



northeast homeland security regional advisory council

NEWSLETTER

SERVING 85 COMMUNITIES IN NORTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

July 2016

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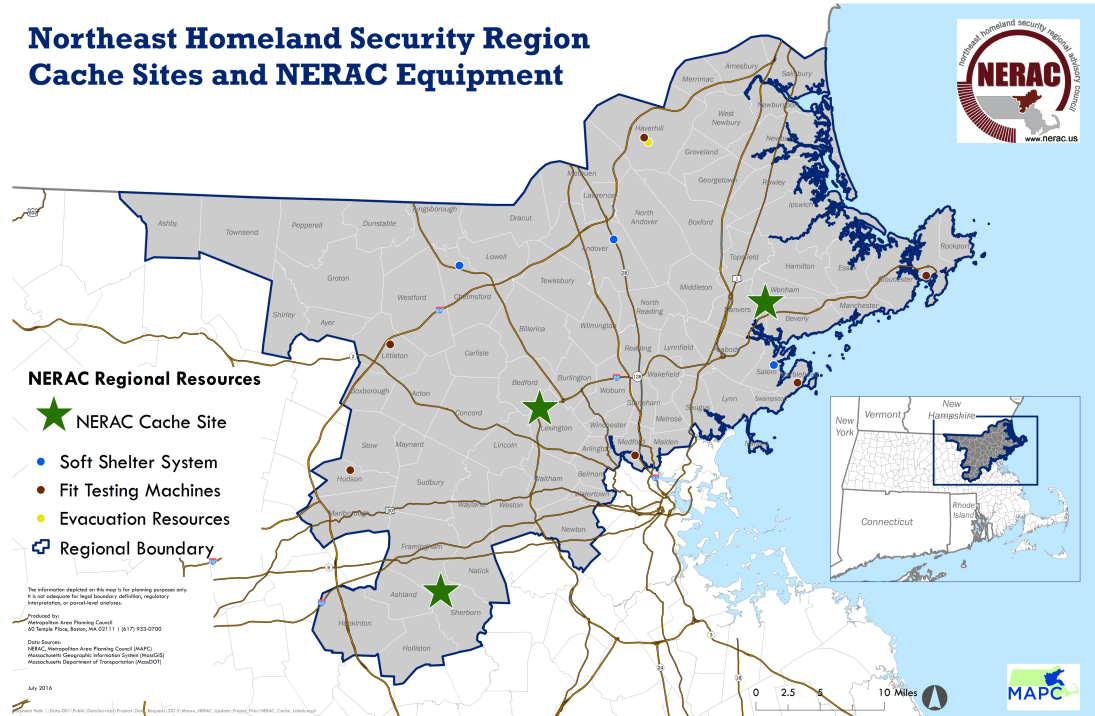
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Northeast Homeland Security Region Cache Sites and NERAC Equipment



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For more information on NERAC, please visit www.NERAC.us or contact Tim Moore, NERAC's Program Manager, at 617-933-0767 or tmoore@mapc.org.

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School Evacuation Tabletop Exercises

Earlier this year, NERAC received simultaneous funding requests from the City of Salem and the Town of Topsfield, both of which were to conduct tabletop exercises on school evacuation. These requests were approved together, and Chief Contracting Services, Inc. was hired to plan, facilitate, and evaluate the exercises. Beginning in April, key stakeholders from the police, fire, emergency management, and school departments in each municipality met to plan the exercises and develop the scenarios. They met regularly over the next 2 months in preparation for the exercises, which took place on June 7th in Topsfield and June 15th in Salem.



Both exercise scenarios began with the selected schools receiving an anonymous bomb threat via telephone and a suspicious package concurrently. School leadership was required to immediately assess the legitimacy of the threat and determine whether or not the buildings should be evacuated. Both schools made the decision to evacuate, and began to move students to a pre-designated

evacuation point. During this evacuation process, they had to deal with numerous unexpected challenges, such as students who did not hear the evacuation orders remaining in the school, a key faculty member being impacted by a serious medical event, students having emotional issues, and a school bus transporting students being involved in a traffic accident. Topsfield specifically had to deal with the timing of the event, which resulted in significant student accountability concerns because the threat occurred right after school began but before the daily attendance had been processed. After all students were safely evacuated and it was determined that the threat had passed, both groups had to execute a non-standard student dismissal/family reunification plan, which involved substantial public information campaigns to inform parents of the plan, and strong coordination with their police departments to manage the traffic that it caused.



Both municipalities worked together extremely well, using resources within and outside of their communities to collaboratively address the issues they were presented with. There was also strong support and participation from the superintendents and town manager/mayor of each municipality. Two of the common lessons learned from these exercises was the need to continue developing interoperable communications systems to be utilized between departments within each municipality, and the need to have adaptable family reunification plans that can be utilized in any situation.

