

**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS:
CORE COMPETENCIES FOR ALL PUBLIC HEALTH WORKERS**

A	Administrators	E H	Environmental Health
C D	Communicable Disease	L	Laboratory
CL	Clinical	PI	Public Info

CORE COMPETENCY 1. Describe the public health role in emergency response in a range of emergencies that might arise. (e.g., "This department provides surveillance, investigation and public information in disease outbreaks and collaborates with other agencies in biological, environmental, and weather emergencies.") **A**

CD CL EH L PI

COMMUNICATE public health information, roles, capacities and legal authority accurately to all emergency response partners (other public health agencies, other health agencies, and other government agencies) during planning, drills and actual emergencies. (This includes contributing to effective community-wide response through leadership, team building, negotiation and conflict resolution.) **A**

EVALUATE/REVIEW the public health laws of the jurisdiction on a regular schedule to assess that they are current and up-to-date in regards to bioterrorism (BT) events. **A**

MAINTAIN regular communication with partner professionals in other agencies involved in emergency response. (Includes contributing to effective community-wide response through leadership, team building, negotiation and conflict resolution.) **CL EH PI**

CORE COMPETENCY 2. Describe the chain of command in emergency response.

A CD CL EH L PI

DESCRIBE the chain of command and management system (incident command system) for emergency response in the jurisdiction. **A**

MAINTAIN regular communication with emergency response partners. (Includes maintaining a current directory of partners and identifying appropriate methods for contact in emergencies. **A CD**

MAINTAIN regular communication with partner professionals in other agencies involved in emergency response. (Includes contributing to effective community-wide response through leadership, team building, negotiation and conflict resolution.) **L**

MAINTAIN agreements with partners from within the jurisdiction and from other jurisdictions to allow the public health agency to secure assistance and other resources. **A**

CORE COMPETENCY 3. Identify and locate the agency emergency response plan (or the pertinent portion of the plan). A C D C L E H L P I

ENSURE that the agency (or agency unit) has a written, updated plan for major categories of emergencies that respects the culture of the community and provides for continuity of agency operations. **A**

IDENTIFY the needed components of a public health BT response plan that is integrated with overall emergency response plan for the agency. **A**

ENSURE that all BT plan components are developed by appropriate and knowledgeable staff by applying the following competencies: **A**

INTEGRATE the agency's BT response plan into the Incident Command or Unified Command System used by other responders (such as Fire, Police and EMS) in the jurisdiction. **A**

DEFINE modifications to the agency's internal command notification and coordination structure required for BT response. **A C D**

DESIGN BT-specific protocols for enhanced surveillance, including activating additional personnel (e.g., infection control practitioners, public health nurses, epidemiologists, and data entry clerks from other institutions, jurisdictions and/or agencies.) **A**

ESTABLISH emergency communications roles and responsibilities for BT response. **A C D**

ESTABLISH protocols for handling and distribution of the National Pharmaceutical Stockpile. **A C D**

ESTABLISH protocols to address public health surge capacity, including use of volunteers. **A C L**

IDENTIFY pharmaceutical, veterinary, or other resources required for consultation by the agency or jurisdiction during BT response. **A**

USE risk assessment of potential biological, chemical or radiological hazards in the community to determine the roles and responsibilities of those involved in public health BT response. **A**

GENERATE regulations that provide the authority to conduct risk assessments in BT events. **A**

GENERATE plans to conduct risk assessments in public health emergencies. **A C D**

SPECIFY safety measures to be taken by public health responders in a BT event, including use of personal protective equipment. **A C L**

DISSEMINATE notifiable disease information, reporting requirements and procedures to healthcare providers on a periodic basis. **A**

ENSURE that laboratories within the jurisdiction or agency have BT response plans: **A L**

IDENTIFY Level A laboratories serving the jurisdiction or agency. **A L**

IDENTIFY Level B and C laboratories serving the jurisdiction or agency. **L**

ENSURE Level A laboratories can conduct “rule-out” testing, specimen packaging and handling, and referral of suspected biological threat agents to a higher level laboratory. **A L**

ENSURE that Level B and Level C laboratories have the capacity and proficiency to identify and confirm biological threat agents and can refer specimens to higher level laboratories for further characterization. **L**

MAINTAIN contact and location information for Level B and Level C laboratories in the BT Laboratory Response Network serving the jurisdiction. **A L**

MAINTAIN written plans for 24/7 availability of specific staff and specialists required during a BT event. **A C D E H L P I**

IDENTIFY specific resources needed for response to critical biologic agents. (Category A, B, C.) **A**

GENERATE a public health bioterrorism (BT) response plan for

- a) epidemiology and surveillance **C D**
- b) environmental health **E H**
- c) laboratory **L**
- d) public information **P I**

that is integrated with the emergency response plan for the agency by applying the following competencies:

DESIGN BT-specific protocols for enhanced surveillance, including activating additional personnel (e.g., infection control practitioners, public health nurses, epidemiologists, and data entry clerks from other institutions, jurisdictions and/or agencies.) **A C D**

