

Private Sector Preparedness PS-Prep FAQs

What is Private Sector Preparedness (PS-Prep)?

In the “Implementing the Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007” (the 9/11 Act), Congress authorized the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to establish a **voluntary private sector preparedness accreditation and certification program**. This program, now known as “PS-Prep,” will assess whether a private sector entity complies with one or more voluntary preparedness standards adopted by DHS, through a system of accreditation and certification set up by DHS in close coordination with the private sector.

PS-Prep will raise the level of private sector preparedness through a number of means, including:

- (i) establishing a system for DHS to adopt private sector preparedness standards;
- (ii) encouraging creation of those standards;
- (iii) developing a method for a private sector entity to obtain a certification of conformity with a particular DHS-adopted private sector standard, and encouraging such certification; and
- (iv) making preparedness standards adopted by DHS more widely available.

Who is responsible for the PS-Prep program?

On August 31, 2007, the Secretary of Homeland Security named the Administrator of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as the designated officer.

Is the program voluntary?

Yes it is, but the DHS is encouraging all private entities to seriously consider seeking certification on appropriate standards adopted by the DHS.

What is the Federal Notice?

The Federal Notice (FEMA-2008-0017) discusses essential elements of the program, describes the consultation that has taken place and will take place with the private sector, and seeks additional recommendations in a number of areas, including the private sector preparedness standards that DHS should adopt, both initially and over time.

The Federal Notice can be found at <http://www.regulation.gov>. In the “Enter Keyword or ID” box, enter **FEMA-2008-0017**. Once the search results appear you can select “Notices” under “Document Type” to find the original document.

Which standards were added to the Federal Register?

FEMA published a second Federal Register Notice on October 16, 2009, announcing DHS’ intent to select three standards for adoption in the PS-Prep program. The three identified standards selected for adoption in PS-Prep at this time are:



1. National Fire Protection Association 1600:2007—Standard on Disaster/Emergency Management and Business Continuity Programs.
2. British Standard 25999-2:2007— Business Continuity Management.
3. ASIS SPC. 1-2009—Organizational Resilience: Security Preparedness, and Continuity Management Systems— Requirements with Guidance for Use.

Why does it say *intent* to select three standards?

The DHS have selected the three standards that it intends to adopt for the PS-Prep program; however, the DHS has given time for the public to comment on the adoption of the standard selections.

Who can submit comments?

Anyone may submit comments at any time, and comments will be considered by the DHS as they are received.

What is the deadline for comments?

The deadline for comments was initially set for 30 days after the publication of the Federal Notice, but it has been extended to January 15, 2010, so there is still time to comment and we encourage you to comment.

What do I comment on?

The DHS have asked for comments on 6 questions, which are below. They will however accept other comments that you may have.

1. Are there reasons that DHS should not adopt any one of the three standards listed above?
2. Are there any supporting guidance materials in addition to the three identified standards that are needed to help the private sector attain certification to one of the three standards?
3. What factors would a business consider in determining which DHS adopted standard(s) to pursue for certification under the PS-Prep Program?
4. What are the reasons for businesses to seek certification under these identified standards?
5. How would the fact that an organization is certified under the PS-Prep Program affect or otherwise influence your decision to do business with them?
6. In response to the December 2008 Federal Register notice, DHS received numerous comments promoting the use of a “maturity model process improvement approach” for business preparedness and continuity. The maturity model was described as an approach whereby certifications on certain standards could be incremental, i.e., grading on a scale of conformance, rather than a conformance/nonconformance basis. The notice noted that certifications will determine conformity or non-conformity with a particular standard. How could the use of a maturity model approach be applied to certification to any of these standards?

What happens next?

After the public comment period closes, the DHS will recommend preparedness standards to be added to the Federal Register. They have selected ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board (ANAB) to establish



and oversee the development and implementation of the accreditation and certification requirements for the Voluntary Private Sector Preparedness Accreditation and Certification Program.

What can I do?

As business continuity professional and with your company's approval, if appropriate, we encourage you to submit comments on the adoption of the standard selections (the three standards listed in "[Which standards were added to the Federal Register?](#)" above).

Where can I find further information?

<http://www.fema.gov/privatesector/preparedness/>

<http://www.regulation.gov/>

"Private-sector preparedness is not a luxury; it is a cost of doing business in the post-9/11 world. It is ignored at a tremendous potential cost in lives, money, and national security." - **National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States—the 9/11 Commission.**

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Bibliography

Department of Homeland Security. (2009). *Federal eRulemaking Portal*. Retrieved 2009, from regulations.gov: <http://www.regulations.gov>

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). (n.d.). Retrieved from Voluntary Private Sector Preparedness.