



**Examine the ability of public and private sector partners to mitigate risks to infrastructure systems; leverage mutual assistance and private sector resources; and prioritize, stabilize, and restore critical lifelines such as communications, energy, hazardous waste management, healthcare, food and water, safety and security, and transportation.**

The National Exercise Program (NEP) is a two-year cycle of selected exercises across the nation that examines and validates capabilities in all preparedness mission areas. The 2019-2020 NEP cycle is guided by nine Principals’ Strategic Priorities, established by the National Security Council and informed by national preparedness data.

**What are Stabilization and Restoration of Critical Lifelines exercises?**

A lifeline is a sector that provides indispensable services that enable the continuous operation of critical business and government functions, and is critical to human health and safety or economic security.

**Exercises aligned to this priority should:**

- Examine the prioritization of life-saving and life-sustaining lifeline systems during the immediate response phase of an incident
- Assess the ability of participants to leverage all available resources to stabilize and restore critical lifelines
- Assess infrastructure interdependencies and cascading effects between lifelines
- Evaluate the implementation of pre- or post-disaster mitigation measures to reduce the risk to lifelines

**Related Core Capabilities**

- Infrastructure Systems
- Long-term Vulnerability Reduction
- Operational Communications
- Operational Coordination
- Physical Protective Measures
- Situational Assessment
- Supply Chain Integrity and Security

**Why is this important?**

States, territories, tribes, urban areas, and other communities use the Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) and Stakeholder Preparedness Review (SPR) to assess their preparedness. FEMA includes the results of the THIRA and SPR, along with several other preparedness indicators, in the annual National Preparedness Report (NPR). Analytic results help shape planning, training, exercise, and other prioritization decisions at all levels.

**National Preparedness Report**

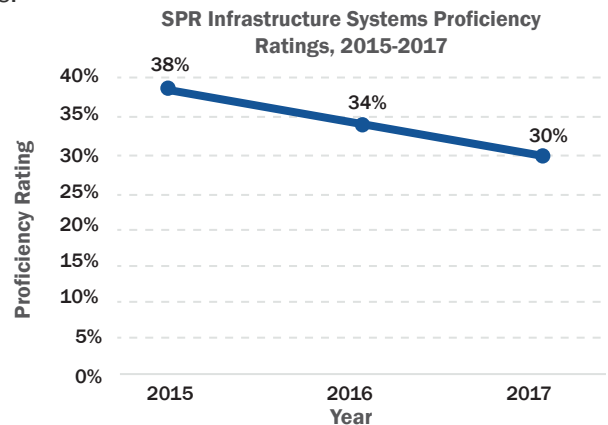
- 2012-2017 NPRs identified the Infrastructure Systems core capability as a **national area for improvement**
- Aging infrastructure **presents growing risks** to these systems and decreases resilience

**Stakeholder Preparedness Review**

- The SPR is a jurisdiction’s self-assessment of **current capability levels** measured against targets identified in the THIRA
- Since 2015, jurisdictions’ proficiency ratings for the Infrastructure Systems core capability have **steadily decreased**

**Lessons Learned and Emerging Threats**

- During the 2017 hurricane season, FEMA and its partners **faced challenges supplying limited temporary power generation capacity**, highlighting the need to further invest in resilient electrical grids and to prepare for long-term outages



**Spotlight: Critical Assessment of Lifelines**

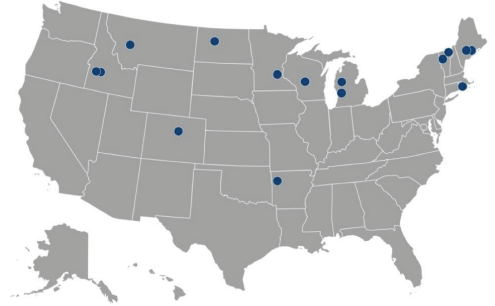
The National Institute of Standards and Technology conducted the **Critical Assessment of Lifeline System Performance** as part of the Community Resilience Program. The study identifies gaps between desired and anticipated performance of lifeline systems, allowing emergency managers to set priorities and define strategies that reduce risk and improve lifeline resilience. To read more, please visit: [nist.gov/sites/default/files/documents/el/resilience/NIST-GCR-16-917-39.pdf](https://www.nist.gov/sites/default/files/documents/el/resilience/NIST-GCR-16-917-39.pdf).



