



## Department of Homeland Security Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report for 18 December 2008

Current Nationwide Threat Level is

**ELEVATED**  
SIGNIFICANT RISK OF TERRORIST ATTACKS

[For info click here](http://www.dhs.gov/)  
<http://www.dhs.gov/>

- According to Global Security Newswire, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission announced Friday that staffers had recommended employing heightened security measures rather than replacement of cesium chloride, which is used in medical and industrial devices. (See item [6](#))
- The Associated Press reports that New Hampshire’s Department of Health and Human Services mistakenly released personal information about Medicare Part D recipients to its service providers two weeks ago and is now notifying those affected. (See item [23](#))

**DHS Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report Fast Jump**

Production Industries: [Energy](#); [Chemical](#); [Nuclear Reactors, Materials and Waste](#); [Defense Industrial Base](#); [Dams](#)

Service Industries: [Banking and Finance](#); [Transportation](#); [Postal and Shipping](#); [Information Technology](#); [Communications](#); [Commercial Facilities](#)

Sustenance and Health: [Agriculture and Food](#); [Water](#); [Public Health and Healthcare](#)

Federal and State: [Government Facilities](#); [Emergency Services](#); [National Monuments and Icons](#)

### Energy Sector

Current Electricity Sector Threat Alert Levels: **Physical: ELEVATED, Cyber: ELEVATED**  
Scale: LOW, GUARDED, ELEVATED, HIGH, SEVERE [Source: ISAC for the Electricity Sector (ES-ISAC) – <http://www.esisac.com>]

1. *December 17, Longmont Times-Call* – (Colorado) **Explosion at Dacono gas plant injures 1.** An explosion at a gas plant outside of Dacono, Colorado, late Tuesday morning left one plant employee with minor injuries, according to incident officials. Fort Lupton and Mountain View firefighters responded to the fire caused by the 11:09 a.m. explosion at the DCP Midstream natural gas plant. Firefighters initially stayed about a half-mile away while the gas flow to the building was shut down, said the deputy chief of Mountain View Fire Protection District. He added that neither the cause nor the exact location of the explosion had been determined Tuesday afternoon. Five employees working at the plant were evacuated. A DCP spokeswoman said the company

will work with fire officials to determine the cause of the explosion.

Source: [http://www.timescall.com/news\\_story.asp?ID=13033](http://www.timescall.com/news_story.asp?ID=13033)

2. *December 17, Ventura County Star* – (California) **1 injured in well head explosion.** Authorities responded Wednesday morning to a report of a well head explosion north of Ventura, California, an area where oilfields and natural gas wells are located. One person was injured in the explosion, which was reported in the 3600 block of Ventura Avenue near Shell Road about 11:19 a.m., according to the Ventura County Fire Department. At 11:43 a.m., the fire department was reporting that the incident included the release of benzene, a flammable petroleum product.

Source: <http://www.venturacountystar.com/news/2008/dec/17/1-injured-well-head-explosion/>

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## **Chemical Industry Sector**

3. *December 16, Houston Chronicle* – (Texas) **Explosion rattles Montgomery County chemical plant.** An explosion at an east Montgomery County chemical facility broke windows at the plant and rattled a few neighbors, but no one was injured and the damage was quickly contained, a company official said. The blast blew the top off an empty tank that normally holds methyldiethanolamine, a nonhazardous chemical used in detergents and fabric softeners, the plant manager said. Company officials are investigating why the blast occurred. The explosion shattered some windows and shook some ceiling tiles loose, the manager said, but there was no fire or chemical release. Employees were evacuated as a precaution until emergency crews could determine that the situation was under control. Surrounding units also were shut down while the tank was examined, but the plant later resumed normal operations

Source: <http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/headline/metro/6167302.html>

4. *December 16, Central Valley Business Times* – (California) **Cal/EPA moves closer to banning certain chemical.** The use of certain toxic substances in products and manufacturing processes would be banned or reduced in California under the California Environmental Protection Agency's final recommendations for the state's "green chemistry initiative" released Tuesday. "Rather than managing wastes at the end of a product's lifecycle, green chemistry shifts our focus to designing chemicals, processes, and goods that have little or no adverse effects during the manufacturing, use or disposal of a product," says the head of Cal/EPA. Among the six policy recommendations, the Cal/EPA claims its proposal will "Accelerate the quest for safer products, creating a systematic, science-based process to evaluate chemicals of concern and alternatives to ensure product safety and reduce or eliminate the need for chemical-by-chemical bans," and "Move toward a cradle-to-cradle economy, establishing a California green products registry to develop green metrics and tools (e.g., environmental footprint calculators, sustainability indexes) for a range of consumer products and encourage their use by businesses."

