



NATIONAL POLICY FOR HOMELAND SECURITY

Last Reviewed: 28 April 2016

As with any Air Force mission, the Service role in [homeland operations](#) is directed and guided by national policy. The National Security Strategy (NSS) provides the overarching national guidance for providing a safe and secure environment for the American people. It lists national level priorities in pursuit of US security objectives. Two major documents further detail the Department of Defense (DOD) role in homeland operations: the [National Response Framework](#) (NRF) and the [National Strategy for Homeland Security](#) (NSHS).

NATIONAL RESPONSE FRAMEWORK

The NRF is a guide to how the Nation conducts all-hazards response. It is built upon scalable, flexible, and adaptable coordinating structures to align key roles and responsibilities across the Nation. It describes specific authorities and best practices for managing incidents that range from the serious but purely local, to large-scale terrorist attacks or catastrophic natural disasters.

The term “response” as used in the NRF includes immediate actions to save lives, protect property and the environment, and meet basic human needs. Response also includes the execution of emergency plans and actions to support short-term recovery. The NRF is always in effect, and elements can be implemented as needed on a flexible, scalable basis to improve response.

It is written especially for government executives, private sector and nongovernmental organization leaders, and emergency management practitioners. First, it is addressed to senior elected and appointed leaders, such as federal department or agency heads, state governors, mayors, tribal leaders, and city or county officials—those who have a responsibility to provide for effective response. For the nation to be prepared for any and all hazards, its leaders should have a baseline familiarity with the concepts and mechanics of the NRF.

The NRF defines the principles, roles, and structures that organize how the US responds as a nation. The NRF:

- ✦ Describes how communities, tribes, states, the federal government, private sectors, and nongovernmental partners work together to coordinate national response.

- ★ Describes specific authorities and best practices for managing incidents.
- ★ Builds upon the national incident management system, which provides a consistent template for managing incidents.

Dealing with the immediate consequences of a catastrophic event is a local responsibility. State or federal involvement is usually contingent on a request for support from the local authorities. Terrorist events, however, such as 9/11 or those preceded by substantial threat warning, may involve the overlapping authorities of local, state, and federal agencies. Each of these agencies has a role in data collection, analysis, threat response, and response and recovery. While every attempt is made to maintain local and state control of domestic incidents, attacks and disasters deemed of significance to national security may be managed under federal jurisdiction.

This federal involvement has the potential for conflict, with local authorities in the lead for managing the consequences of an event, while federal authorities lead the effort when national security is at stake. The numerous local, state, and federal agencies that may participate in homeland operations, each with a differing chain of command, can complicate response efforts. By establishing an integrated response capability to support these efforts, the DOD and the Air Force are capable of supporting any mission they may be called upon to perform.

NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR HOMELAND SECURITY

The NSHS is designed to mobilize and organize the nation to secure the US homeland from terrorist attacks. The strategic objectives of homeland security and how the Air Force supports them are to:

- ★ **Prevent and disrupt terrorist attacks.** To prevent attacks against the US, Air Force forces deter, detect, predict, plan for, and preempt threats to the homeland. Air Force operations can prevent attack through early warning and military operations overseas.
- ★ **Protect the American people, critical infrastructure, and key resources.** Air Force operations can reduce America's vulnerability to terrorist attacks by air patrols over specific locations or resources. Examples include military support to law enforcement during special events or national special security events such as the Olympics, the Super Bowl, and Presidential movements. In addition, the Air Force places special emphasis on securing and safeguarding stockpiles of nuclear and conventional weapons and associated facilities, whether operationally deployed, in storage, in transit, or awaiting disposal.
- ★ **Respond to and recover from incidents that do occur.** Through defense support of civil authorities, Air Force forces respond with such resources as rapidly deployable medical capabilities and civil engineer expertise as key contributors. The

Air Force has the ability to provide logistics at all levels of operation, from bare base to main operating base support.

- ✦ **Continue to strengthen the foundation to ensure long-term success.** Joint planning and mutual training exercises with civil authorities well before an incident occurs reduce America's vulnerability and provide force protection for Air Force forces.
-