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PREVENTION

Joint Strategies:
Public Health-Law Enforcement

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Joint Strategies: Public Health-Law Enforcement

- Law Enforcement and Public Health Goals
- Mutual Goals for Prevention
- Prevention methodologies
  - Securing dangerous pathogens
  - Establish Information Sharing Mechanism with notification triggers
  - Conduct Joint Threat Assessment
  - Conduct Joint Training

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Public Health and Law Enforcement Goals Compared

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Law enforcement:

- Protect health and safety of public
- Prevent bioterrorism attacks
- Stop further crimes
- Apprehend and convict criminals

Public health:

- Protect health and safety of public
- Prevent disease outbreaks
- Stop further cases of disease and outbreaks
- Build science base for future prevention

Mutually Beneficial Goals - Prevention

- Both Public Health and Law Enforcement want to...
  1. Prevent bioterrorism attacks
  2. Detect bioterrorism attacks to prevent further cases/outbreaks
- How?
  1. Secure dangerous pathogens
  2. Establish information sharing procedures and notification triggers
  3. Conduct Joint Threat Assessments

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Prevention: Securing Dangerous Pathogens

- Potential biological agent sources:
  - Endemic disease outbreaks/sources
  - Laboratories possessing high consequence biological agents (research/clinical)
  - Synthetic Biology

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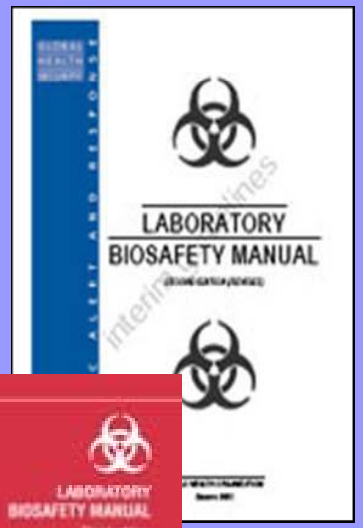
Securing Dangerous Pathogens Supports Biosafety and Biosafety Efforts

- Laboratory biosecurity supports the laboratory biosafety agenda of preventing disease in people, animals, and plants
- Safe and secure laboratories help
  - Ensure the containment of hazardous infectious substances
  - Protect valuable research and commercial assets
  - Minimize risk of accidental exposure or release
  - **Reduce the risk of crime and bioterrorism**



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Support of Biosafety and Biosecurity

- Law Enforcement:

Minimize security risk (material theft, diversion, malicious use of pathogen)

  - Conduct background investigations of personnel who access pathogens
  - Conduct security risk assessments of laboratory facilities to ensure adequate controls are in place
  - Establish notification procedures so labs report any suspicious activity and theft, loss, or release of pathogens

- Public Health/Laboratory:

Minimize safety risks to laboratory personnel or surrounding environment

  - Establish guidelines and safety criteria and conduct training
  - Report/follow up on possible lab exposure or any theft, loss, or release of pathogen

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Prevention: Establish Information Sharing Procedures

Types of information/sources

Law Enforcement Intel:

- Terror groups/organizations
- Threats
- Intelligence
- Victim info

Public Health Intel:

- Disease clusters/outbreaks
- Lab test results
- Epidemiological investigation
- Patient info

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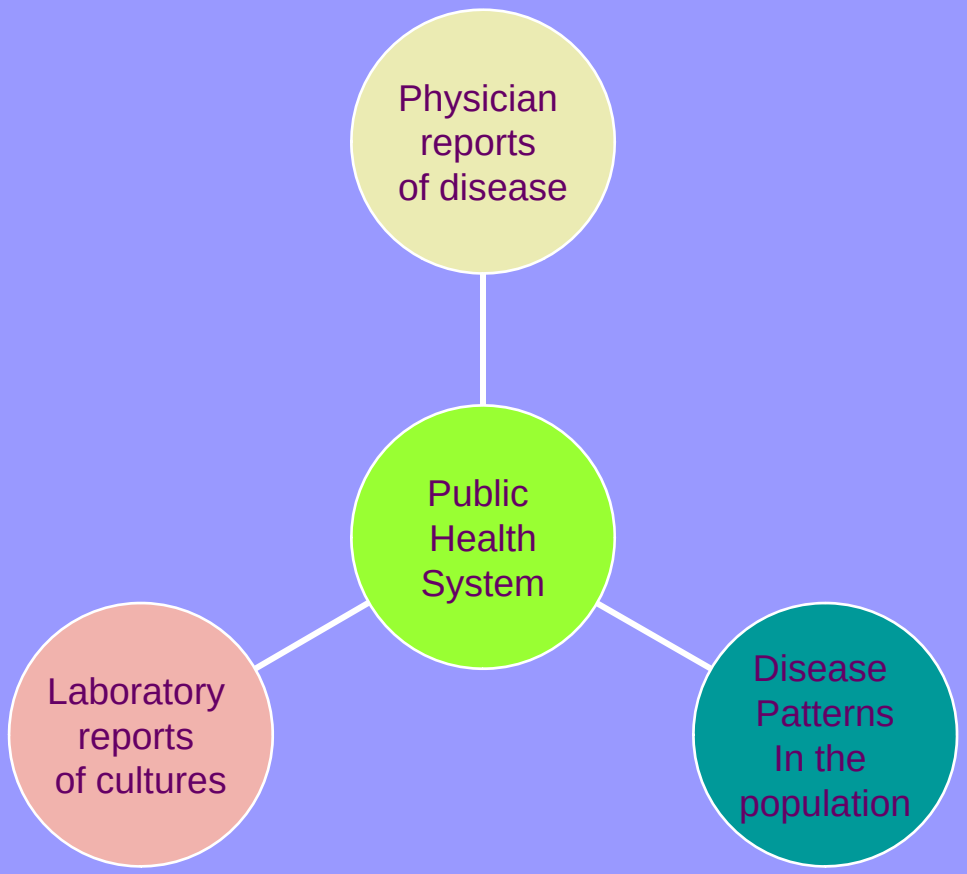
Public Health System Internal Notifications



