

# ISRP 1999 abstract

Presenter/author	Title	Abstract
<p>Krasner, Esther</p> <p><i>Israel Ministry of Defense Head, NBC Protection Division Tel-Aviv Israel</i></p>	<p><b>The First Responder's Needs</b></p>	<p>The explosions in New York's World Trade Center and in Oklahoma City's Federal Building brought an awareness of the significance of domestic terrorism to the general public. The Tokyo Sarin incident was a turning point in the world's grasp of terrorism, introducing new frightening concepts, and emphasizing the need for appropriate preparation and response to such events.</p> <p>In Israel we have been living for years under the threat of terrorism- a situation to which one can never become accustomed and where every incident leaves a permanent scar. However, it is possible to prepare for dealing with a terrorist attack, organizationally, technologically and psychologically. In addition, Israel has been under the threat of B&amp;C warfare for years; four decades ago it was decided to prepare the homefront to face this threat. Since the Gulf War, when we witnessed the possibility that missiles armed with Biological or Chemical agents might hit civilian centers, the level of preparedness and ability to deal with the aftermath rose dramatically. There is great similarity between the preparedness for Bio/Chem. attack on civilian centers and that for a terror attack. In both situations, emergency and rescue personnel would be called upon to enter an affected area, quickly give first aid, evacuate the wounded, locate and neutralize the contaminant source. The first responders are civilian personnel, either in an official capacity or as volunteers. This population is inhomogeneous- men and women of different ages, most of whom are not trained to carry out their mission in protective gear.</p> <p>There have been attempts in different countries to adapt battlefield protective gear and civilian gear used for hazardous material (HAZMAT) incidents to the needs of first responders. On the basis of our experience these are incorrect solutions, and may harm the entire process of dealing with a Bio./Chem. event. It is imperative that the protective respiratory gear be suitable for the event itself and the hazard assessment, on the one hand, as well as for the tasks in the affected area, the ability of the team to function rapidly, and carry out its duties under differing environment conditions.</p> <p>The respiratory protective system for the first response teams must provide a high and reliable degree of protection, and at the same time allow for typical and comfortable functioning. The system must be simple to operate, while providing answers to the physiological requirements- respiration, low heat stress, vision and hearing.</p> <p>The R&amp;D organization, testing and standards institutes and acquisition bodies that accompany the establishment and organization of the first response units, must understand that these units are different from military units and are not similar to HAZMAT crews. They operate in different environments, under different threats and are required to carry out different activities and thus require unique respiratory protective gear.</p>