



State of Delaware

Department of Safety & Homeland Security

2025 Homeland Security Strategy

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INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Delaware Department of Safety and Homeland Security (DSHS) is to promote and protect the safety of people and property in the State of Delaware. In doing so, DSHS strives to integrate information, tools, and resources necessary to enhance collaborative preparedness initiatives and homeland security. By leveraging insight and expertise from a cross-section of the State's security and safety professionals, the Department has developed the 2025 State Homeland Security Strategy. This Strategy provides an overview of how Delaware assesses risks, implements countermeasures to reduce those risks and mitigate associated vulnerabilities, and outlines initiatives that ensure our State remains vigilant in addressing the ever-evolving threat landscape.



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Cabinet Secretary

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RISK IDENTIFICATION

Risk is examined utilizing a combination of historical knowledge, subject matter expertise, and standardized assessments that cover the threats, existing capabilities, and vulnerabilities significant to the State of Delaware. These vectors are evaluated to understand potential harm to critical assets within the State that may cause disruptions and/or significant societal impacts.

These analyses include incident after-action reports, advisory council input, survey data, threat assessments, and hazard vulnerability assessment data. This data influences risk hierarchies in the following categories:

Physical Disruption

Multiple assessments are conducted to examine statewide threats and vulnerabilities that would cause physical disruption, ranging from incidents like active assailants to winter storms. These assessments, done by partners like the Delaware Information and Analysis Center and the Delaware Emergency Management Agency, provide a comprehensive overview of risk areas such as terrorism, hazardous materials, natural hazards, general crime, drug crime, and hate crime. Furthermore, these assessments examine gangs/organized crime groups, school safety, critical infrastructure, and site-specific threats in Delaware with a tie to critical infrastructure, personnel, and property.

Digital Disruption

In addition to physically disruptive threats, malicious cyber actors remain persistent. Threat groups have increasingly targeted critical infrastructure, disrupting vital services and accruing financial costs. Mass gatherings and other soft infrastructure continue to be a target for terrorist entities due to the relative ease of access and potential impact of a successful attack against such sites and communities. DSHS agencies work closely across the whole of government to identify and mitigate vulnerabilities to our cyber infrastructure at all levels of government through targeted testing, analysis, and remediation.

COUNTERMEASURES

Homeland security represents a collective effort. Countermeasures are strategically implemented to reduce risks and mitigate threats while attempting to anticipate the unforeseen. These countermeasures include robust training and exercise programs to ensure a state of readiness, integrated assessments, and the utilization and enhancement of available programs, which allow threats to be addressed holistically across a spectrum of partners. The Homeland Security Advisory Council (HSAC) was established post 9/11 and has regularly convened key partners to improve communication and coordination. The Council provides expertise on all facets of homeland security to the Cabinet Secretary and Homeland Security Advisor, who, in turn, can advise the Governor.

Risk is strategically brought down by utilizing programs like the Homeland Security Grant Program. Funded through federal grant dollars, this program assists state governments in preventing, protecting against, mitigating, responding to, and recovering from threats identified during their assessment processes. By leveraging the goals set by the HSAC, the Delaware Homeland Security Terrorism Preparedness Working Group (DHSTPWG) reviews and approves purchases that are proven to reduce risk and improve capabilities statewide. The Working Group is comprised of leaders from across the public safety spectrum, from firefighting to agriculture, and ensures expenditures align with that State's risk profile and associated goals.

Training opportunities are conducted to continue educating our homeland security partners to remain knowledgeable on the latest trends and tactics. Training and exercise needs are assessed and prioritized through an Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP). The plan is developed through an annual stakeholder meeting to coordinate statewide preparedness activities, including identifying specific training and exercises to reduce defined risks through a building block approach and continuous improvement processes.

Programs that support homeland security initiatives continue to evolve to address threats holistically and meet the needs of our communities. For example, in recent years, Delaware has taken strides to advance school safety initiatives, develop a comprehensive strategy for responding to active assailant

and hostile mass casualty incidents (MCI), and manage risks associated with emerging threats.

The Comprehensive School Safety Program (CSSP), responsible for ensuring school safety and compliance with state laws that require schools to have and practice emergency plans, has encouraged the use of after-action reports for exercises to aid schools in improving their plans based on lessons learned. They have also incorporated annual facility infrastructure assessments so schools can better understand their risks and completed a first-of-its-kind statewide effort to develop high-resolution tactical maps of all campuses that can be used for preparedness planning and response efforts. They have promoted a suite of no-cost tools, including standardized behavioral threat assessment and suicide risk assessment screening protocols, given schools access to the anonymous threat reporting and crisis counseling tools, and provided statewide trainings for standardized response and reunification methods during and after critical incidents.

A Public Safety Working Group was established to develop a comprehensive strategy to address emergency response to active assailant and hostile mass casualty incidents, and to improve integration between law enforcement, fire, telecommunications, and emergency medical services. Recognizing such incidents' complexity and unpredictable nature, an approach was developed that reinforces the importance of preparation, interagency coordination, and adherence to standardized protocols to effectively manage high-risk, low-frequency events. The group has developed a policy and implemented recurring training and exercise opportunities.

Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) serve as a vital tool to conduct security and vulnerability assessments, provide situational awareness, and support first responder operations. UAS can also pose various threats. The Delaware Airspace Management Working Group (DAMWG) was established to address managing risks associated with nefarious or malicious UAS operations; perform data collection and analysis to inform regulatory, legislative, and management decisions; support Advanced Air Mobility and Urban Air Mobility initiatives; and support Delaware public safety and government utilization of UAS by supporting a common training foundation and implementation of policies to utilize shared resources efficiently.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND ONGOING COORDINATION

To promote and protect the safety of people and property in the State of Delaware and collectively address the challenges of modern homeland security, the Department of Safety and Homeland Security has set the following goals:

- ✓ Minimize disruptions to Delawareans
 - Prepare for and prevent, when possible, the impacts of threats and hazards
 - Respond and recover effectively to incidents that do occur
 - Protect people, infrastructure, and resources through intentional actions
- ✓ Communicate effectively
 - Engage relevant stakeholders to ensure a broad view of homeland security issues are identified
 - Reduce barriers to information and intelligence sharing amongst public and private partners
 - Foster trust within our communities by promoting meaningful and engaging risk awareness activities
 - Be proactive in communicating with the public before, during, and after an incident.
 - Ensure training on interoperability for response partners.
- ✓ Evaluate risk methodically
 - Utilize quantitative and qualitative assessments to ensure accurate risk priorities are identified and addressed
 - Support the exchange of risk data amongst relevant partners
 - Utilize evaluation tools and methods that meet or exceed the industry standard
- ✓ Address evolving threats
 - Gather partner input and assess existing programs and initiatives to ensure evolving threats are addressed and integrated within existing processes to meet the needs of our community.

✓ Stay vigilant

- Review, evaluate, and validate plans, policies, and procedures, ensuring interoperability and coordination across local, state, regional, federal, and non-governmental homeland security partners.
- Provide realistic training and exercise opportunities to ensure a state of readiness and incorporate lessons learned into current planning processes.
- Update the Homeland Security Advisory Council's (HSAC) current structure and responsibilities during 2025.

Ensuring our State can address the ever-evolving threat landscape is a collective effort. This Homeland Security Strategy outlines actions and objectives that have been implemented to reduce risks and mitigate associated vulnerabilities while planning for the future. The State of Delaware strives to be at the forefront of homeland security through promoting and protecting the safety of people and property in Delaware.



"To promote and protect the safety of people and property in Delaware."