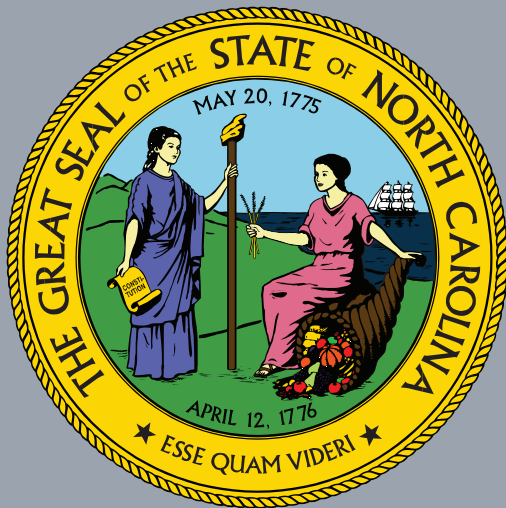


North Carolina

STATE HOMELAND SECURITY STRATEGY



2022-2024

A Message From the State Homeland Security Advisor

The North Carolina Department of Public Safety is charged with protecting the state from a multitude of threats and hazards, to include natural and manmade impacts to our state critical infrastructure and terrorism events. Through our department's operating divisions and agencies, on a daily basis we support local jurisdictions in responding to a variety of incidents and in the implementation of the state homeland security strategy.

As State Homeland Security Advisor, I have the great privilege in leading these efforts and partnering with the Deputy Homeland Security Advisor and department leadership to protect this great state.

This multi-faceted approach is implemented through collaboration with state and federal public safety, law enforcement and intelligence agencies through our State Homeland Security Advisor Work Group:

1. Provision of financial support to local and state partners for capability development;
2. Strategic and operational planning and training for critical infrastructure protection;
3. Facilitation of intelligence gathering, analysis, and effective dissemination; and
4. Development of all-hazards response capacity at the local and state level to address a variety of threats.

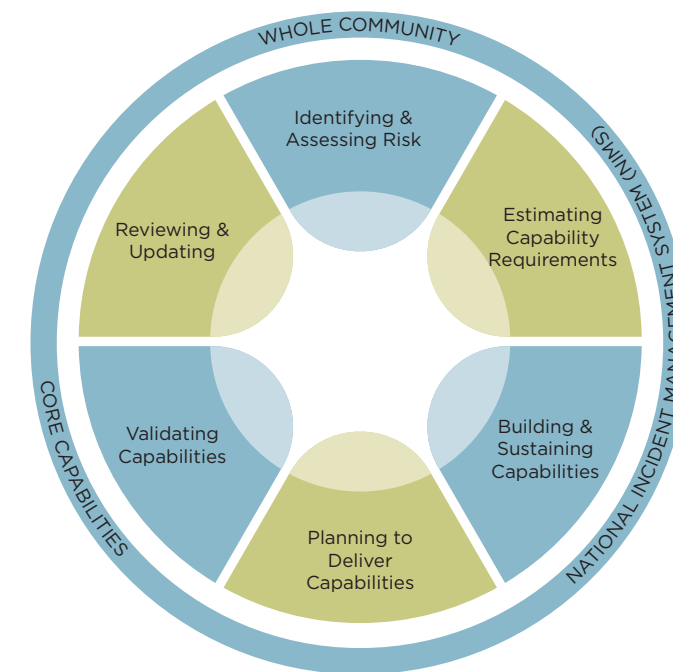
On behalf of the women and men of the Department of Public Safety, it is my honor to support the daily work to address homeland security threats and risks to our state.

Eddie M. Buffaloe Jr.
Secretary, Department of Public Safety
State Homeland Security Advisor

Introduction

The Federal Emergency Management Agency and Department of Homeland Security have identified 32 core capabilities as the means by which a more resilient and prepared community can be both built and enhanced. North Carolina is committed to supporting the National Preparedness System and centers this effort towards building, sustaining and enhancing these core capabilities. North Carolina's all-hazards approach to proactively identify and re-enforce strengths as well as address identified needs provides foundational support in preparing for, mitigating, responding to and recovering from natural hazard events as well as adversarial man-made events.

The North Carolina State Homeland Security Strategy is based on a shared responsibility of preparedness by which working together, across all governmental and private sector landscapes, we promote a safer and more resilient North Carolina in the face of any hazard. This strategic plan consists of a five-phase approach: **Analyze, Develop, Design, Implement and Evaluate**, all on a recurring basis. This approach is dependent upon active communication and collaboration among stakeholders from the public and private sector and all levels of government.



