

National Biodefense Strategy Calls for a Robust Decontamination Capability

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The National Biodefense Strategy (NBS) sets the course for the U.S. Government to combat serious 21st century biothreats both domestically and internationally. It calls for a whole-of-government approach to biodefense; and is the first to recognize infectious disease outbreaks as critical threats alongside biological threats from terrorists, other nations, or lone actors. The National Security Presidential Memorandum (NSPM) -14 directs implementation of the NBS by establishing U.S. policy to coordinate Federal Government programs, actions and budgets. To that end, the U.S. will be better positioned to anticipate, prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from biological disasters. Until now, government agencies have had disparate programs and actions that were not centrally coordinated. Also, the NBS calls for the U.S. Government to strengthen national biodefense partnerships from both industry, non-government organizations, and international partners.

The NBS supports five different goal areas, three of which address bio-related decontamination efforts, including Goals (3) Ensure biodefense enterprise preparedness to reduce the impacts of bioincidents; (4) Rapid response to limit the impacts of bio incidents; and (5) Facilitate recovery to restore the community, the economy, and the environment after a bio-incident and multiple departments and agencies. Specifically, Goal 3 calls for research to understand the persistence and potential for secondary transmission of biological contaminants in a variety of environments and the ability of various disinfection technologies to inactivate or remove biological contaminants. Also, Goal 3 pushes for the development of technologies for all phases of environmental cleanup (characterization, decontamination, waste management, and clearance) for the natural, inhabited, and engineered environments, including critical infrastructure, contaminated with known and emerging biological threats. These technologies should be readily available and scalable for natural, accidental, or deliberate releases of biological agents.

The intent of the presentation and discussion is to provide awareness of the NBS to the research and response community dedicated to environmental cleanup. The presentation will provide a survey of U.S. Government efforts related to enhancing preparedness and response related to decontamination following a biological incident.