
Graduate Certificate in Forensic and National Security Studies

Homeland Security and Emergency Management

Homeland Security and Emergency Management Glossary

A

Active Shooter: An individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area.

Adaptive Leadership: A leadership style that involves adjusting strategies and approaches to meet changing circumstances and challenges.

Advanced Persistent Threat (APT): A long-term cyber threat that targets specific organizations or individuals to steal information or disrupt operations.

Agency: A distinct part of a government responsible for specific functions or services.

Agroterrorism: The deliberate contamination of food, crops, or livestock to cause harm to a nation's economy or food supply.

Alert: A notification or warning about a potential threat or danger that requires immediate action.

All-Hazards Approach: A comprehensive strategy for addressing various types of emergencies and disasters, regardless of their cause.

Antiterrorism: Measures taken to prevent, deter, and respond to terrorist activities.

Asset: Anything of value that can be used to achieve objectives or goals.

Authentication: The process of verifying the identity of an individual or system before granting access to resources.

Authorization: Permission granted to access specific resources or perform certain actions.

Automated External Defibrillator (AED): A portable device used to deliver an electric shock to the heart to restore its normal rhythm during sudden cardiac arrest.

B

Biological Agent: A pathogen or toxin used as a weapon to cause harm to humans, animals, or plants.

Biological Threat: The potential for a biological agent to be used deliberately to cause harm.

Bioterrorism: The intentional release of biological agents to cause illness, fear, or death.

Border Security: Measures taken to control and protect a country's borders from illegal activities and

threats.

C

CERT (Community Emergency Response Team): A group of trained volunteers who assist emergency responders during disasters and emergencies.

Chemical Agent: A toxic substance used as a weapon to cause harm to humans, animals, or the environment.

Chemical Threat: The potential for a chemical agent to be used deliberately to cause harm.

Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosive (CBRNE): A category of threats that includes chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive hazards.

Command and Control: The exercise of authority and direction over resources in an emergency or crisis.

Common Operating Picture (COP): A shared understanding of the current situation among emergency management stakeholders.

Community Resilience: The ability of a community to withstand, adapt to, and recover from disasters and emergencies.

Contingency Planning: The process of preparing for potential emergencies and developing response strategies.

Counterterrorism: Actions taken to prevent, deter, and respond to terrorist activities.

Crisis Communication: The process of sharing information during emergencies to inform, protect, and guide the public.

Critical Infrastructure: Systems and assets vital to the functioning of a society, economy, or government.

Cybersecurity: Measures taken to protect computer systems, networks, and data from cyber threats.

D

Damage Assessment: The process of evaluating the impact of a disaster on people, property, and infrastructure.

Decontamination: The process of removing or neutralizing hazardous substances from people, equipment, or the environment.

Disaster: A sudden event that causes significant harm, disruption, or destruction, requiring a coordinated response.

Disaster Recovery: The process of restoring and rebuilding communities after a disaster to pre-disaster conditions.

Disaster Response: The immediate actions taken to save lives, protect property, and meet basic needs during and after a disaster.

Disaster Risk Reduction: The process of reducing the vulnerabilities and risks associated with disasters.

Domestic Terrorism: Acts of terrorism committed by individuals or groups within a country's borders.

E

Emergency: A situation that requires immediate action to protect life, property, or the environment.

Emergency Management: The discipline of preparing for, responding to, recovering from, and mitigating emergencies and disasters.

Emergency Operations Center (EOC): A facility where emergency management officials coordinate response and recovery efforts during disasters.

Emergency Planning: The process of developing strategies and procedures to respond to emergencies effectively.

Evacuation: The process of moving people from a dangerous area to a safe location during emergencies.

Exercise: A simulation or test of emergency response procedures to evaluate preparedness and identify areas for improvement.

Explosive Device: A device designed to cause an explosion and inflict damage or harm.

Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD): The process of safely locating, identifying, and disposing of explosive devices.

Extremism: Ideologies or beliefs that advocate violent or radical actions to achieve political, religious, or social goals.

F

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA): The U.S. government agency responsible for coordinating disaster response and recovery efforts.

First Responder: The first individuals to arrive at the scene of an emergency to provide assistance and support.

Forensic Science: The application of scientific techniques to investigate crimes and analyze evidence.