Source: <http://www.centralvalleybusinesstimes.com/stories/001/?ID=10632>

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## **Nuclear Reactors, Materials, and Waste Sector**

5. *December 16, Associated Press* – (Arizona) **Prison for nuke engineer who took software to Iran.** An Iranian-born engineer who worked at the nation's largest nuclear power plant was sentenced December 16 to 15 months in prison for taking computer software that he obtained at the plant to Iran. The engineer, a naturalized U.S. citizen, worked for the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station west of Phoenix for 17 years. Palo Verde officials have said the software did not contain enough information to pose a security threat. In May, a federal jury convicted him of illegally accessing a protected computer but deadlocked on two other counts. He then reached a deal with prosecutors in which he pleaded to one of the remaining counts. The other one, involving violation of the U.S. trade embargo with Iran, was dropped.

Source:

[http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/N/NUCLEAR\\_PLANT\\_ENGINEER?SITE=NYONE&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT](http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/N/NUCLEAR_PLANT_ENGINEER?SITE=NYONE&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT)

6. *December 15, Global Security Newswire* – (National) **U.S. agency fails to address potential “dirty bomb” threat, lawmaker says.** A U.S. Representative from Massachusetts said Friday that the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission would be ignoring the potential use of cesium chloride as an ingredient in radiological “dirty bombs” by refusing to prohibit the use of the radioactive isotope. The commission announced Friday that staffers had recommended employing heightened security measures rather than replacement of the material, which is used in medical and industrial devices. A press release said the commission itself had not made its decision. A National Academy of Sciences report in February found that cesium chloride could be replaced in most or all uses by safer materials, the congressman said. He co-sponsored legislation that would require the material to be phased out of use wherever possible and to prohibit licensing of additional sources.

Source: [http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw\\_20081215\\_1090.php](http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20081215_1090.php)

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## **Defense Industrial Base Sector**

7. *December 17, Ventura County Star* – (California) **Plutonium not found at Field Lab burn pit.** Initial testing that showed the presence of plutonium in a burn pit at the Santa Susana Field Laboratory near Simi Valley proved to be incorrect, a state official said Tuesday. The state Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), had previously said plutonium was discovered there. The director of the DTSC said he learned Tuesday that subsequent and more refined analysis of the samples taken in the pit indicated the initial reading for plutonium was wrong. Samples taken at the pit, at the former rocket engine and nuclear test site in the hills south of Simi Valley, also found low levels of radium-226. The pit became a source of controversy two years ago when nearly 200 pages of documents were made public. The records, released in 2006 by current lab owner Boeing Co., showed a variety of toxic chemicals were burned in the pit, including

napalm, potassium cyanide, and chromium. The lab's former owner, Rocketdyne, trucked in some of the toxins from other facilities, primarily its Canoga Park site and another lab at the Santa Susana site where radioactive work was conducted.

Source: <http://www.venturacountystar.com/news/2008/dec/17/plutonium-not-found-field-lab-burn-pit/>

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## **Banking and Finance Sector**

8. *December 17, Washington Post* – (National) **CheckFree.com hijack may have Affected 160,000 users.** Online bill pay giant CheckFree.com said the hijacking of its Web site this month affected an estimated 160,000 people, a disclosure that offers the most detailed account yet of the true size and scope of a brazen type of attack that experts say may become more common in 2009. In a filing with Wisconsin's Office of Privacy Protection, CheckFree said at least 160,000 people may have visited the site during the nine-hour period it was hijacked, which had redirected visitors to a site in Ukraine. An analysis of that Ukrainian site indicated that it was trying to exploit known security flaws in Adobe Acrobat and Adobe Reader, in an attempt to install a variant of the the Gozi Trojan, which is among the most sophisticated password-stealing programs in use today.  
CheckFree controls between 70 to 80 percent of the U.S. online bill pay market. Among the 330 kinds of bills consumers can pay through CheckFree are military credit accounts, utility bills, insurance payments, mortgage, and loan payments. CheckFree said it has sent warning notices to about five million consumers.  
Source:  
[http://voices.washingtonpost.com/securityfix/2008/12/checkfreecom\\_hijack\\_may\\_have\\_a.html](http://voices.washingtonpost.com/securityfix/2008/12/checkfreecom_hijack_may_have_a.html)
9. *December 17, New York Daily News* – (National) **SEC admits it blew many chances to uncover financial fraud of Bernie Madoff.** The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) confessed Tuesday it blew chance after chance for at least a decade to uncover Madoff's \$50 billion Ponzi scheme. The chairman of the SEC ordered a probe by the SEC's inspector general, saying the agency's staff had "credible and specific allegations" but never brought them to commissioners. He ordered all SEC staffers who had contact with the defendant or his family removed from the investigation. The chairman called his agency's lack of action "deeply troubling." The SEC's enforcement division investigated the defendant's company only last year, without bringing a claim.  
Source: [http://www.nydailynews.com/money/2008/12/16/2008-12-16\\_sec\\_admits\\_it\\_blew\\_many\\_chances\\_to\\_uncov.html](http://www.nydailynews.com/money/2008/12/16/2008-12-16_sec_admits_it_blew_many_chances_to_uncov.html)
10. *December 17, Bloomberg* – (National) **Billionaire Ford shops for banks as government welcomes buyers.** A billionaire from Texas now has \$2 billion to buy banks and the regulatory authority to spend it. He is looking for banks on the cheap after regulators in November granted his investment group a charter previously restricted to federally insured depository firms. U.S. regulators are loosening 50-year-old banking

