

# JOURNAL OF CIVIL DEFENSE

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## Farewell to Walter Murphey

*29 years of faithful service*



To the great sorrow of all Murphey died this past July Oregon. Walter was the TACDA for many years Managing Editor for the from 1968 until 1997. He for programs to improve against both manmade and many inspiring, helpful of Civil Defense issues, Civil Defense (CD)

CD programs in many other countries. Among his many accomplishments for Civil Defense was to provide vital support to the National Civil Defense/Emergency Management Monument, which now resides at the National Emergency Training Center in Emmitsburg, Maryland (near Gettysburg) and that acts as a memorial to all who have served the cause of protecting our nation against disasters, terrorism, and war. While Walter was an extremely powerful force within this nation's CD movement, he never sought the limelight, but rather worked hard so that Civil Defense leaders throughout the country could be heard, whether through the Journal or through presentations at the many conferences that Walter and his staff organized. His enthusiasm for advocacy never waned, as Walter continued to provide helpful counsel and suggestions until his health no longer allowed him to do so. On a personal side, his kindness and encouragement to the TACDA staff and board members was deeply appreciated, as was his unusual dedication to the mission of our association. No one knows how many people may owe his or her life to the persevering advocacy of this dear man. We will greatly miss you, Walter.

who knew him, Walter 12th at his home in Executive Director for and served as the Journal of Civil Defense was a passionate advocate our nation's civil defense natural disasters. He wrote articles on a broad range related not only to the US programs, but also about

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# America Better Protected Than Ever

*By Sgt. 1st Class Doug Sample  
American Forces Press Service*

**WASHINGTON, July 29, 2003** — While there are no guarantees that America can prevent another terrorist attack on U.S. soil, Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge said the "American people are more secure and better prepared today than ever before."

"I can say that because we are certainly more aware of the threat of terrorism and we are certainly more vigilant about confronting it," he said.

Ridge's remarks were made during the Homeland Security Department Conference held July 28 in Arlington, VA. He also announced measures to share information among government agencies and a new system to keep track of visitors entering the United States illegally.

He said the president's initiative to create the Terrorist Threat Integration Center will give analysts access to sensitive information generated by agencies all across the government. This will "assure that critical intelligence will be shared with the appropriate individuals at both the state and local level," Ridge noted.

He said this would involve a communication system among multilayered government tiers down to local levels and across the law enforcement community and the private sector. "Again, it will require teamwork. It will require partnership. It will require communication," he emphasized.

In addition, Ridge said his department is increasing the number of inspectors and Border Patrol agents, and equipping agents with state-of-the-art technology.

He said the department is in the process of implementing the U.S. Visitor and Immigrant Status Indication Technology system.

Ridge said the system, called US VISIT, will be under way at selected locations by the end of the year. It is designed to make entering the U.S. easier for legitimate tourists, students and business travelers, while making it more difficult, by

implementing biometrically authenticated documents, to enter the U.S. illegally.

"This is essentially a virtual border that will use biometrics to confirm the identity and status of all travelers both to and from the United States. We're obliged by the end of this year to be able to confirm the identity of individuals who come into this country using our seaports or airports," he said.

Visitors coming into the U.S. as of Jan. 1, 2004 will have to submit fingerprints that will allow the department to monitor who's in the country, he said.

"Then we have a basis of information to make sure that once their visa has expired or once their authorized time within the country has expired, then they leave," he explained. "And then we'll have a database of those who have complied with the law and those who haven't, and then we can devote the resources to go out and apprehend those who haven't."

Ridge pointed out that in the first six months of the department's existence, it has made great progress to reach a high standard of readiness and protection.

"We moved rapidly to map and protect our critical infrastructure, such as power plants and financial systems, secure our borders from terrorists and suspicious cargo, and prevent and prepare for attacks involving weapons of mass destruction," he said.

"Through our 'Ready' campaign, we have also empowered individual citizens and families in their own protection. Every single day we collect more intelligence, share more information, inspect more baggage and passengers and containers, guard more territory and equip and train more first responders," he added.

Although he emphasized the work that the Homeland Security Department is doing to prepare and plan against terrorist acts is important, he added that "the role of localities in prevention is absolutely critical as well."

"We depend on citizens to be vigilant. We depend on state and local governments to assess critical infrastructure vulnerabilities and work with us to address them. We depend on businesses to take the necessary steps to protect their facilities. And we depend on thousands of trained personnel to work with cities across the country to secure our ports, our borders and our transportation systems."

Ridge said that DHS has developed "vital security partnerships" to assist localities with those obligations and that his department will share information and resources "however and wherever we can."

Ridge said that DHS has allocated about \$4 billion for equipment, training and other resources for first responders such as police, fire and emergency services personnel at the state and local areas.

The money will also provide grants for mass transit, port security and emergency operations. He said that an additional \$3.5 billion will be made available later this year.

"So, by the end of this year, there will be about \$7.5 billion available to our partners in the state and local government," he said.

