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## **ASIS to help establish voluntary private sector preparedness program**

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A new federal law calling for the creation of a voluntary private sector preparedness standards program has resulted in the collaboration between ASIS International, Disaster Recovery Institute International, National Fire Protection Association, and Risk and Insurance Management Society Inc., to prepare a report in response to the homeland security legislation.

The interdisciplinary team from ASIS, DRII, NFPA and RIMS combined their expertise and perspectives to develop a mechanism to address verifiable private sector preparedness called for in the new homeland security law "Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007." The interdisciplinary team's conclusions and recommendation have been released in a report titled "Framework for Voluntary Preparedness."

The interdisciplinary team brought together professional associations that view preparedness from security management, business continuity management, emergency management and enterprise risk management perspectives. The "Framework for Voluntary Preparedness" highlights the commonality of the different perspectives and approaches.

"In the report, the interdisciplinary team recommended that in order for the private sector to adequately and voluntarily establish preparedness programs, it should be given the flexibility to choose from various standards, guidelines and best practices that best meet their needs for preparedness," said Mark Geraci, CPP, chairman of the ASIS International Commission on Standards and Guidelines.

"The report identifies core common elements of a preparedness program and provides a crosswalk of existing standards, guidelines and best practices. Preparedness and resilience, while important to businesses and organizations, must be done in a cost-effective manner that is in sync with the organization's culture and business model," Geraci said.

Small businesses in particular need to tailor their preparedness and resilience strategies to their financial realities. The report finds that depending on the structure of businesses and organizations in the private sector, many are already pursuing elements or complete programs in preparedness based on the viewpoint of one or more of these disciplines. These organizations should be afforded the flexibility to build on their existing programs.

Assuring organizational resilience in the private sector requires the appropriate management of the risks related to intentional, unintentional and naturally caused disruptions which organizations of all sizes and types face. The report emphasizes that one size does not fit all and it is important that the private sector have appropriate choices that fit their respective business needs. It also notes that a major barrier to preparedness and resilience management is a lack of knowledge and tools, particularly in the case of small businesses.

The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation generously supported the effort to identify issues critical to program

success and business viability.

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