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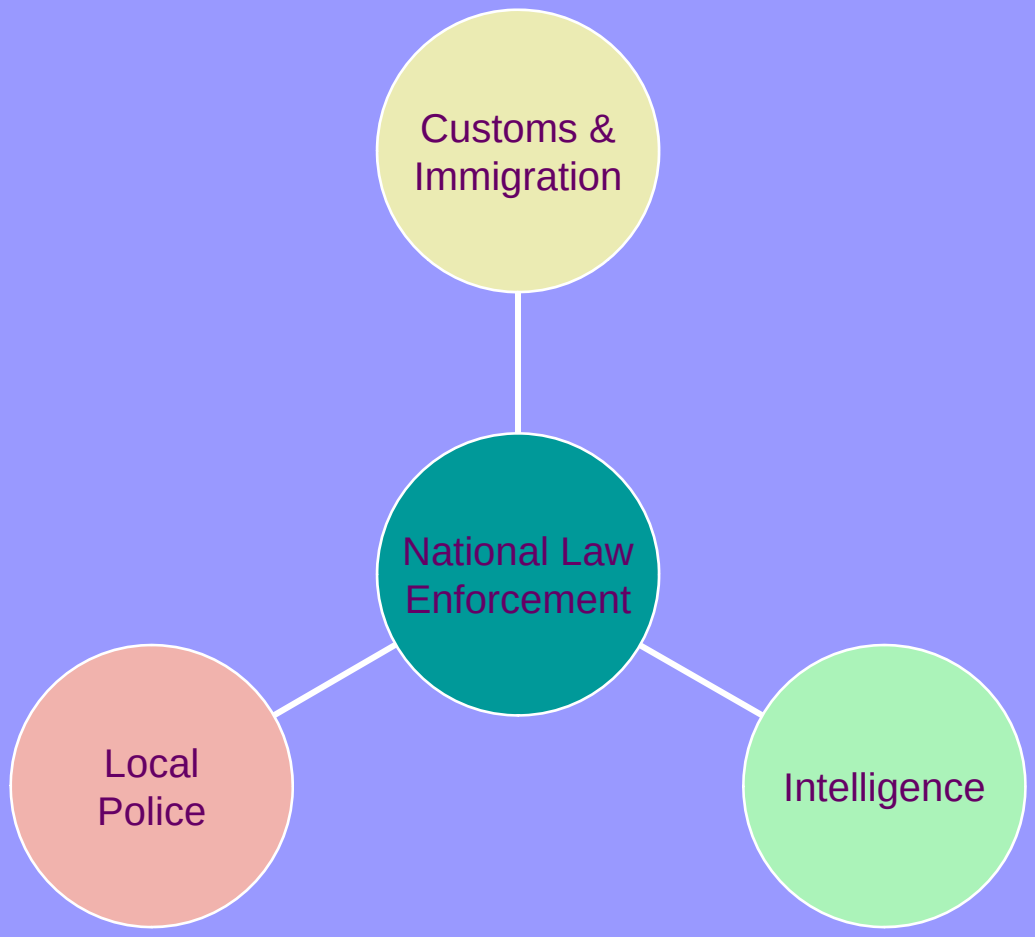
Law Enforcement System Internal Notifications



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Prevention: Establish Information Sharing Procedures

- Establish a communications mechanism *before* the event
  - Work out procedures in advance
  - Helps build credibility and trust between agencies who normally do not work with one another
  - Goals may overlap but methods are different and must be addressed in protocol development
    - Privacy of patient information
    - Sensitive law enforcement investigative info

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Prevention: Establish Information Sharing Procedures

A critical first step to developing protocols is to create a list of Public Health and Law Enforcement triggers which signals the initial communication flow.