ALERT Training

In April, NERAC provided backfill and overtime reimbursement to officers from numerous police departments throughout the region to attend two Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERT) courses that took place in West Newbury. The ALERT course is designed for patrol-level law enforcement officers who are likely to be the first to arrive at the scene of an active shooter event and be responsible for immediately stopping the perpetrator(s). About 30 officers attended each 2-day course, where they learned skills such as shooting and moving, threshold evaluation, team movement principles, room entry techniques, rescue team tactics, and post-engagement priorities. The course involved practical instruction on these techniques, and then put officers through challenging force-on-force scenarios where they were required to work as a team and use these skills to safely bring acts of violence to a conclusion.

This course was developed by Texas State University, and is being offered throughout the country by Texas State instructors with the assistance of the FBI. The FBI made this program their national standard for special agent tactical instructors, and has put 225 of their personnel through the train-the-trainer program so that they can supplement Texas State's instructors and bring this training to as many agencies as possible. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is also a part of this partnership, paying for the costs of all materials necessary for each offering of this course. Through the joint efforts of these three groups, over 114,000 law enforcement officers from across the nation have been able to attend this training.

As part of NERAC's FFY2016 budgeting process (which is currently ongoing), the Council has allocated funding and submitted an application to the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) to conduct additional ALERT training in the region, as well as additional training designed by Texas State University on integrated care techniques designed to improve coordination between police, fire, and EMS during these types of events so that victims receive medical care earlier and fatalities are minimized.

NEMLEC SWAT MACTAC Training

During the week of May 16th-20th, the Northeastern Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council (NEMLEC) SWAT Team participated in a 40-hour Multiple Assault Counter Terrorism Action Capabilities (MACTAC) training. The training was funded by NERAC and taught by LEAD Consultants, which is a California-based company that provides training using some of the most experienced SWAT operators in the country. MACTAC training is designed to improve the law enforcement response to active threat events involving multiple perpetrators attacking multiple locations simultaneously, similar to the events that took place in Paris last November. It also focuses on the special considerations needed for the response to



events involving IED's and high-powered weapons. As the level of sophistication of combat tactics used by terrorists and other armed assailants continues to increase, this type of training is becoming more and more necessary for first responders to be prepared to combat the constantly evolving threat.

Over the course of the week, the team trained at several locations, simulating the response to multiple threats and providing immediate medical care to victims. They received instruction on rapid deployment and entry to buildings, contact team maneuvers and techniques, downed officer rescue, use of tactical tools such as armored vehicles, and how to facilitate the immediate provision of medical care to victims through full-speed, field-based exercises using marking ammo. Members of the Middlesex Sheriff's SWAT Team and the Nashua (NH) SWAT Team also participated in the training.



New Ambubus Location

NERAC has moved one of its three ambubuses from the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority in Haverhill to the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority in Fitchburg. The bus will be used as a shared asset with the Central Homeland Security Region, and provide a quicker response to NERAC communities in Western Middlesex County. NERAC region stakeholders in need of an ambubus during an emergency should continue to request it by calling Region III CMED at (978) 946-8130 or via radio. As this bus is now hosted in EMS Region II, stakeholders from that region may alternatively contact Region II CMED to request a bus.

Each ambubus is capable of transporting up to 12 patients on stretchers (or up to 6 patients in wheelchairs) along with medical personnel and their equipment. Bus drivers will be provided by either the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority or the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority when needed.



Fit Testing Machines

In 2012, NERAC purchased 6 Portacount 8038+ quantitative fit testing machines for the region. Since that time, the machines have been stored at 3 local fire departments and made available to all stakeholders in the region free-of-cost. Due to the increasing costs associated with recalibration and certification of these machines, they are going to become part of NERAC's Regional Cache System and a daily fee of \$15 will be charged for their use going forward. These fees will be put towards the recalibration/certification costs that must be paid every 1-3 years (depending on frequency of use) to keep the machines available.

The machines will still be hosted at fire departments throughout the region, and can be accessed by contacting any of the host departments directly. In order to more effectively place the machines across the region and make them readily available, the following departments have been selected as host locations:

- Gloucester Fire Department
- Haverhill Fire Department
- Hudson Fire Department
- Littleton Fire Department
- Marblehead Fire Department
- Medford Fire Department



For information on how to access these machines, NERAC's Fit Testing Machine User Policy, or a copy of the user manual for these machines, please visit the "Fit Testing Machines" page under the "Regional Resources Tab" at www.nerac.us. A separate announcement will be made when the machines have been moved to each of these locations.

