

TOPIC 17 – PHYSICAL SECURITY AND RESILIENCY

1. ISSUE: Physical Security and Resiliency for VA facilities.

2. BACKGROUND: There are several Statutes and Presidential Executive Orders mandating VA's response to national emergencies and implementation of programs to provide for the security and continued operation of VA's critical facilities. These include:

- Presidential Executive Order 12656, issued November 18, 1988, and Homeland Security Presidential Directive/HSPD-7, issued December 17, 2003, address policies requiring VA to protect its critical facilities;
- Public Law 107-188 enacted June 12, 2002, addresses VA's support of the Federal response to public health emergencies; and
- Public Law 107-287 enacted November 7, 2002, addresses VA's actions in response to chemical or biological risks as part of the Federal response to public health emergencies.

3. DISCUSSION:

a. Development of physical security strategies – VA, in collaboration with the National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS) assembled a task group of multi-disciplinary volunteer experts and a project team representing the healthcare, facility, security, and cemetery sectors to advise VA on major emergency and disaster threats and how best to evaluate its facilities vulnerabilities against these threats. Based on this input VA developed a methodology to assess the vulnerability of its critical facilities, provide mitigation solutions to protect VA patients, employees, and visitors, and maintain the operational capability of mission critical facilities during a natural or man-made extreme event. Utilizing this assessment methodology, VA assessed 140 of its critical facilities and identified a need to provide standards that would mitigate the systemic vulnerabilities identified.

b. Physical Security Strategies Report – VA developed, with the assistance of NIBS, Physical Security Strategies Report (January 8, 2006), that identified critical design elements to improve the capability of VA facilities to function and provide services in support of the Federal National Emergency Management Plan. The Report identified strategies for new and existing Mission Critical, and new and existing Life Safety Protected facilities. Both new and existing Mission Critical facilities are required to remain in operation after a major man-made or natural extreme event while Life Safety Protected facilities require only life safety protection for VA patients, staff, and visitors.



4. VA POLICY FOR NEW AND RENOVATION CONSTRUCTION: The Physical Security Strategies Report was approved by the Secretary on April 18, 2006. Projects are to be designed to comply with the Physical Security Design Manuals, which were developed to implement the strategies.

5. FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Please contact Don Myers, Director of Facilities Standards Service at (202) 632-5388, or Fred Lau at (202) 632-5262, or email til@va.gov