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Public Health Triggers
(examples)

- Test samples submitted to labs that are positive for bioterrorism agents
- Unusually large numbers of patients with similar symptoms or disease
- Unusually large numbers of unexplained symptoms, diseases, or death
- Higher than expected morbidity and mortality associated with common disease
- Disease with unusual geographic or seasonal distribution
- Unusual disease presentation
- Endemic disease with unexplained increase in incidence
- Unusual “typical patient” distribution (i.e., several adults with an unexplained rash)
- Ill persons presenting at the same time; point source with compressed epidemic curve

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Law Enforcement Triggers

- Intelligence or investigative information indicating individual or group is unlawfully possessing a biological agent
- Seizure of bio-processing equipment
- Seizure of a biological dissemination device
- Assessments or threats that indicate a credible biological threat
- A Hazardous Materials Team response which involves biological agents

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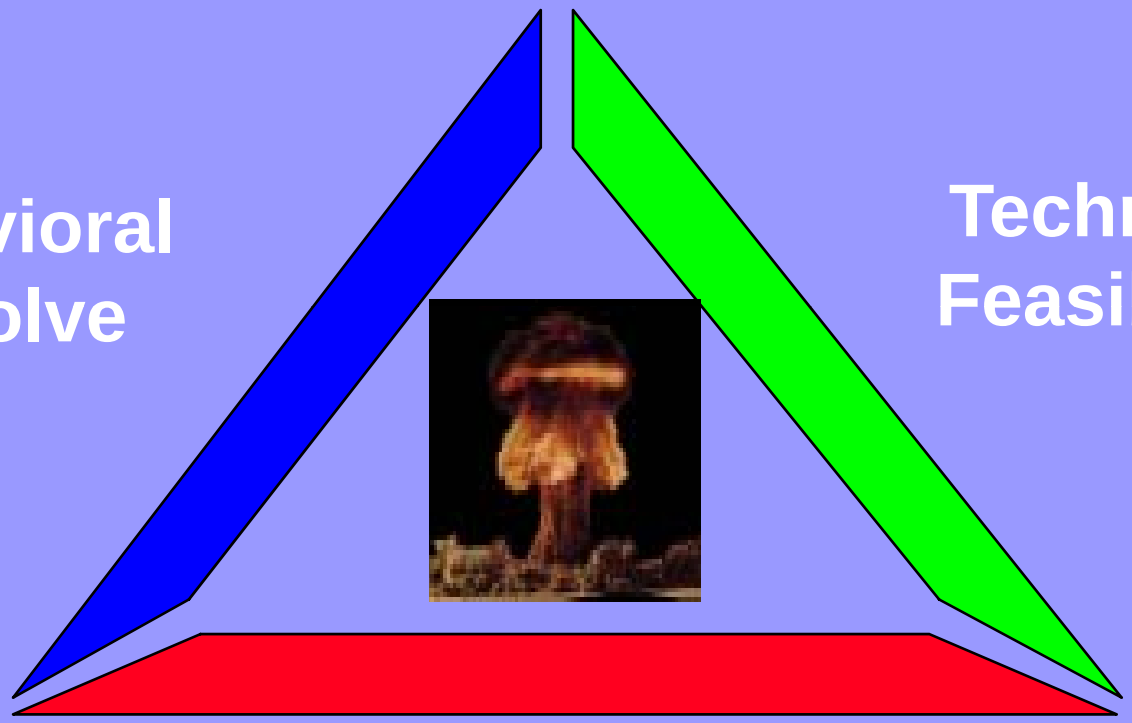
Prevention: Conduct Joint Threat Assessments

- Conduct a Joint Threat Assessment when either agency meets a critical threshold to share information
- Conduct notifications
- Threat Assessment conducted in person (on scene) or over the phone (conference call)
- Purpose of Threat Assessment
  - To determine if a credible bioterrorism threat exists
  - To identify next steps to address threat if one exists

WMD Threat Assessment



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Threat Assessment Process

- Perform a “Situation Based” Threat Assessment
  - Is there a “threat” or a suspicious circumstance?
- Threat:
  - Who is the target?
  - How is the threat worded?
    - Vague? Specific?
    - Active? Passive?
  - How was the threat received?
  - Is the threat actionable?
- Suspicious Circumstance:
  - Is there a clear target?
  - Has the target received threats?
  - Can the circumstance be explained innocently?
    - Suitcase? Pipe Bomb?
- Problem: This is an “odds based” technique

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Prevention: Conduct Joint Threat Assessments

- If threat is determined to be credible:
  - Law Enforcement agrees to next steps
    - Begin investigation, collect evidence in hazardous environment, etc
  - Public Health agrees to next steps
    - Tests environmental or clinical samples at laboratory
    - Begins epidemiological investigation
    - Queries disease surveillance for more information
  - Consideration of initiating a Joint Investigation

    (covered in another block of instruction)

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Prevention: Training

Create Joint Training Programs

- Notification drills
- Table Top Exercises
  - Identify local leaders in public health, medicine, and law enforcement
  - Develop locally adaptable strategies
- Full Scale and Practical Exercises
  - Involve local responders, hazardous materials specialists, and personnel above in overt and covert responses to bioterrorism attacks
  - Involve hospital personnel, mock victims/patients

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Summary

- Joint public health and law enforcement prevention strategies include securing dangerous pathogens, establishing information sharing protocols,and conducting joint threat assessments and training
- These strategies are more likely to be successful if implemented and practiced before an event occurs

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