

Federal Emergency Management Agency Rapid Response Information System

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Key Words: FEMA, Rapid Response Information System, RRIS, NBC, terrorism, chemical, biological, chem/bio, radiological, materials, nuclear, incident

Abstract: The FEMA Rapid Response Information System (RRIS) can be used as a reference guide, training aid and an overall planning and training resource for response to a chemical, biological and/or nuclear NBC terrorist incident. The RRIS is comprised of several databases, consisting of chemical and biological agents and radiological materials characteristics, first aid measures, Federal response capabilities, a list of commercially available NBC unique equipment, Help Line, Hotlines and other Federal information sources concerning potential weapons of mass destruction. Detailed information on the Federal government's surplus property program is also included.


Introduction


The Rapid Response Information System (RRIS) is a congressionally mandated program that tasked the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to develop and maintain an RRIS system. The legislation that created the RRIS was the Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 1997. With this legislation, Section 1417, required that an RRIS be developed for the area of terrorism/Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD).

The RRIS system was to be primarily a domestic training and preparedness tool in the area of terrorism/Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). Congress wanted FEMA to incorporate information on Federal Response Capabilities; Inventories on Excess Equipment; Chemical and Biological agent characteristics and munitions data in a database. The legislation also required that the RRIS was to be incorporated within the Federal Response Plan.



RRIS Executive Overview Briefing







**Public Law 104-201, Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1997,
Title XIV, Defense Against Weapons of Mass Destruction
*Section 1417, Rapid Response Information System***

Rapid Response Information System

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Overview: Section 1417



- **Inventory of rapid response equipment and assets.**
 - **Federal Response Plan (FRP) signatories.**
 - **Include inventory of excess equipment.**
- **FEMA generates a master inventory.**
- **Chemical and biological database.**
- **Incorporate RRIS guidance in the FRP.**
- **Provide access to inventory and database.**

Rapid Response Information System

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FEMA, after creation of an RRIS Federal Interagency Steering Group, went back to Congress, Senator Lugar's staff (he was one of the legislation's authors), and asked for additional clarification and guidance. The guidance was to provide information on Federal organizations that had a terrorism/WMD specific capability, initially, and information of a macro level rather than on a line item listing of equipment. Information on HAZMAT was not to be included as that was already in significant existence. Further, authorization was given to include radiological materials and to build on existing information and systems. Direct guidance was given to ensure that the RRIS system was reliable, protected, and available to the user.



Congressional Guidance



- **Guidance received from Senator Lugar's staff.**

- **Focus on federal response capabilities rather than a line item list of equipment.**
- **Do not include HAZMAT information.**
- **Include radiological materials in the CHEM/BIO agent database.**
- **Build on existing databases and systems.**
- **Build a protected and physically robust system to ensure availability to the user.**

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Rapid Response Information System

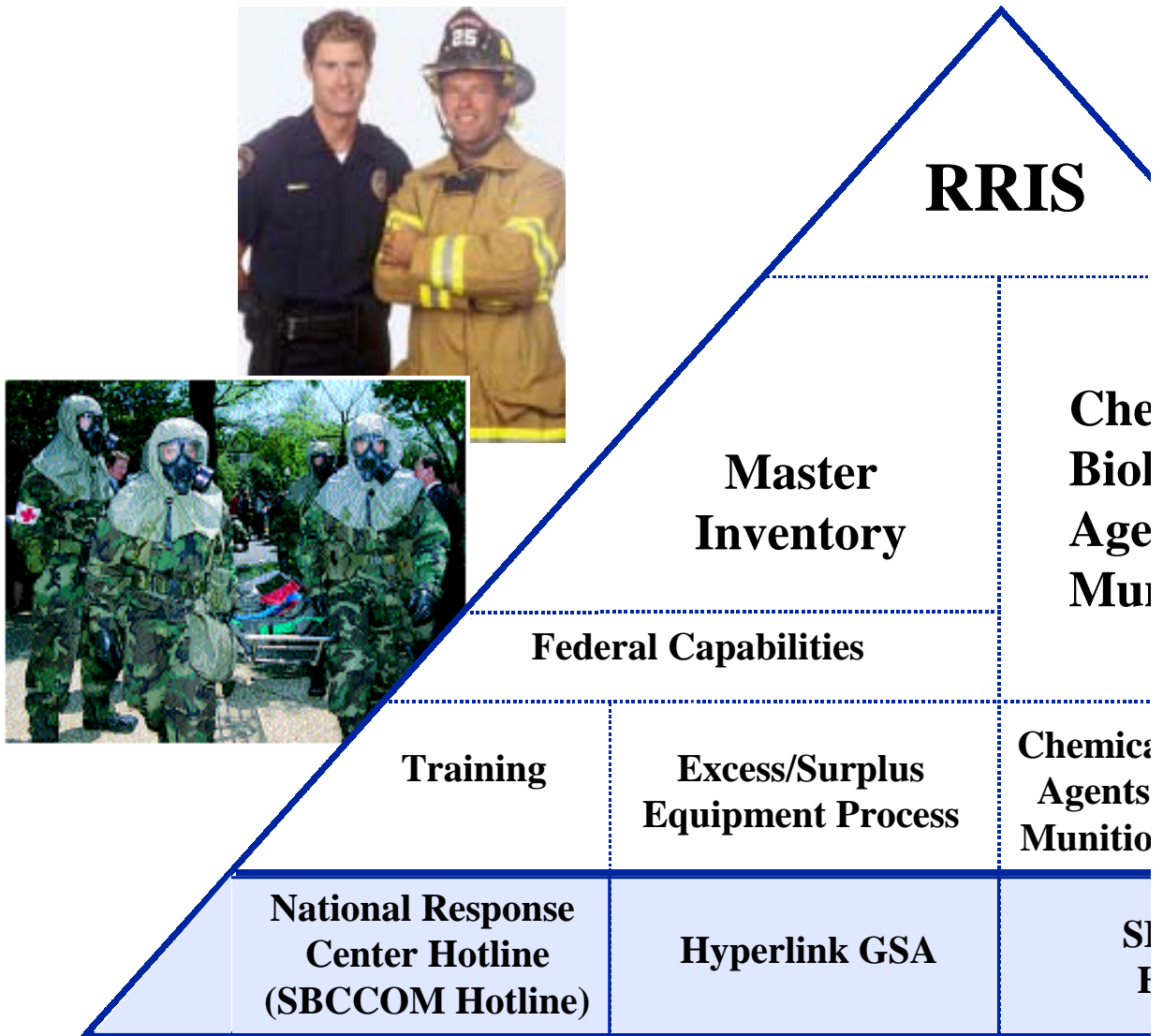
After receiving additional guidance from Congress, we (FEMA-Interagency Steering Group) elected to build upon several capabilities: SBCCOM/NRC (DOE) 24hr chemical/biological and radiological hotlines (crisis oriented) and their generally duty hour question/answer chemical/biological helpline. In addition we hyperlinked with GSA's Excess Surplus Equipment databases. Building upon this, the RRIS can be conceptually, at this time, be divided into two areas: On the left hand portion of the pyramid Federal Capabilities, Training, and Excess equipment; On the right hand side Chemical, Biological, and Radiological Agent Characteristics and Munitions Data. Predominantly, this is the initial operating capability that became operational on 31 December 1997 with the section on training being added in 1998. This is presently the current system capability that we are maintaining.