North Carolina State Homeland Security Strategy

PURPOSE

The purpose of the North Carolina State Homeland Security Strategy is to provide strategic direction for North Carolina and its jurisdictions to prepare, respond, mitigate, and recover from catastrophic events, both natural and man-made.

This is especially important for two distinct reasons:

1. the high frequency of natural disasters that occur in North Carolina, and
2. the potential for future acts of domestic violent extremism, cybercrime and terrorism.

This strategy provides a comprehensive framework for North Carolina which will identify, unify, guide, and streamline homeland security efforts over the next two years.

It is recognized that from the mountains to the coast, North Carolina experiences a dynamic variety of natural disasters at an increased frequency. These include but are not limited to: forest fires, ice storms, tornados, tropical storms, mud slides, earthquakes, flooding and hurricanes. Additionally, the SHSS is of significant importance due to the increased risk of man-made catastrophic events, particularly those that result from a terrorist act, whether physical or cyber in nature.

To successfully implement this plan, the 2022-2024 SHSS focuses on seven goals with associated objectives outlining the direction of the homeland security mission in our state. This is an exceptionally complex task requiring coordination, cooperation and focused efforts from diverse parties across North Carolina – local, state and federal government entities, private and non-profit sectors, and the public.

VISION

North Carolina’s vision is to proactively increase outreach to enhance capacity and force multiplying capabilities throughout the state utilizing the whole community and whole of government approach that is used to enhance the safety of our residents and visitors.

SCOPE

Homeland Security is inherently a multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional effort that focuses on all threats and hazards (technical, human-caused and natural) that could significantly impact North Carolina. In general, local jurisdictions prepare for their potential threats and hazards, while state agencies must be prepared to assist with catastrophic events that exceed local capability. Effective public-private coordination is critical to the success of homeland security initiatives and is encouraged. The SHSS takes a broader view and focuses on the critical elements of both homeland security and emergency management.

MISSION AREAS

North Carolina’s SHSS is based upon the National Preparedness Goal and its defined success as: A secure and resilient Nation with the capabilities required across the whole community to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to and recover from the threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk.¹

The SHSS utilizes the National Planning Framework as the foundation, along with the following key themes:

1. Engaged Partnership with the Whole Community,
2. Scalability, Flexibility and Adaptability in Implementation, and
3. Integration Among the Frameworks.

The SHSS rests upon the five mission areas and is guided by the development and execution of the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s 32 core capabilities identified in the National Preparedness Goal.

¹Federal Emergency Management Agency (2020, July 20). National Preparedness. Retrieved from FEMA.gov: <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/national-preparedness/goal>

These mission areas are further explained below:

- **Prevention:** Prevent acts of terrorism and other human-caused events through information sharing and counter-terrorism investigations and operations.
- **Protection:** Protect the people of North Carolina, the states most critical infrastructure, and our key resources using a comprehensive approach.
- **Mitigation:** Reduce the loss of life and property by lessening the impact of future disasters through coordinated mitigation efforts.
- **Response:** Respond quickly to reduce the loss of life and property, reduce suffering, meet basic human needs and mitigate further harm following an event.
- **Recovery:** Restore essential services in a safe and timely manner after disasters, while also hardening infrastructure and other systems in communities impacted by disasters in order to build them back better than before.



GOALS

The SHSS contains seven interconnected goals that are designed to accomplish the mission in accordance with the National Preparedness System, National Preparedness Goal, National Preparedness Framework and other relevant federal guidance.

Each goal contains objectives defining initiatives that achieve the state’s vision through mission areas. The primary purpose is to establish a proactive and collaborative approach to homeland security that prioritizes information sharing and coordination between partner agencies.

NORTH CAROLINA STATE’S HOMELAND SECURITY GOALS

Goal 1: Strengthen Intelligence and Information Sharing Capabilities

Goal 2: Strengthen Counterterrorism Capabilities

Goal 3: Enhance Cybersecurity Capabilities

Goal 4: Expand Critical Infrastructure Protection

Goal 5: Strengthen Public Health and Medical Emergency Preparedness

Goal 6: Advance Interoperable and Emergency Communications

Goal 7: Strengthen an All-Hazards Preparedness Capability at the Local and State Level

INITIATIVES

Civil Disturbance Working Group:

The Civil Disturbance Working Group was established by the Department of Public Safety to enhance coordination during the event of civil disturbance. The group is comprised of representatives from various state law enforcement agencies and assists local law enforcement with proactive security measures prior to the onset of an event. Furthermore, during an event, this working group is responsible for making recommendations to the Secretary of Public Safety regarding possible state law enforcement actions. All recommendations and decisions are motivated by intelligence and data that is collected, analyzed, and shared by the North Carolina Information Sharing and Analysis Center.

