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Gearing Up and Getting There

Improving Local Response to Chemical Terrorism

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This dissertation identifies policies and organizational options at the local level that could save lives and/or reduce injury likely to occur from an act of chemical terrorism. The dissertation seeks out low-cost options to improve the current performance level in responding to chemical terrorism. The dissertation uses Los Angeles as a case study in this effort.

The dissertation follows a four-part framework. First, it attempts to determine the level of risk of chemical terrorism in Los Angeles and identifies an anticipated magnitude for which emergency responders and decision makers should plan. Second, the dissertation considers current capability and performance levels in chemical terrorism response and determines a performance goal for response to the planning magnitude. Third, through modeling and simulation the dissertation presents low-cost options in equipment, training, organization and doctrine that could improve the response to a chemical terrorist event. Lastly, the dissertation examines these low-cost options in terms of budget considerations in Los Angeles.

The dissertation’s findings point to decentralizing counter-chemical terrorism equipment throughout the Los Angeles metropolitan area, the reformulation of certain doctrinal policies that may inadvertently slow the mitigation process, the establishment of low-cost training methods to enhance the specialized knowledge needed to respond effectively, the inclusion of doctrinal polices to accelerate the decontamination process, and the continued focus on an all-hazards approach to preparedness.