## What are the major challenges?

An analysis of 15 exercise after-action reports (AARs) revealed common challenges:

- Establishing formal plans and response teams dedicated to guiding response actions in the event of a physical infrastructure system failure
- Familiarizing emergency personnel with energy infrastructure systems to enhance mitigation capabilities during catastrophic events
- Ensuring institutions establish regular testing schedules for systems, back-up systems, and supporting equipment to enhance usability and interoperability
- Establishing methods to mitigate the reliance of critical infrastructure systems on internet connectivity to engage in emergency response operations
- Enhancing public- and private-sector partnerships by encouraging critical infrastructure owners and operators to increase participation in training and exercise opportunities



*Distribution of jurisdictions that submitted AARs for exercises aligning to Stabilization and Restoration of Critical Lifelines capabilities*

### Case Study: 2017 Hurricane Season

The FEMA 2017 Hurricane Season After-Action Report specifically cited the need to revise the National Response Framework to emphasize stabilization of critical lifelines. The report also concluded that closer partnerships with the private sector are instrumental to securing resources and support for survivors. Read the full report at [fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/167249](https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/167249).

## What can I do?

Training and exercises can help all levels of government, the private and nonprofit sectors, and other partners across the whole community be better prepared. The National Exercise Division at FEMA is committed to providing assistance to partners in planning, designing, developing, conducting, and evaluating their own exercises that validate core capabilities.

### Exercise Starter Kits

Exercise Starter Kits are pre-packaged sets of guides and templates to help exercise planners develop tabletop exercises that can be tailored to the specific threats, resources, and operational plans of their community.

### Spotlight Initiative

The **National Business Emergency Operations Center (NBEOC)** is FEMA's virtual clearing house for two-way information sharing between public- and private-sector stakeholders in preparing for, responding to, or recovering from disasters. During response activities, NBEOC members are linked into FEMA's National Response Coordination Center, activated Regional Response Coordination Centers, and the broader network of emergency management operations to include state and Federal partners. Learn how to get involved at [fema.gov/nbeoc](https://www.fema.gov/nbeoc).

### Training Courses

Examples of relevant training courses are provided below. Course offerings frequently change; please visit [firstrespondertraining.gov](https://www.firstrespondertraining.gov) for a full list of training courses and resources.

- AWR-213:** Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience Awareness
- IS-821.A:** Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources Support Annex
- G0557:** Rapid Needs Assessment
- MGT-342:** Strategic Overview of Disaster Management for Water and Wastewater Utilities
- MGT-345:** Disaster Management for Electric Power Systems

*FEMA training courses are provided at no cost to first responders.*

Please visit [pretoolkit.fema.gov](https://pretoolkit.fema.gov) for Exercise Starter Kits, training courses, and additional resources.

## Nominate an Exercise to the National Exercise Program

### Benefits of participating in the NEP include:

- Receiving technical assistance and support for your exercises from experienced exercise specialists
- Access to exercise templates, tools, and other resources to help you design, conduct, and evaluate your exercises
- The ability to pursue new exercise ideas and broaden the impact of your exercises to a wider group of stakeholders
- The opportunity to influence national preparedness policy and resource allocation decisions at all levels by contributing exercise findings

### How to Participate in the NEP

1. Visit [fema.gov/nep](https://www.fema.gov/nep) to learn more about the 2019-2020 cycle
2. Download and complete the Exercise Nomination Form
3. Work with your FEMA Regional Exercise Officer ([fema.gov/reos](https://www.fema.gov/reos)) and submit the Exercise Nomination Form to [nep@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:nep@fema.dhs.gov)
4. The FEMA National Exercise Division will respond to discuss your exercise