

**HOMEGROWN VIOLENT EXTREMISM  
RECOVERY PLANNING FOR PUBLIC SAFETY**

---

**InfoBrief**



**International Public Safety Association**

February 2018

## Homegrown Violent Extremism Recovery

While the recovery from a homegrown violent extremism event parallels recovery from most other types of disasters, it also requires additional considerations to assist impacted individuals and families as well as help rebuild the connections, resilience and strength of the community<sup>i</sup>. Organizations with all-hazards recovery plans will be prepared for most of activities to be completed; a mass violence incident annex to these plans will serve to outline the additional actions, roles, responsibilities and policies to guide coordinated recovery operations for HVE incidents and other types of assailant events.

As is the case in any disaster, HVE recovery is a continuous process that occurs over short and long-term incremental phases. Organizations and communities will progress through recovery at different rates and each will require varying degrees of assistance.

Initial recovery efforts should begin in parallel with response activities to ensure prompt availability of resources critical to the impacted individuals, families and communities. An effective response to HVE incidents is essential to life safety, and the recovery aspect is crucial to reducing psychological, social and economic effects of the incident.

For HVE incidents, some key goals specific to these types of incidents to consider in recovery planning efforts include:

1. Return of incident site to its full functionality as quickly and efficiently as possible.
2. Restore a sense of normalcy back to impacted communities and businesses.
3. Repair and foster relationships within and between communities.

### Short-term recovery considerations

As with any disaster, short-term recovery efforts of an HVE event need to be directed toward ensuring the safety of individuals, impacted property and critical infrastructure. Regardless of cause, organizations, through a coordinated effort with other municipal services, must be prepared to activate:

1. Debris removal and management.
2. Rapid damage assessments on damaged and impacted buildings and infrastructure.
3. Critical infrastructure repair/restoration to ensure availability of essential services.
4. Emergency sheltering or lodging.
5. Crisis communications media response.

Some short-term recovery projects may span over a longer period, but they still require initiation as early in the process as possible to return communities to normalcy.

### **What's different in HVE incidents?**

Following any HVE or mass violence incident, organizations need to have planning in place to quickly activate and coordinate a slate of other facilities and services to assist families, friends and the broader community.

### **Crisis support for survivors and survivors' families**

Crisis support can take many forms and will depend on the nature of the HVE event and number of injured and deceased. The opening of a family assistance center may be important for friends and family to convene as they await information on the incident or reunification with individuals who were evacuated from the incident site. Centers may also provide private areas for notification of families of deceased as well as access to counselling and psychosocial services.

The nature of this center may change as the transition to longer term recovery occurs and can be morphed to provide a singular access point to financial and social assistance programs for families and victims or services for impacted communities depending on the needs identified for your specific area.

### **Missing persons reporting**

Depending on the scale of the HVE event, planning for missing persons reporting will need to be scalable to accommodate large events or incidents occurring within crowded, tourist-focused or popular areas.

Existing reporting systems can quickly be overwhelmed in a large incident. Emergency professionals need to consider the potential of tourists and visitors being involved in the incident and how the reporting can accommodate and support families abroad as well as international inquiries regarding loved ones.

### **Criminal investigation**

Investigations into HVE events will be lengthy and complex. Recovery plans must identify the various agencies that may need to be involved and any resources necessary to support the timely investigation and identification of victims at the site. Emergency services should consider assistance that may be required from other agencies in facilitating logistical support, including cordoning, privacy screening and transport and storage of the deceased.

### **Memorial sites and events**

In the aftermath of an HVE incident, memorial sites and events provide an opportunity for individuals to recognize and remember those injured or killed. Consideration should be given to designating a space in or near the area where people may leave tokens of remembrance. Planning should also address whether local governments intend to coordinate a public memorial service and measures necessary to protect the safety of attendees and the surrounding community during impromptu and organized vigils and services.

Vigilance must be exercised over the long term, for memorial sites by their very nature can become high profile targets for other extremists. The concept of a memorialization is not without serious controversy.<sup>ii</sup>

### **Long-term recovery considerations**

Long-term recovery from any HVE or mass violence incident needs to facilitate the healing and strengthening of communities.

### **Ongoing mental health monitoring and supports**

In addition to ensuring availability of services for victims, families and the impacted community, it will be equally important to monitor first responder and employee mental health in the weeks and months following the event. Organizations will need to ensure ongoing awareness and access to employee assistance programs, counseling and support services.

### **Rebuild or strengthen community connections**

Beyond the losses to human life and property is the possible damage to the social fabric, through fear, suspicion, hatred or turning of one community against another. If the attacker(s) are identified as having come from a particular cultural, religious or social community or targeted members of communities such as these, officials need to have strategies in place for fostering understanding, countering misinformation and encouraging connections between the broader population and these groups. These strategies must be sensitive to the needs of all, for marginalizing or condemning the anger and righteous rage of the victimized community may fuel future violent extremism. Local governments need to leverage all existing resources available to rebuild strong community connections.

If the HVE is determined to make roots in a community, officials must closely examine the dynamics of that community within their area and efforts to inspire or gain support for politically- or ideologically-motivated violence within those populations. This is truly ground zero and this is where the cycle of emergency management continues, and efforts shift back to what prevention activities will be needed to combat the risk of additional individuals becoming radicalized in the future.

<sup>i</sup> This InfoBrief was developed by the International Public Safety Association's Executive Director's HVE Policy Task Force. Members included Tabitha Beaton, Thomas Engells, Michael Lugo, Allison Knox and Heather R. Cotter.

<sup>ii</sup> See Fullerton Carol S., Ursano, Robert J., Norwood Ann E. and Holloway, Harry H. 2003. "Trauma, Terrorism and Disaster." In *Terrorism and Disaster: Individual and Community Mental Health Interventions*, edited by Ursano, Robert J., Fullerton Carol S., Norwood, Ann E., 1-23. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press and Milosevic, Ana (2017) Remembering the Present: Dealing with the Memories of Terrorism in Europe. *Journal of Terrorism Research*. <https://jtr.st-andrews.ac.uk/articles/10.15664/jtr.1269/galley/995/...>