Homeland Security Working Group:

The North Carolina Department of Public Safety, in collaboration with federal, state and local partners, is charged with protecting the state from a multitude of threats and hazards that could adversely affect residents, visitors and critical infrastructure. Under the guidance of the Homeland Security Advisor and the Deputy Homeland Security Advisor, this broad interagency group of state and federal law enforcement and public safety agencies provides strategic and operational direction and intelligence gathering, analysis and dissemination.

Joint Cybersecurity Task Force:

The JCTF is comprised of North Carolina Emergency Management, the North Carolina Local Government Information Technology Association, the North Carolina National Guard, local and federal law enforcement partners, the State Fusion Center, the North Carolina Department of Information Technology and state and federal Information Technology/Cyber specialists. This multi-agency team provides incident coordination and resource support to impacted organizations. The joint nature of this group is critical to the effective identification, mitigation and recovery from cyber threats to the state's critical infrastructure.

Emerging Electronics and Communications:

State communications requirements are created and approved by the state Interoperability Executive Committee and the North Carolina Emergency Management Communications Branch and submitted to the Division of Emergency Management/Homeland Security Section for usage. The communications sector, both public and private, is vital to information sharing in furtherance of protecting the public, as well as public safety professionals. Investing in emerging technology is at the forefront of these efforts with the help of funds generated through available grants. To ensure that interoperability priorities are addressed the SIEC will provide a strategic plan, the State Communications Interoperability Plan, to outline communications priorities. These priorities are created to align with the Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment and the National Emergency Communications Plan while keeping security of networks, infrastructure and personnel in mind.

Current State Analysis

RISK PROFILE

Threats

a. International Terrorism

The threat of foreign terrorist organizations to our nation remains substantial. The National Counterterrorism Center assesses the most serious threats to the homeland come from violent extremists inspired by the Islamic State in the Levant and al-Qa'ida/Al-Qaeda, including its allies and affiliates.

b. Domestic Violent Extremism/Domestic Terrorism

Domestic violent extremism/domestic terrorism remains an evolving and persistent threat to the homeland. Violent extremists will continue to target individuals or institutions associated with their grievances, either real or perceived. Personal finances, employment difficulties and disruptions, education difficulties and disruptions, social isolation and the many other impact areas to include those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic have created an environment that could accelerate some individuals' mobilization to targeted violence or radicalization to terrorism.

