



Homeland  
Security

# Fact Sheet

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## **VOLUNTARY PRIVATE SECTOR PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM**

### **Purpose**

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) established a voluntary private sector accreditation and certification preparedness program (PS-Prep). 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. The program is completely voluntary; no private sector entity will be required by DHS to comply with any standard adopted under the program. However, DHS encourages all private sector entities to seriously consider seeking certification on an appropriate standard adopted by DHS, once those standards become available. We anticipate that initial standards will be adopted approximately thirty days after the Federal Register notice is published. DHS also encourages private sector entities to develop preparedness standards that, if appropriate, may be adopted by DHS and become part of PS-Prep.

The purpose of PS-Prep is to widely encourage private sector preparedness. The program does so by providing a mechanism for a private sector entity—a company, facility, not-for-profit corporation, hospital, stadium, university, etc.—to receive a certification from an accredited third party that it is in compliance with a private sector preparedness standard adopted by DHS. Once standards are adopted by DHS, and third parties are accredited by the selected entity to provide certifications on those standards, private sector entities may arrange with those certifiers to gain certification on a DHS-adopted standard. DHS is committed to a collaborative process that will fully engage the private sector through a range of partnerships, public forums, comments and other outreach.

### **Management and Certification Process**

DHS has selected an accreditation body, ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board (ANAB) to develop and oversee the certification process, manage the accreditation, and accredit qualified third parties to carry out the certification in accordance with the accepted procedures of the program.

The program is to be almost entirely driven by the private sector. Though DHS will adopt appropriate private sector standards and manage the accreditation process through ANAB, the standards that are adopted are the product of private sector work—whether through voluntary consensus standards organizations, sector coordinating councils, or other private sector entities or groups. PS-Prep is a tool for both DHS and the private sector to give greater visibility—through a certification—to a private sector entity’s compliance with a standard, and to more widely proliferate the use of standards in the private sector.

### **Voluntary Preparedness Standards**

PS-Prep will consider several types of voluntary private sector preparedness standards. First, DHS will consider adopting standards that comprehensively deal with preparedness and that could be applied to the majority of private sector entities. DHS will likely adopt such standards early, to provide the greatest chance for rapid widespread adoption. Such standards may contain modifications to take into account particular unique aspects of various industries or sectors, as well as currently-existing regulatory regimes that apply to those industries or sectors. Second, and importantly, PS-Prep will also consider more limited standards, such as those that apply to a particular industry or a subset of an industry, or those that cover a more circumscribed aspect of preparedness.

The program will consider several types of voluntary preparedness standards, including consensus standards and standards that are likely to apply to a particular industry, small business or sector of the economy. DHS is considering several lower-cost options aside from third-party certification for small businesses. One such option is having the small business affirm that it has complied with one or more DHS-adopted standards. Another option is a second-party attestation, which would involve another entity—perhaps one that uses the small business in its supply chain—affirming that the small business conforms with one or more DHS-adopted standards.

### **How to Get Involved**

Private sector entities can get involved in the program by submitting comments, suggesting private sector standards to be adopted by DHS and participating in one of the public forums on the topic. DHS will hold public meetings in Washington, D.C. to provide a forum for comments. Details will be posted at <http://www.fema.gov/privatesectorpreparedness>.

DHS has posted the Federal Register notice at <http://www.regulations.gov>. Comments may be submitted to <http://www.regulations.gov> or [FEMA-POLICY@dhs.gov](mailto:FEMA-POLICY@dhs.gov). (Identify Docket ID FEMA-2008-0017). For further information please contact Mr. Don Grant, Incident Management Systems Director, National Preparedness Directorate, FEMA, 500 C Street S.W., Washington, D.C. 20472. Phone: (202) 646-8243 or e-mail: [Donald.Grant@dhs.gov](mailto:Donald.Grant@dhs.gov).