Forensic Pathology: The branch of forensic science that focuses on determining the cause of death through examination and analysis.

Forensic Psychology: The intersection of psychology and the legal system, focusing on understanding behavior and mental processes in legal contexts.

G

Global Terrorism: Acts of terrorism that transcend national borders and impact multiple countries.

Government Continuity: The ability of a government to maintain essential functions and services during and after emergencies.

H

Hazard: A source of potential harm, danger, or risk.

Homeland Security: The collective efforts to protect the United States from threats and hazards, including terrorism, natural disasters, and other emergencies.

Humanitarian Assistance: Aid and support provided to individuals and communities affected by disasters or emergencies.

I

Incident Command System (ICS): A standardized management system used to coordinate emergency response efforts.

Infrastructure Protection: Measures taken to safeguard critical infrastructure from threats and hazards.

Intelligence Fusion Center: A facility where information and intelligence are collected, analyzed, and disseminated to support homeland security efforts.

Interagency Cooperation: Collaboration and coordination among different government agencies to address common challenges and goals.

International Terrorism: Acts of terrorism that occur outside a country's borders and involve individuals or groups from multiple countries.

J

Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF): A multi-agency team that investigates and responds to terrorism-related threats and activities.

K

K9 Unit: A specialized team of law enforcement officers and trained dogs used for search and rescue, detection, and other tasks.

L

Law Enforcement: Agencies and officers responsible for enforcing laws, maintaining public order, and protecting communities.

M

Mass Casualty Incident (MCI): An emergency situation that results in a large number of casualties requiring immediate medical attention.

Medical Countermeasures: Treatments, vaccines, and other medical interventions used to protect and treat individuals exposed to biological, chemical, radiological, or nuclear threats.

Mitigation: Actions taken to reduce or eliminate the long-term risks and impacts of disasters.

N

National Incident Management System (NIMS): A standardized framework for managing emergencies and coordinating response efforts.

National Security: The protection of a nation's sovereignty, interests, and values from external and internal threats.

O

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA): The U.S. agency responsible for ensuring safe and healthy working conditions for employees.

Operational Security (OPSEC): Measures taken to protect sensitive information and operations from adversaries.

P

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Clothing and gear worn to protect individuals from hazards in the workplace or during emergencies.

Physical Security: Measures taken to protect people, property, and assets from physical threats and dangers.

Preparedness: The activities, plans, and resources put in place to effectively respond to emergencies and disasters.

Public Health Emergency: A situation that poses a threat to the health and safety of a community or population.

Q

Quarantine: The isolation of individuals or groups exposed to a contagious disease to prevent its spread.

R

Radicalization: The process by which individuals adopt extreme beliefs and ideologies that can lead to violent actions.

Recovery: The phase of emergency management that focuses on restoring and rebuilding communities after a disaster.

Resilience: The ability to withstand, adapt to, and recover from adversity, challenges, and disasters.

Response: The actions taken to address immediate threats, protect lives and property, and meet basic needs during emergencies.

Risk Assessment: The process of identifying, evaluating, and prioritizing potential hazards and vulnerabilities.

S

Security Clearance: Authorization granted to individuals to access classified information or restricted areas.

Shelter in Place: The practice of seeking immediate protection indoors during emergencies to stay safe from external threats.

Situational Awareness: The ability to perceive, understand, and anticipate events and risks in the environment.

Surveillance: The systematic monitoring of individuals, groups, or activities for security, intelligence, or investigative purposes.

T

Terrorism: Acts of violence or intimidation carried out to achieve political, religious, or ideological goals.

Threat Assessment: The process of evaluating and analyzing potential threats to identify risks and vulnerabilities.

U

Unified Command: A coordinated management structure where multiple agencies work together to respond to complex emergencies.

V

Vulnerability Assessment: The process of identifying weaknesses and susceptibilities that could be exploited by threats or hazards.

W

Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD): Chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear weapons capable of causing widespread harm and destruction.

X

Xenophobia: Prejudice, discrimination, or hostility towards individuals or groups perceived as foreign or different.

Y

Yellow Ribbon Program: A U.S. Department of Defense initiative that provides education benefits to military service members and veterans.

Z

Zero-Day Attack: A cyber attack that exploits a previously unknown vulnerability before a fix or patch is available.