

U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine

Emergency Response Plan Mapping: Securing the Army's Water Systems



Small-Scale View of Emergency Response Plan (ERP) Map



Large-Scale View of Emergency Response Plan (ERP) Map

The U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine (USACHPPM) provides worldwide scientific expertise and services in preventive medicine, environmental health, epidemiology and disease surveillance, and toxicology. USACHPPM supports readiness by keeping soldiers fit to fight, while also promoting wellness among their families and the federal civilian workforce.

USACHPPM has developed comprehensive Emergency Response Plans (ERPs) for U.S. Army installations, primarily in response to the Bioterrorism Act of 2002. This act requires water utilities to conduct Vulnerability Assessments (VAs) of their water systems and create or update their ERPs based on the VA findings. In addition to the VAs, the ERP also aims to prepare an installation for an emergency. It will guide first responders by identifying roles and responsibilities of applicable installation organizations. An ERP also provides valuable information such as identifying critical water customers, offering an overview of the water system, and providing alternate water sources.

One significant component of the ERP is a series of maps. For each installation, maps of the entire water distribution network and individual detailed map sheets at 1:10,000 scale are created by the USACHPPM GIS Branch using ArcGIS 9 by ESRI. In addition to standard basemap data, such as physical and human features, these maps highlight water system assets and a vital component: the locations of critical customers. The geospatial data presented in the ERP is essential to an efficient response in the event of a biohazardous emergency.

As part of the development of ERPs, the USACHPPM Water Supply Management Program conducts tabletop exercises that allow installation staff to become familiar with the new plan. Participants are provided copies of their ERPs that include the series of maps specific to the installation. These exercises have proven to be a very valuable resource to ensure the security of an installation's infrastructure, as evidenced by postexercise input from participating installations.

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