ESTABLISH written policies and procedures for rapid specimen identification and electronic reporting of results. **C D**

ESTABLISH data collection protocols that systematically monitor community health indicators (e.g., aberrations in utilization trends or syndromic surveillance.) **C D**

ENSURE a system is established and functioning that provides rapid rule-out testing, referral, identification, confirmation, and characterization of biological threat agents including rapid reporting of results, during a BT event. **C D**

CONDUCT workforce BT preparedness programs in

- a) epidemiology and surveillance. **C D**
- b) environmental health. **E H**
- c) laboratory, including hospital and laboratory staff **L**
- d) clinical **C L**

IDENTIFY specific resources needed for BT response to crucial biologic agents (Category A, B, C.) **C D E H L**

USE risk assessment of potential biological, chemical, or radiological hazards in the community to determine roles and responsibilities of those involved in public health BT response. **C D**

DEVELOP protocols for risk assessment of potential biological, chemical or radiological hazards in the community to determine roles and responsibilities of those involved in public health BT response. **E H**

DELINEATE protocols for patient decontamination and environmental remediation, including populations with special needs. **E H**

SPECIFY safety measures to be taken by public health responders in a BT event, including use of personal protective equipment. **E H L**

PREPARE public health personnel responding to a BT event regarding procedures of crime scene preservation, proper handling, transportation and storage of criminal evidence. **L**

ESTABLISH emergency communications roles and responsibilities for BT response. **C D P I**

MAINTAIN an up-to-date directory of materials and resources on bioterrorism. **P I**

MAINTAIN ongoing training to ensure specimen security, including transportation of specimens, limiting access to reference cultures, isolates, etc. **L**

ESTABLISH written Laboratory Response Network approved protocols. **L**

MAINTAIN agent identification protocols to be used in the laboratory. **L**

ESTABLISH written policies and procedures for rapid identification and electronic reporting of results. **L**

DEFINE laboratory communication plans and protocols for disseminating information to emergency response partners during a public health emergency. **L**

CONDUCT workforce BT preparedness programs **CL**

CORE COMPETENCY 4. Describe his/her functional role(s) in emergency response and demonstrate his/her role(s) in regular drills. **A CD CL EH L**

PI

IDENTIFY your functional role in the agency's BT response plan. **A CD EH L CL PI**

DEMONSTRATE readiness to apply professional skills to a range of emergency situations during regular drills. (e.g., access to, use and interpret surveillance data; access and use lab resources; access and use science-based investigation and risk assessment protocols; identify, select and use appropriate personal protective equipment.) **CD CL EH L**

DEMONSTRATE readiness to apply professional skills to a range of emergency situations during regular drills (such as access to, use and interpretation of data; access to and use of appropriate resources). **PI**

CORE COMPETENCY 5. Demonstrate correct use of all communication equipment used for emergency communication (phone, fax, radio, etc.)

CORE COMPETENCY 6. Describe communication role(s) in emergency response:

- within the agency using established communication systems
- with the media
- with the general public
- personal (with family, neighbors) **A CD CL EH L PI**

ESTABLISH a public health communication infrastructure that receives and transmits data and information for decision support during a BT event. **A**

ESTABLISH secure communication pathways for use in a BT event, including computer security policies and safeguards against data loss. **A**

ESTABLISH redundant communication mechanisms for immediate and reliable voice and secure data communication during a public health emergency. **A**

TEST protocols for BT-specific communication and agency interaction at regular intervals with BT response partner agencies. **A**

CORE COMPETENCY 6A. Describe communication role(s) in emergency response with the media and with the general public. **A**

ENSURE development and delivery of accurate event-specific, science-based risk communication messages to the public, to health care providers, to the media, and to the response community during a BT event. **A**

CORE COMPETENCY 6B. Describe personal communication role(s) in emergency response with family or neighbors. **A**

ENSURE that the agency (or agency unit) regularly practices all parts of emergency response. **A**

CONDUCT workforce BT preparedness programs. **A**

EVALUATE every emergency response drill to identify needed internal/external improvements. **A**

ENSURE that knowledge/skill gaps identified through emergency response planning, drills and evaluation are filled. **A**

DISSEMINATE notifiable disease information and reporting requirements and procedures to healthcare providers on a periodic basis. **C D**

CORE COMPETENCY 7. Identify limits to own knowledge/skill/authority and identify key system resources for referring matters that exceed these limits. **A C D**
C L E H L P I

CORE COMPETENCY 8. Recognize unusual events that might indicate an emergency and describe appropriate action (e.g., communicate clearly within the chain of command.) **A C D C L E H L P I**

IMPLEMENT the public health emergency response plan. **A**

IMPLEMENT your individual BT response functional role. **A C D C L**
E H L P I

PARTICIPATE in continuing education to maintain up-to-date knowledge in areas relevant to emergency response. (e.g., emerging infectious diseases, hazardous materials, diagnostic tests, etc.) **C D C L E H L P I**

CORE COMPETENCY 9. Apply creative problem solving and flexible thinking to unusual challenges within his/her functional responsibilities and evaluate effectiveness of all actions taken.