## **Cities Ready Sirens as Terror Warnings**

*By Tim Talley, The Associated Press*

**OKLAHOMA CITY** - Cold War-era sirens may be revived as terrorism warnings. Cities including Oklahoma City, Chicago and Dallas have upgraded their outdoor warning systems with a type of siren that can carry voice announcements - an idea that officials say took on added importance in the post-Sept. 11 world.

Sirens have long been used for storm disasters, but now the Federal Emergency Management Agency is studying whether they can warn people of biological, chemical or nuclear attack.

"You have all kinds of new systems," said Timothy Putprush, a telecommunications specialist with FEMA. "You originate a message. You need to get it out to the population."

Thousands of sirens were built across the country during the Cold War to warn citizens in case of nuclear attack, but the federal government stopped the program and the sirens fell silent in many of the nation's largest cities. Other cities put them to use to warn of tornadoes.

But terrorism warnings emerged as a new use for the sirens after Sept. 11. The federal government is currently updating the nation's civil preparedness guide to discuss improved ways of notifying the public of emergencies, and that includes the use of sirens.

In Oklahoma City, taxpayers agreed to spend \$4.5 million several years ago to upgrade its Cold War-era warning system with 181 new sirens covering a 622-square-mile area in the city.

The sirens, together with news reports and special radios that emit a loud alarm in times of weather emergencies, helped prevent loss of life when tornadoes raked the Oklahoma City area on May 8 and 9. More than 300 homes were destroyed but only one person was killed, an elderly man who fell and hit his head while taking shelter.

The sirens can be particularly useful to people who are not listening to the radio or watching television.

"If you've got a weather radio in your house, it doesn't do much for you when you're at the ballpark," said Kerry Wagnon, director of public safety capital projects in Oklahoma City.

Wagnon also said the sirens could be used in the event of a terrorist attack like the one that killed 168 people in 1995.

Radio and television news reports are the warning method of choice in many large cities, where old civil defense sirens have fallen into disrepair.

"When the money dried up, the ability to maintain them, based on a perception of the threat, went away," said Bob Canfield, assistant general manager of the Los Angeles Emergency Preparedness Department.

Sirens would not be of much use in Los Angeles because the sprawling urban area does not face the kinds of natural disasters for which they are most useful, he said.

"They're no good for earthquakes, and tornadoes are not our thing," Canfield said.

Jarrold Bernstein, a spokesman in New York City's Office of Emergency Preparedness, says battery-operated radios make more sense than wailing sirens in his densely populated urban area of more than 8 million people.

"We just don't think it's a practical system for New York City," he said.

While not dismissing sirens, officials in Washington are looking at other options including electronic text messaging and a reverse 911 system that would telephone citizens in an emergency, said Jo'Ellen Countee of the District of Columbia Emergency Management Agency.

"A lot of people want sirens - people who are old enough to remember sirens," Countee said.

Electronic messages might work for people with a cell phone, but Putprush said visitors at the district's many monuments or on the National Mall would need an outdoor warning.

"There are thousands and thousands of tourists there at any time of day," he said. "That would be a great application for it."

## **Bioterror Self-Triage Hopes to Avert Panic**

*By Avram Goldstein*

Bioterrorism experts are developing a do-it-yourself triage system in an attempt to prevent panicky crowds from overwhelming Washington area hospital emergency rooms during an epidemic or terror attack.

The idea is to get the public to use a sophisticated electronic questionnaire that would get an instant medical risk assessment and to help persuade those who seem not to be at risk to stay away and give medical professionals time to focus on patients who are.

After the computer leads someone through the questions, either online or over the telephone, the patient would be advised according to what the symptoms seem to be. The options the system might offer include: stay home in voluntary quarantine, go to a designated site for follow-up care, move to an isolation facility or just relax.

The system could be updated with localized information about the hazard and the nearest appropriate medical help, said one of its developers, Georgetown University biodefense coordinator

Michael D. McDonald. Programmed correctly, it could be used to respond to severe acute respiratory syndrome, smallpox, nerve agents, radiological hazards and unforeseen diseases or emergencies.

McDonald and Harvard psychiatrist Stephen E. Locke are coordinating the project. They have secured no formal funding commitments, but Georgetown officials are conducting meetings that include discussions of the concept with public health officials.

Proponents say the electronic assessments would ease pressure on hospitals while protecting the so-called "worried well" from gathering where they would be in close quarters with people who actually had been exposed to pathogens or chemical agents.

Some experts, though, question whether the screening tool might give bad advice, and they said they doubt many people would seek or accept electronic advice when they are fearful. Others said they worry the system might inadvertently discourage some sick people from seeking help that they need.

Most local public health officials and bioterrorism experts are not familiar with the program, but several said anything that might limit a post-event surge of people to hospitals would be welcome. "If it doesn't cost much and keeps anybody away from the ER, it's worthwhile," said Arlington County Health Director Susan Allan.

"Many patients we saw in our emergency room during the anthrax attacks would not have needed to come in for care if they could have had simple questions answered," said the director of a large emergency room who spoke on the condition of anonymity. "You could lop 20 or 30 percent off the top."