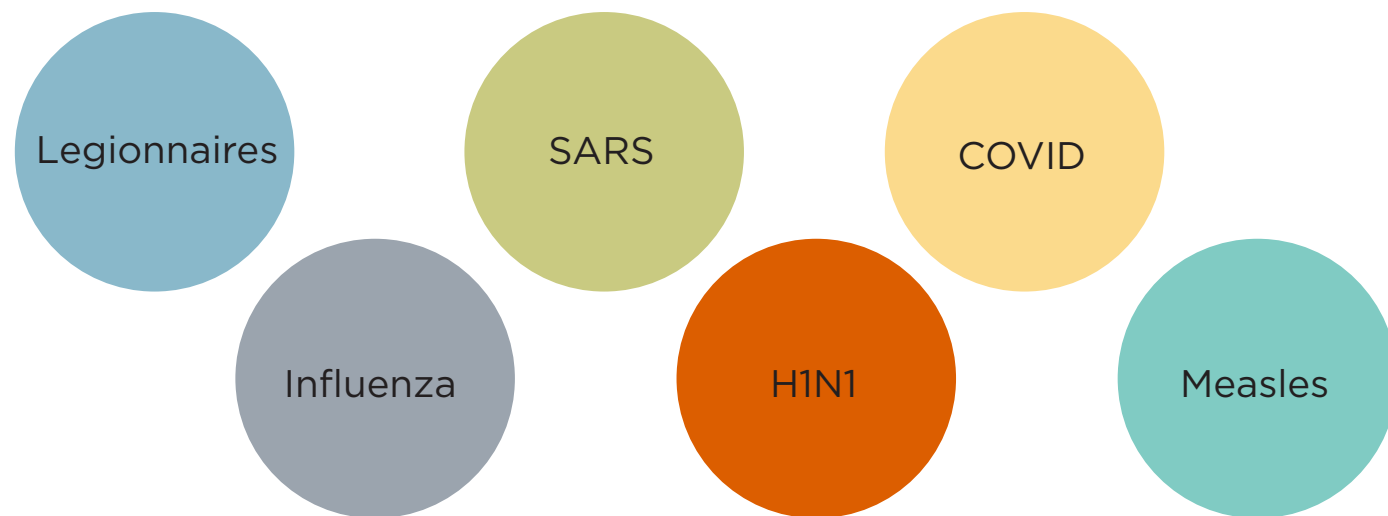
c. Cyber Incident

Cyber incidents continue to be an increasing concern for critical infrastructure organizations within North Carolina. Every year there has been a noted increase of attacks in the form of ransomware, data exfiltration and extortion and others, which have devastating impact to our state’s critical infrastructure. This trend is forecasted to continue and remain a pervasive occurrence in the upcoming years.

d. Public Health and Medical Emergencies

North Carolina will also prepare for the outbreak of communicable diseases and other public health related emergencies.

The state has recently experienced a variety of public health issues which required a coordinated and proactive response for the following:



The state must also remain proactive in addressing matters ranging from disease epidemics, chemical and radiological releases, severe weather and natural disasters.

North Carolina’s Public Health and Medical programs are designed to enhance and support our state’s public health capacities prior to, during and after a disaster occurs.

e. Food and Agricultural

The agricultural industry, including food, fiber and forestry, contributes approximately \$91.8 billion to North Carolina’s economy and accounts for a significant percentage of the state’s total income. Interruption during any stage of agricultural operations can have devastating and far reaching impacts on public health and the economy. Identifying the major threats to the food and agriculture sector is an integral component of being able to prepare for, respond to and recover from incidents involving this critical national infrastructure component.

Natural Hazards

a. Hurricanes

Due to its geographic position, North Carolina can experience both direct and indirect impacts from tropical cyclones. There are several paths that a hurricane may take, all of which result in varying effects to North Carolina. A “coastal track” (where the hurricane skirts the coastline) typically results in a threat of heavy rain, high winds and storm surge across portions of central and eastern North Carolina. A “gulf track” (when a hurricane makes landfall on the Gulf Coast and moves northward) often brings heavy rains and flooding to the western portion of the state. A “direct hit” can cause statewide damage from heavy rain, high winds and storm surge and often results in the most widespread impacts.

According to the North Carolina Climate Office, the state has been impacted by 83 direct landfalling tropical cyclones and 299 non-landfalling storms affecting the state within 150 miles between 1851-2019, making North Carolina one of the most prone hurricane states in the country.

b. Floods

Floods can occur at any time of the year across the state and are among the most common and impactful natural disasters. North Carolina’s proximity to the moisture sources of the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico and western North Carolina’s mountainous terrain have led to extreme rainfall events in all corners of the state. Along with flash flooding, extreme rainfall can lead to landslides and debris flows across western portions of the state. A record 244 flash flood warnings were issued in North Carolina by the National Weather Service in 2018. North Carolina has 17 major river basins which can result in river flooding impacting the state for days and weeks after heavy rainfall ends. Severe river flooding can result in communities being cutoff for long durations.

c. Winter Storms

During winter weather events, the state can experience all different precipitation types. The mountain region of North Carolina is often more prone to winter weather than any other region in the state. In this region, snow is typically the most dominant precipitation type and higher elevations can see 50-75” of snowfall per season. Heavy snow, sleet and/or significant ice accumulations can lead to widespread transportation impacts and significant damage to trees, power lines, and infrastructure.

