

ISO and Societal Security

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Recent world events have demonstrated that no country or organization is free from the consequences of acts of nature and humans. Intentional and unintentional disruptions have profoundly changed our lives and the way we do business. We have discovered that we are indeed a world community, together facing disasters that recognize no borders or boundaries. The consequences of natural and man-made hazards are not bound by political jurisdictions. Not only was the tsunami in the Indian Ocean a devastating tragedy for Asia, it was also the single largest natural disaster in Sweden's history. The world recognized that together we must prepare for and respond to disruptions around the globe.

At the end of 2005, the need for global cooperation was recognized and the International Organization for Standardization - ISO - reactivated its Technical Committee 223, originally initiated under the title "Civil Defense", to develop standards to address issues related to natural and man-made disruptive events. The committee Chair and Secretariat were given to the Swedish Standards Institute (SIS). Countries responded, and today ISO/TC 223 has 54 country delegations participating in the technical committee. ISO/TC 223 adopted a perspective of "Societal Security" in recognition that technological, political and economic changes have redefined security challenges to society. Trans-jurisdictional and trans-boundary interactions and interdependencies have rendered the tradition perspective of national civil defense obsolete.

The term societal security was first used by Barry Buzan in the book *People, States and Fear: National Security Problem in International Relations* (Longman; 2 edition, 1991), as part of his theory of security. Various other security theorists have modified his theory and the debate continues on the exact meaning of the term. The international community has not reached consensus on the meaning of Societal Security. ISO/TC 223 has adopted an inclusive perspective bringing together the disciplines of security, risk management, preparedness, crisis management, emergency management, business continuity management, and disaster management.

A burgeoning array of national standards could play havoc on global trade and a coordinated response to a cross-jurisdictional crisis. A level playing field of international standardization is the only way to avoid a new set of rules at each border. Standards are seen as providing a common ground to address challenges before, during and after a disruptive event. Standards are voluntary generic best practices designed to help manage societal security. International standardization in the area of societal security is aimed toward achieving both individual and multi-organizational resilience through improved management and interoperability. This can be achieved by coordinated planning for the technical, human, organizational, and functional aspects of prevention, preparedness, response, continuity and recovery to and from disruptive events. ISO/TC 223 uses an all-hazards approach covering all necessary activities in the key phases of management of a disruptive event. The opportunities for collective action will be enhanced through interoperability.

In November 2007, ISO/TC 223 published its first deliverable, ISO Publicly Available Specification ISO/PAS 22399:2007, *Societal security – Guidelines for incident preparedness and operational continuity*. ISO/PAS 22399 guidelines establish the process, principles and

terminology of preparedness and continuity management within the context of societal security. The document provides a foundation for developing and implementing preparedness and continuity within an organization thereby improving organizational resilience.

In May 2008, ISO/TC 223 conducted its 5th plenary session, hosted by the Korean Agency for Technology and Standards, in Seoul, Korea. TC 223 has several major initiatives underway including developing a framework for societal security standards; a management system standard and guidance for preparedness and continuity management; a lexicon of societal security terminology; as well as standards for exercising and testing; public private partnerships; essential information and data requirements for command and control; inter/intra organizational warning procedures; principles for command and control, coordination and cooperation in resolving societal security incidents; and systems requirements for interoperability in command and control, coordination and cooperation.

IAEM members are encouraged to join the national Technical Advisory Groups (TAG), or Mirror Committees, in their countries in order to actively contribute to the development of the various standards that will comprise the ISO TC 223 series. Standards development is a participatory activity – developed by stakeholders that will use and be impacted by them. In the U.S. anyone from the security and security risk management, preparedness, crisis management, emergency management, business continuity management, and disaster management communities interested in having their voice heard is encouraged to join the U.S. Technical Advisory Group by contacting drlarson@jorsm.com.