"It's a very exciting and potentially valuable tool," said Michael S.A. Richardson, the D.C. Health Department's chief medical officer. "It gives the public a way to access important information in a crisis so they can act appropriately . . . The physical facilities are not going to be able always to handle large amounts of people efficiently. Large groups of people should not be out on the streets."

Richardson wants the District to anchor the Washington region testing of the software, and triage system leaders at Georgetown and Harvard say they plan to make the national capital area a "test bed" for the project, along with Pittsburgh and Massachusetts. Another group is working on a similar concept in Los Angeles, they said.

But McDonald and Locke said that some experts have doubts. "Somebody is scared to death, and you suggest going to the computer and starting to answer questions," said Ken Alibek, a former Soviet bioweapons expert who defected and now is a biodefense specialist at George Mason University. "Some people would do it, but the great majority wouldn't be able to do it. The major engine is fear."

Concern about the "surge capacity" of health care facilities has sharpened since the anthrax attacks of 2001, when about 20,000 people in the region were given preventive antibiotics, mostly by public health agencies.

Thousands of others went to doctors and emergency rooms complaining of symptoms. Few turned out to be at risk of contracting anthrax. The rest,

McDonald said, were somatizing -- experiencing physical symptoms caused solely by psychological distress. Experts say physical ailments rooted in the mind account for up to half of office visits to primary care doctors.

"Even in normal times, somatization is the leading reason why people seek care from a doctor," said Locke, who also is president of the American Psychosomatics Society. "People go to doctors with physical complaints in which careful evaluation fails to reveal an organic cause from one-third to one-half of the time."

In a major outbreak, stress-related symptoms could run wild, causing huge lines and flooding facilities with people who do not need to be there, McDonald and Locke say.

"Conservatively, the somatizers will likely outnumber those actually exposed by 5 to 10 times," according to a report on the screening tool by Harvard researchers supervised by Locke. "However, it is conceivable that this number may in fact be much larger."

Georges C. Benjamin, executive director of the American Public Health Association and former Maryland health secretary, said he knows telephone triage protocols can be effective because he used to write them for private health plans.

"You absolutely can sort people into high-risk and low-risk groups," he said. "The research needs to be done to figure out what you do with people who are giving you exactly the symptoms they read about or saw on television . . . And you have to make sure that you identify people who are both somatizing and [also] sick."

SARS, smallpox, chemical agents, radiological bombs or an entirely new "engineered agent" -- a combination of deadly pathogens -- could trigger a far more intense public response than anthrax did, according to experts working on the triage project.

"When you put a lot of people under stress, you suddenly have a huge surge in demand of people needing help determining whether their symptoms are due to stress or exposure," Locke said.

Models of the questionnaire ask for personal and contact information, take the patient through descriptions of symptoms, inquire whether the patient often somatizes and ask about the patient's attitudes about health care and life.

Dan Hanfling, director of emergency management and disaster medicine for Inova Health System, said of the anthrax scare that brought large numbers of the uninfected people to emergency rooms, "That opens a window of experience on what we are likely to face in the next event." He added, "We

need to preserve the ability to deliver acute health care. This will have hiccups, but I think it's a great step in the right direction."

Some say they think the system needs extensive testing. "I think the concept would be fine, but I see all kinds of possible problems," said Philip S. Brachman, an Emory University epidemiology professor who spent 32 years at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. "It has to be field-tested very carefully in a random way with good controls by an independent group."

## Letter To Members

Dear TACDA Member,

On Monday, July 29, 2003 TACDA launched its premier issue of Civil Defense and Homeland Security Weekly, a new email-based public service aimed to provide readers with the tools and resources they need to stay informed and keep abreast of current civil defense and homeland security news and developments.

Civil Defense & Homeland Security Weekly is the weekly voice of the American Civil Defense Association. Published in electronic form, CDHLSW covers the broad, fluid topics of homeland defense, emergency mgmt., disaster preparedness and recovery, critical infrastructure protection, and raising the public's overall level of situational awareness and readiness.

Each issue fills the need for a concise weekly summary of important civil defense and homeland security news, combined with a selection of the latest government reports, analysis, official guidance, free online courses, and other useful resources.

As an existing TACDA member, if we have an email address on file for you, we took the liberty of adding you to this mailing list. This service is free to everyone, whether or not they choose to support TACDA financially. We look at this as a step in the

right direction toward preparing all American citizens for the threats that we face as a country and providing the necessary informational tools and resources that we need to help us better educate ourselves on how to prepare for, react and respond to any type of disaster or emergency situation that may occur on American soil.

If you did not receive your first issue of CDHLSW via email, we may not have a valid email address on file for you. We encourage you to take advantage of this free service and register today online to receive this weekly resource. You can subscribe at [www.tacda.org/cdhls/](http://www.tacda.org/cdhls/).

Be sure to share this resource with your friends, family and colleagues.

If you have any suggestions on how to improve CDHLSW or any other service offered by TACDA, we would love to hear from you. Your comments and feedback are crucial elements in our efforts to provide you with the best services possible.

We are looking forward to hearing from you very soon and appreciate your continued support.

Kindest Regards,  
Kathy Eiland  
Executive Director, TACDA