Wintry precipitation is not the only hazard that a winter storm can bring to the state. During nor’easters, strong winds occur along the coastline and contribute to coastal flooding.

d. Wildfires

Wildfires are most common across the Mountains, Sandhills and Coastal Plain. North Carolina averages thousands of fires every year, with tens of thousands of acres burned. In 2016, over 77,000 acres were burned in North Carolina, largely due to several large fires across western portions of the state after a warm and dry summer and fall season.

e. Droughts

Historically, North Carolina experiences drought conditions every few years with a significant drought occurring every 10-20 years. Significant droughts can lead to reduced drinking water supplies, agricultural impacts, increased wildfire risks and poor water quality. Long-term droughts can significantly impact state revenue by harming the economy through low crop yields, increased food costs, increased water costs and reduced tourism. The North Carolina Drought Management Advisory Council was created in 2003 under North Carolina General Statute 143.355.1. It is an interagency organization responsible for issuing drought advisories based on technical data to address varying conditions throughout the state.

f. Earthquakes

North Carolina can experience earthquakes centered within the state, but also from earthquakes centered outside of the state in five seismic zones: Eastern Tennessee, Charleston South Carolina, Giles County Virginia, Central Virginia, and New Madrid. While earthquakes can be felt across all of North Carolina, the greatest threat is in western portions of the state and along the North Carolina/South Carolina state line in southeastern North Carolina. The state has experienced 22 damaging earthquakes from 1735-2019. The greatest damage occurred during the 1861 Wilkesboro, 1886 Charleston South Carolina, 1916 Asheville, and 1926 Mitchell County earthquakes. The 1886 earthquake centered in Charleston, South Carolina is the most damaging earthquake recorded in the Southeast and brought strong to very strong shaking throughout much of southern and central North Carolina.

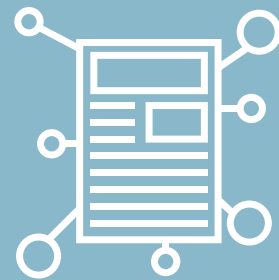
g. Severe Weather

Severe storms including tornadoes, damaging winds and hail can occur across the entire state and during any month, with the greatest activity during April and May. According to the National Weather Service, the state experienced 51 tornadoes and 928 severe thunderstorms with damaging wind and hail, resulting in \$137.5 million in 2019 alone.

Risk Analysis

In pursuant to Comprehensive Preparedness Guide 201, North Carolina utilizes the Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment to better understand the state’s risks and hazards and determine the level of capability needed to address those risks and hazards on a yearly basis. During the THIRA process, targets are set for each of the 32 capabilities in the National Preparedness Goal. North Carolina then uses the Stakeholder Preparedness Review to estimate the state’s current capabilities, identify capability gaps and intended approaches for addressing gaps, and assess the impact of relevant funding sources on sustaining and building capabilities. The threats and hazards identified in the 2020 THIRA were selected from information gathered from subject matter experts based on the state’s most likely scenarios.

The THIRA/SPR are the result of a collaborative effort by North Carolina Division of Emergency Management, and involved subject matter experts from a multitude of disciplines across the state representing federal, state, tribal, local, private sector and non-governmental partners. While the specific results of the THIRA/SPR are not made public to protect any sensitive information contained within the data, the general sense of North Carolina’s strengths and needs have been captured and are incorporated into this SHSS. Together, the THIRA, SPR and SHSS will continue to be used to help determine how federal homeland security grant funding can best be leveraged toward the most critical needs faced by North Carolina.



GOAL 1: STRENGTHEN INTELLIGENCE AND INFORMATION SHARING CAPABILITIES

Goal 1: Strengthen Intelligence and Information Sharing Capabilities

Mission Areas: Prevention, Protection

Objectives

- 1.1) Ensure intelligence and information reporting is generated by external partner organizations through the Field Liaison Officer program.
- 1.2) Evaluate analysis and information dissemination processes and products to better support stakeholders.
- 1.3) Support North Carolina public safety officials' professional development concerning threat areas of interest.
- 1.4) Maintain and leverage information technology systems, platforms, etc. to support analysis and information sharing.
- 1.5) Enhance coordination, information sharing and outreach between the NCISAAC and Joint Cybersecurity Task Force with a vision of co-locating the JCTF with NCISAAC.
- 1.6) Increase the participation of local and state emergency management personnel in the State Field Liaison Officer Program.



GOAL 2: STRENGTHEN COUNTERTERRORISM CAPABILITIES

Goal 2: Strengthen Counterterrorism Capabilities Mission Areas: Prevention, Protection and Response

Objectives

- 2.1) Increase the ability to identify, respond, investigate and/or disrupt threat items that have a nexus to terrorism.
- 2.2) Development of investigative and analytical processes that address targeted violence incidents.
- 2.3) Continue support for the state's bomb squads and explosive detection K-9 teams to further enhance our Improvised Explosive Device prevention and response teams.
- 2.4) Increase the ability to identify, respond, investigate and/or disrupt threat items that have a nexus to illicit drug and narcotic trafficking and distribution.
- 2.5) Increase the ability to identify, respond, investigate and/or disrupt threat items that have a nexus to organized criminal enterprise.