Cybersecurity and Social Media Trainings

In April, NERAC hosted a 2-day cybersecurity program that consisted of a 4-hour course titled "The Essentials of Community Cybersecurity" and a 12-hour course titled "The EOC's Role in Community Cybersecurity". The first course helped students build a non-technical understanding of cybersecurity in the context of a community, and learn how cyber attacks can impact a community's business operations and emergency response. The remaining 12 hours of the program, which was also non-technical, focused on the "whole community" response to cybersecurity events, and the roles and responsibilities community officials need to have to prevent, detect, and respond to cybersecurity events.



In June, NERAC hosted a 1-day "Social Media for Natural Disaster Response and Recovery" course, which helped participants learn how to use various social media platforms to disseminate critical information to the public about actions they should be taking to protect themselves and their property before, during, and after disasters. The course also covered how to use social media to gain better situational awareness during an event through the identification of trends and the use of basic data mining techniques.

Both of these courses were brought to the region free-of-cost to NERAC through the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium (NDPC), which is a group of 7 member-agencies created by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and FEMA's National Preparedness Directorate to address the counter-terrorism preparedness needs of first responders across the country. Through this consortium, the cybersecurity course was provided by the Texas A&M



Engineering Extension Service (TEEX), and the social media course was conducted by the National Disaster Preparedness Training Center (NDPTC) at the University of Hawaii. Both TEEX and NDPTC have been valuable partners, providing cost-effective training to the NERAC region over the last several years.



NTAS Bulletin Update

On June 26th, DHS released a new National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS) bulletin, updating and reinforcing the information from the bulletin that was released in December of 2015. This bulletin states that the threat level has not diminished since the previous bulletin was issued, and stresses DHS's concern that homegrown violent extremists may be inspired to carry out attacks at public locations and events with little or no notice. It goes on to specifically note that across the United States and Europe, terrorists have been directing their attacks towards a wide array of diverse targets, and there is a particular concern that targets may be chosen based on the perceived religion, ethnicity, nationality, or sexual orientation of the individuals associated with them. To view this bulletin in its entirety, please click [here](#). It will be in effect until November 15th, at which time the threat levels towards the homeland will be re-assessed.

All NTAS bulletins and other elevated or imminent alerts are posted to www.dhs.gov and to DHS's twitter and facebook pages when they are issued or updated. They are also posted to the NERAC website at www.nerac.us automatically as soon as they are released by DHS.



Cache Equipment: Surveillance Cameras

In 2014, NERAC purchased 6 portable surveillance cameras and added them to the Regional Cache Program. These cameras are discrete, box-shaped devices that can be temporarily installed anywhere that a community requires additional security or monitoring for special events or elevated threats. They provide a live feed over wifi or the Verizon 4G network to any computer or other handheld device with an internet connection. The cameras can be operated remotely from these devices, and can record video at either 720P or 1080P, and zoom in up to 30X. They are entirely weatherproof, and come with pole mounting equipment necessary for attachment to a standard telephone pole and connection to power via a street lamp photo cell. They also include an external microphone for audio recordings when desired. The cameras are available for a fee of \$10 per day.

Because there are specific legal issues associated with the use of these cameras (such as the storage of recorded materials and privacy/consent considerations), all municipalities are required to sign an agreement beyond the Cache Borrower Subscription Form before using these cameras. If your community has not signed this agreement but would like to, or if you are unsure of whether your community has signed the agreement, please contact NERAC's Program Manager Tim Moore at timmoore@mapc.org or 617-933-0767.





NERAC MEETING SCHEDULE

NERAC Full Council

Date: 2nd Thursday of Every Month
Time: 1:00pm-3:00pm
Location: Burlington Town Hall Main Hearing Room

Training and Exercise Committee

Date: 2nd Thursday of Every Month
Time: 12:00pm-1:00pm
Location: Burlington Town Hall Main Hearing Room

Communications Interoperability Committee

Date: 2nd Tuesday of Every Month
Time: 9:30am-12:00pm
Location: Essex County RECC (Middleton)

Regional Cache Committee

Date: Sept. 7th	Dec. 6th	March 7th	June 16th
Time: 10:00 AM	10:00 AM	10:00 AM	10:00 AM
Location: Beverly EM	Lexington DPW	Framingham DPW	Burlington Town Hall

ICS Working Group

Date: 2nd Thursday of Every Month
Time: 11:00am-12:00pm
Location: Burlington Town Hall Main Hearing Room

All agendas and open meeting notices for NERAC meetings are posted at www.nerac.us. For questions regarding any of these meetings, please contact NERAC's Program Manager, Tim Moore, at 617-933-0767 or tmoore@mapc.org.

Is your department active on social media?

Follow the official NERAC Facebook and Twitter accounts for up-to-date information on trainings, exercises, and resources.