USE the agency BT Incident Command management structure. **A E H**
P I

ACTIVATE emergency public health and infection control measures specific to the BT event. **A**

ACTIVATE enhanced active surveillance protocols to track the scope of the exposure or outbreak. **A C D**

IDENTIFY persons potentially exposed to a specific BT agent in need of public health and/or medical intervention. **A C D**

ACTIVATE the laboratory BT response plan. **A**

ENSURE functioning of a system for rapid rule-out testing, referral, identification, confirmation, and characterization of biological threat agents, including rapid reporting of results, during a BT event. **A L**

PROVIDE public health support as needed for victims and responders within the jurisdiction's response. **A**

ACTIVATE a call-down roster using 24-hour contact information to reach BT response staff and consultants. **A**

COMMUNICATE the need for assistance during a BT event to appropriate resources. **A**

USE the agency's BT-specific public information plans, protocols and materials in a BT event. **A**

USE established communication systems for coordination among the response community during a BT event, including those for privileged information. **A C D E H**

ACTIVATE redundant communication mechanisms for immediate and reliable voice and secure data communication during a public health emergency including two-way emergency communications. **A**

USE event-specific information and scientific principles of risk communication to inform the public, the media, health care providers and the response community during a BT event. **A**

DESIGNATE a media spokesperson during a BT event. **A**

PERFORM your individual communication responsibilities during a BT event. **A**

APPLY appropriate science-based public health measures to ensure continued population protection appropriate to the biological threat involved. **A E H**

EVALUATE every emergency response to identify needed internal/external improvements. **A**

ENSURE that knowledge/skill gaps identified through emergency response evaluation are filled. **A**

APPLY algorithms that trigger further epidemiological investigation. **C D**

IDENTIFY the indicators, signs and symptoms for exposure to critical biologic agents (Category A, B, C) or to nuclear or chemical agents. **C D**

IDENTIFY the indicators, signs and symptoms for exposure to critical biological agent (Category A, B, C.) **C L**

REQUEST implementation of the public health emergency response plan. **C D**

COLLECT timely patient-based and health care utilization data on critical biological agents (Category A, B, C.) **C D C L**

DEMONSTRATE proper safety and personal protection equipment procedures. **C D**

USE established communication systems for coordination among the response community during a BT event, including those for privileged information. **C D C L L**

CONTRIBUTE to the development of accurate event-specific science-based risk communication to the public, the media, health care providers and response community in a BT event. **C D E H**

DEFINE algorithms that trigger further epidemiological investigation. **C D**

APPLY appropriate science-based public health measures to ensure continued population protection appropriate to the biological threat involved, including follow up of those exposed, vaccinated, or quarantined. **C D**

IDENTIFY persons potentially exposed to a specific BT agent in need of public health and/or medical intervention. **C D C L**

ESTABLISH and/or SUPERVISE and/or PERFORM effective assessment, stabilization, diagnosis, and treatment or referral of victims of specific types of BT incidents involving a variety of agents, as appropriate to your functional role.

CL

ESTABLISH a system of triage for victims of BT events using incident-specific triage guidelines. and/or **CL**

SUPERVISE the triage of victims of BT events using incident-specific triage guidelines. and/or **CL**

TRIAGE victims of BT events using incident-specific triage guideline. **CL**

ISOLATE and contain victims of a BT event as appropriate. **CL**

PROVIDE public health support as needed for victims and responders within the jurisdiction's response plan. **CL**

USE proper safety and personal protection procedures and equipment. **CL**

APPLY appropriate techniques for preserving possible evidence at an incident site or medical facility. **CL**

RECOGNIZE and TREAT the psychological impact of a BT event on victims and health care professionals, as appropriate to the event. **CL**

IMPLEMENT Laboratory Response Network approved protocols. **L**

FOLLOW written policies and plans in performing rule-out testing and referral in a BT event. **L**

COMMUNICATE decontamination and triage information on a specific BT event to partners in the response, as directed by PH Official or PH Incident Commander.

PI

COMMUNICATE the need for assistance during a BT event to appropriate resources as directed by PH Official or PH Incident Commander. **PI**

DESIGNATE, or serve as, a media spokesperson during a BT event, as directed by PH Official or PH Incident Commander. **PI**

USE established communication systems for coordination among the response community during a BT event, as directed by PH Official or PH Incident Commander. **PI**

COORDINATE the development and delivery of event-specific information based on scientific principles of risk communication to inform the public, the media, health care providers and members of the response community during a BT event. **PI**

INITIATE appropriate and coordinated communication with the public, the media, and health care providers and the response community during an incident. **PI**

MAINTAIN the delivery of appropriate and accurate information to the public, the media, health care providers and the response community as required by the specific event. **PI**

Adapted from : COMPETENCIES FOR ALL PUBLIC HEALTH WORKERS. Columbia University School of Nursing Center for Health Policy. November 2002