GOAL 3: ENHANCE CYBERSECURITY CAPABILITIES

Goal 3: Enhance Cybersecurity Capabilities

Mission Areas: Protection

Objectives

- 3.1) Through the collaborations of NCEM, NCDIT, NCNG and other relevant partners integrate and operationalize cybersecurity tools across all state agencies.
- 3.2) Continue to be the model state for cybersecurity by integrating intelligence and information sharing capabilities across the state spectrum (SEE Goal 1: Objective 1.5).
- 3.3) Harden networking infrastructure by reforming outdated infrastructure and put in place new technologies that greatly improve security within state and local government agencies.
- 3.4) Cultivate IT workforce.
- 3.5) Improve state, local, and critical infrastructure cybersecurity technical capabilities.
- 3.6) Increase collaborations with federal, state, local governments, private sector, non-governmental organizations and academia to foster situational awareness and advance cybersecurity efforts.
- 3.7) Improve cyber incident response and the ability to analyze cyber related incidents and perform necessary investigations.
- 3.8) Improve cybersecurity resource awareness through outreach and education efforts to pertinent stakeholders.



GOAL 4: EXPAND CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

Goal 4: Expand Critical Infrastructure Protection

Mission Areas: Response, Recovery

Objectives

- 4.1) Expand and refine the Critical Infrastructure Protection Program.
- 4.2) Improve the Security and Resiliency of State Energy Sector Assets.
- 4.3) Strengthen public and private sector partnerships.
- 4.4) Improve the security and resiliency of state transportation sector assets.
- 4.5) Initiate processes, in collaboration with U.S. DHS/Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, to conduct vulnerability assessments for North Carolina critical infrastructure sectors.
- 4.6) Improve outreach and coordination efforts for all-hazards school risk management and emergency response coordination.



GOAL 5: STRENGTHEN PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Goal 5: Strengthen Public Health Emergency Preparedness

Mission Areas: Response, Recovery

Objectives

- 5.1) Support public health surveillance capabilities to more effectively prevent and monitor outbreaks of disease and exposures and expansion into intelligence analysis and dissemination.
- 5.2) Enhance local, regional, state and federal cross-disciplinary planning efforts to prepare for and respond to a health emergency.
- 5.3) Enhance statewide mass fatality management capabilities.
- 5.4) Expand public health emergency preparedness through training and exercise efforts across the state.
- 5.5) Ensure public health preparedness and medical preparedness through expanded state and local response resources.



GOAL 6: ADVANCE INTEROPERABLE AND EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

Goal 6: Advance Interoperable and Emergency Communications

Mission Areas: Response

Objectives

- 6.1) Maintain the State Communications Interoperability Plan.
- 6.2) Develop purchasing standards to align communications technologies with current statewide communications plan, systems, networks, strategies and emerging technologies in furtherance of obtaining federal grants. This shall include system and device security.
- 6.3) Increase capabilities of the NCEM 24 Hour Watch through the improvement of information sharing processes.
- 6.4) Conduct multi-jurisdictional, multi-disciplinary communications training and exercises to evaluate emergency and interoperable communications.
- 6.5) Develop and enhance redundant communications capabilities.
- 6.6) Increase local law enforcement technical assistance on emergency response resources.
- 6.7) Provide legislative awareness of threats to public safety communications infrastructure in an effort to keep pace with adversarial activities.
- 6.8) Optimize outdated voice and data communications equipment.
- 6.9) Complete the North Carolina Communications Field Operations Guide.



GOAL 7: STRENGTHEN AN ALL-HAZARDS PREPAREDNESS CAPABILITY AT THE LOCAL AND STATE LEVEL

Goal 7: Strengthen an All-Hazards Preparedness Capability at the Local and State Level

Mission Areas: Response, Recovery, Mitigation

Objectives

- 7.1) Develop and sustain all-hazards and operational response plans with state and local emergency preparedness stakeholders.
- 7.2) Enhance coordination, planning and communications for all-hazards events.
- 7.3) Coordinate with state and local public safety partners in developing a proactive event security planning model.
- 7.4) Expand outreach and utilization of the Threat and Hazard Identification Risk assessment tool at the local level.
- 7.5) Enhance the outreach to local entities to increase participation in the Special Event Assessment Rating process.

