

Private Sector Preparedness PS-Prep

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.

Which standards were added to the Federal Register?

DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano announced the adoption of three accepted standards for the PS-Prep program on June 15, 2010. The three identified standards selected for adoption in PS-Prep at this time are:

1. National Fire Protection Association 1600 - 2007 and 2010 versions—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.

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.

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.

Can we submit comments on the PS-Prep Program?

Anyone may submit comments on the [regulation.gov](http://www.regulation.gov) website (see “[What is the Federal Notice?](#)” above) at any time, and comments will be considered by the DHS as they are received. The DHS indicated in their Federal Register Notice [FEMA-2008-0017-0225](#) that they are especially keen to receive comments from small businesses.

What happens next?

The DHS have selected The American National Standards Institute (ANSI)—American Society for Quality (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, the PS–Prep accrediting body. ANAB will finalize its process for accrediting third party certifying entities for the PS–Prep Program. Upon finalization, DHS will announce the initiation of the availability of the PS–Prep Program certification process on the [PS–Prep Program Web site](#). This is expected to take an additional two to four months (from mid June).

Which standard is right for my organization?

Whichever is easiest to implement that meets your business goals, objectives and operations.

- Take into account the size, complexity and location(s) of your business operations;
- How the standards are developed;
- The cost of implementation;
- Consider what may happen to these standards in the future.

What can I do?

Companies can begin to evaluate and implement one of the three standards in preparation for voluntary preparedness.

There is a great deal of work to be done before ANAB is ready to provide Accreditation to 3rd party organizations. These organizations will provide certification to the private sector, which means

certification will not be available until later this year or early next year. The only exception is BS 25999:2007-2, where certification has been available in the USA since the standards release in 2007.

Where can I find further information?

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

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

<http://www.bsiamerica.com/en-us/Assessment-and-Certification-services/Management-systems/Standards-and-schemes/BS-25999/>

“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.). *Voluntary Private Sector Preparedness Accreditation and Certification Program (PS-Prep) Resource Center*. Retrieved from Voluntary Private Sector Preparedness: <http://www.fema.gov/privatesector/preparedness/>