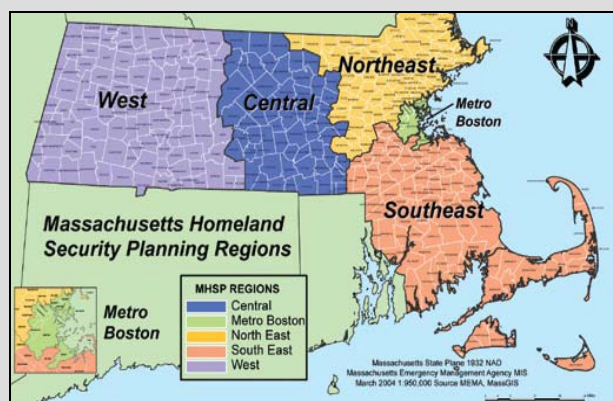
www.facebook.com/NERAC.HS/

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MASSACHUSETTS HOMELAND SECURITY PROGRAM

In 2004, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) designated 5 Homeland Security Planning Regions. EOPSS appointed multi-disciplinary and multi-jurisdictional Advisory Councils for the Northeast, Southeast, Central, and Western regions. These groups represent all relevant public safety disciplines, including law enforcement, fire service, emergency management, public health, hospitals, emergency medical services, public works, transportation, corrections, communications, and local government. The Metro Boston Region has a 9 member advisory council, with 1 representative from each jurisdiction in the region appointed by that jurisdiction's chief executive officer.



The Advisory Councils serve as the policy making and administrative bodies for the Homeland Security Regions as defined by the Massachusetts Homeland Security Strategy developed by EOPSS. The regions receive funding from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security through EOPSS.

MAPC acts as the fiduciary for the Northeast, Southeast, Central and Western Homeland Security Councils, and also provides planning, facilitation, administrative support, and project management services to these regions.

NERAC Smartphone App

NERAC has developed a smartphone/mobile device application available for use by all public safety stakeholders and first responders designed to put critical information about NERAC in your hand when it is needed most. The app consists of the following three plans:

About NERAC

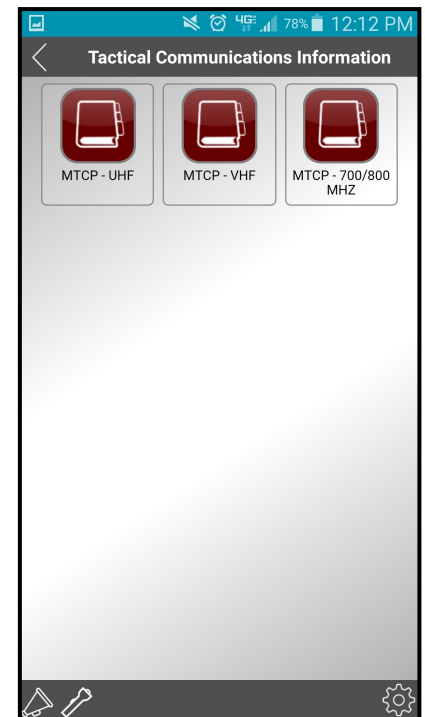
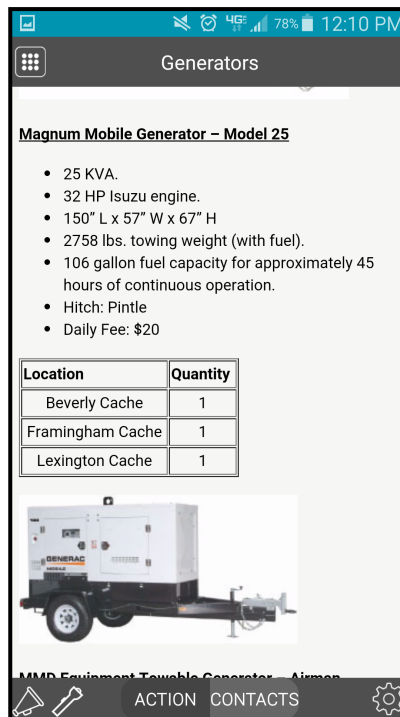
This plan contains general information about the NERAC region, the Council, the Council's projects and initiatives, and important contact information. It should be downloaded by anyone who has an interest in the Council's activities or a desire to become involved in the Council's work.

NERAC Regional Resources

This plan contains specific info on NERAC funded equipment that is available to communities in the region, including quantities, model numbers, capabilities, and contact numbers for access. It is designed for use by anyone who may be in a position to make a resource request on behalf of a municipality/agency.

Tactical Comm Info

This plan contains information on the Massachusetts Tactical Channel Plan (MTCP) for UHF, VHF, and 800 MHz radio systems. It should be used by anyone who may be programming radios or repeaters for local or regional interoperability activities.



For instructions and passwords needed to download this application, please visit www.nerac.us or contact NERAC's Program Manager, Tim Moore, at TMoore@mapc.org.

This document was prepared under a grant from FEMA's Grant Programs Directorate, U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Points of view or opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official positions or policies of FEMA's Grant Programs Directorate or the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.