

Voluntary Program

Participation in the PS-Prep program is completely voluntary. No private sector entity will be required by DHS to comply with any standard adopted under the program. However, DHS encourages all private sector entities to seriously consider seeking certification to an appropriate DHS-adopted standard.

Designation of Preparedness Standards

Congress directed DHS to designate one or more standards for assessing private sector preparedness. The standards will be used by accredited certifying entities to evaluate and certify compliance by private sector entities with the standards adopted by DHS.

DHS published a notice in the Federal Register in Oct. 2009, announcing its intent to adopt the three standards listed below based on scalability, balance of interest and relevance to PS-Prep. Following a series of regional public meetings and the incorporation of public comments, the three standards were adopted by DHS in June 2010:

- ASIS International SPC.1-2009 *Organizational Resilience: Security Preparedness, and Continuity Management System – Requirements with Guidance for use (2009 Edition)*. Available at no cost.
- British Standards Institution 25999 (2007 Edition) - *Business Continuity Management. (BS 25999:2006-1 Code of practice for business continuity management and BS 25999: 2007-2 Specification for business continuity management)*. The British Standards Institution is making both parts available for a reduced fee of \$19.99 each.

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- National Fire Protection Association 1600-*Standard on Disaster / Emergency Management and Business Continuity Programs, 2007 and 2010 editions. Available at no cost.*

Each of these standards comprehensively deals with preparedness and can be applied to the majority of private sector entities.

DHS will continue to accept comments on PS-Prep, the three adopted standards, and/or proposals to adopt any other similar standard that satisfies the target criteria of the December 2008 Federal Register notice that announced the program. DHS will review any comments received or proposals for DHS adoption of additional standards and, when merited, will publish a Federal Register notice providing the results of that review or notifying the public of an intention to adopt additional standards.

DHS considered several types of preparedness standards, including standards that are likely to apply to a particular industry or sector of the economy. In all, DHS evaluated twenty five standards (21 of which were recommended by the public) using Target Criteria, published in the December 24, 2008, Federal Register notice (73 FR 79140) in which DHS announced the PS-Prep Program and sought public comment on all aspects of its implementation. As the program develops, DHS remains committed to ensuring that PS-Prep is developed and standards are selected in close coordination with the private sector and other interested stakeholders. DHS has engaged the public on programmatic issues through a series of Federal Register Notices, public meetings and other interactions with private sector firms, associations, and others.

Small Business Considerations

The Act recognized that small businesses need to be treated differently in the PS-Prep program, and requires DHS to give special consideration to small business concerns (as defined by Section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632)). The December 24, 2008, Federal Register Notice (73 FR 79140) contained an extensive discussion of DHS' approaches to best reflect the interests of small businesses and the purpose of the PS-Prep Program. DHS continues to seek comments from small businesses and others on the adoption of these standards and their impact on future decisions to seek certification under the PS-Prep Program.

Understanding the Accreditation and Certification Process

Over the next several months, the ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board (ANAB)—the accreditation body selected by DHS to develop and oversee the certification process—will manage the accreditation and accredit qualified third parties to carry out the certification in accordance with the accepted procedures of the program. Private sector organizations, including businesses and critical infrastructure and key resources (CIKR) entities, may apply for certification to the applicable requirements of preparedness standard(s) adopted by DHS. Certification, in the context of this program, is confirmation that an accredited third party certification organization has validated a private sector entity's preparedness to a standard.

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Once an organization is certified, there will be a periodic reassessment and audit process so the certification organization can continue to have confidence in the organization's conformity to emergency preparedness and business continuity management system. The certifying organizations will be accredited by ANAB. DHS will maintain and make public a listing of any private sector entity certified as being in compliance with PS-Prep, if that private sector entity consents to such listing.

Program Monitoring

DHS will monitor the effectiveness of the program on an ongoing basis. DHS will review the accreditation and certification program annually to ensure its effectiveness, to include the operations and management of any of the accreditation and certification bodies and the designated standards. DHS will make improvements and adjustments to PS-Prep as necessary and appropriate.

Private Sector Preparedness Coordination Council

FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate is the Designated Officer responsible for the accreditation and certification program. The Administrator chairs a Private Sector Preparedness Coordinating Council comprised of department leadership from the Science & Technology Directorate, Office of Infrastructure Protection, and Office of the Private Sector. Once standards are adopted, the Council will focus on the remaining requirements of the law, which include addressing small business considerations, defining and promoting the business case to encourage private sector entities to work toward voluntary certification and overseeing the program's progress.

How to Get Involved

Private sector entities can get involved in PS-Prep by submitting comments on the identified standards, suggesting additional private sector standards to be adopted by DHS, and participating in future public meetings on the topic. Details will be posted at: www.fema.gov/privatesectorpreparedness. DHS has posted the Federal Register notice at: www.regulations.gov. Comments may be submitted to www.regulations.gov or FEMA-POLICY@dhs.gov. (Identify Docket ID FEMA-2008-0017). For further information please e-mail: FEMA-NIMS@dhs.gov.