Access to the Rapid Response Information System (RRIS)


The RRIS is divided into two sites. Presently, the differences between the two versions are the information on the Intranet version includes CHEM/BIO/Radiological Agent Characteristics that includes treatment modalities, and Munitions data as well as Federal Capabilities data.




Concept & Design



In October of 1998, a modified CHEM/BIO and Radiological database was made available on the Internet. The Internet version does not include treatment modalities. The decision was made to remove treatment modalities due to the fact that such modalities were primarily developed by the DoD to provide care to healthy men and women of military age. As such, the use of these modalities on infants, elderly people, and people with health problems might be unacceptable. The RRIS Interagency Steering Group determined that having such information available on the Internet posed a potential problem that was unacceptable.



RRIS Format



- **Intranet**
 - Hotline/Helpline
 - Equipment
 - CHEM/BIO Agents
 - Radiological Data
 - Reference Library
 - Training
 - Federal Capabilities
 - CB Munitions

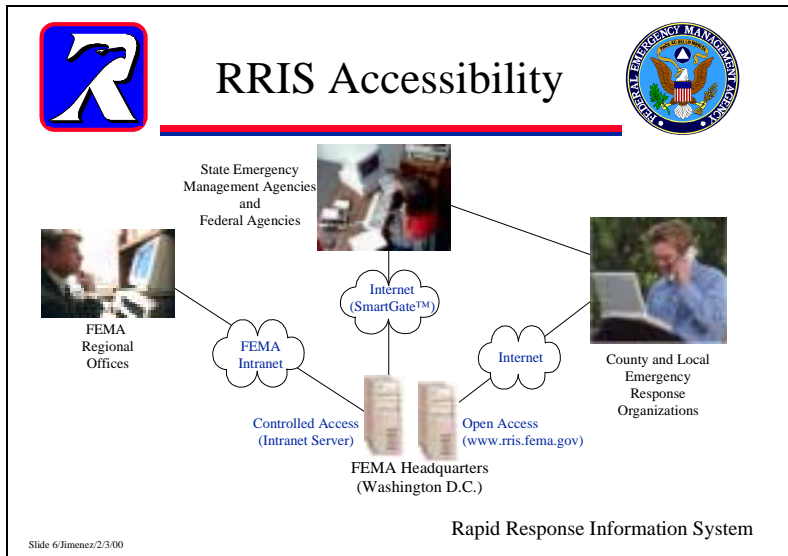
- **Internet**
 - Hotline/Helpline
 - Equipment
 - CHEM/BIO Agents (modified)
 - Radiological Data (modified)
 - Reference Library
 - Training

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The reason that there are two versions (one protected and one not) is that this was the first time all of this unclassified information had been compiled at one location. As such, while we did want to provide this information to allow federal, state and local officials to prepare for a terrorist/WMD incident the same opportunity for a nefarious group or individual to utilize this information against us required some minimal protection for selected information.

Access to the RRIS is through several ways: First, the Internet was designed primarily for first responders to utilize and is located on FEMA's home page. Second, the Intranet firewall version can be accessed through several methods.





Summary



- **RRIS program meets the letter and “spirit” of the law.**
- **User base has steady growth.**
- **RRIS Internet address is <http://www.rris.fema.gov>**
- **RRIS Intranet information for local governments is available through state emergency management RRIS account holders--two accounts per state.**

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