rules amid a financial crisis that has wiped out 25 banks this year and threatens at least 171 more, raising concerns that traditional lenders may not be able to step in. The billionaire's investment firms add to a growing list of non-banks, including securities firms, insurers, and credit-card issuers that have been cleared to buy retail deposits and branches. The billionaire was granted a "shelf charter" by the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, expanding the "pool of potential buyers available to buy troubled institutions," according to a statement from the regulator on November 21. He said he applied in October, after receiving encouragement from the OCC and the California Department of Financial Institutions. The Federal Reserve since 1956 has allowed investment firms to own no more than 9.9 percent of banks and have limited board representation unless they become bank holding companies. A shift began in September when it was announced that the founder of New York investment firm J.C. Flowers & Co. won regulatory approval to buy a Missouri bank. Another billionaire has also expressed a willingness to purchase banks. "It seems like they're running out of choices," said a senior consultant at Austin, Texas-based Mortgage Banking Solutions. "They need to bring outside investment into the process just to get the banking sector back on the right track."

Source:

<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601103&sid=aEXLJ6RgPSKk&refer=us>

11. *December 17, Associated Press* – (National) **Citibank's computers down, blocking account info.** Customers of New York City-based Citibank have lost access to much of their account information because of a computer outage. Many of the troubled bank's clients have not been able to retrieve account details online or by telephone since Tuesday afternoon. Others can access only parts of their account profiles. Citibank telephone representatives say they do not know what caused the outage but technicians are working to fix it. They have been telling customers to call back after Wednesday morning.

Source:

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5hWYJt03XY1Au0bpbCoTBi51PSVzgD954EG500>

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## **Transportation Sector**

12. *December 17, Associated Press* – (Massachusetts) **54 MBTA workers who failed drug tests still on job.** More than 50 MBTA (T) employees who failed random drug or alcohol tests over the last two years remain on the job. The Boston Herald reviewed the transit system's testing records after two trolley operators who were involved in accidents last month were fired after failing drug tests. Of the more than 8,700 employees who were randomly tested since 2006, the review found 77 had failed, 23 of whom eventually lost their jobs or resigned. Fifty-four remain at work. The Herald reported that 12 bus drivers, two train operators, and three streetcar operators were among those fired. The T's two-strike policy gives employees who fail substance abuse tests a second chance following a 40-day unpaid suspension. Operators who fail a test after an accident are fired immediately.

Source: <http://wbztv.com/local/mbta.drug.tests.2.889349.html>

13. *December 17, WXOW 19 La Crosse* – (Minnesota) **Train cars fall into Mississippi after derailment.** Authorities say an accident involving two freight trains has injured two people, set off a propane leak, and caused some railroad cars to fall into the Mississippi River. The La Crescent Fire Chief says the accident happened about 5:30 a.m. Wednesday near Dresbach, at the southeastern corner of Minnesota. Two railroad employees on the trains were injured. The immediate area has been evacuated because the accident caused a propane leak at a switching station. A Winona County Emergency Management spokesman says liquid ammonia is leaking from some cars but is not a public danger. Authorities say one train had 100 cars, and the other had 15.

Source: [http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20081217/ap\\_on\\_re\\_us/train\\_derailment](http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20081217/ap_on_re_us/train_derailment)

14. *December 17, Los Angeles Times* – (California) **L.A. airport agency gets poor marks for emergency response.** Despite significant improvements over the last decade, facilities managed by Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) continue to struggle with emergency response, regional coordination, and the financial solvency of Van Nuys Airport, according to an audit released Tuesday. The city's airports still lack a plan to coordinate law enforcement, airport operations, airlines, and federal security agencies in an emergency, despite the improvement and expansion of police services since 9/11. LAX has been ranked by the state as the Number 1 potential target for terrorists in California. "If there was a major incident out there, a wide range of city employees who work at the airport would not know what to do. The majority of them, they are not trained, and there is no well-formulated plan in place. There is work to be done," said a Los Angeles city controller. The wide-ranging, 525-page audit, which cost almost \$700,000, looked at 25 major airports for comparison purposes and surveyed thousands of LAWA employees, elected officials, stakeholders, and citizens interested in local airports.

Source: <http://www.latimes.com/news/local/politics/cal/la-me-laxaudit17-2008dec17,0,1221154.story>

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## **Postal and Shipping Sector**

15. *December 17, Earthtimes* – (International) **Tests negative on white powder sent to U.S. embassies.** More than a dozen U.S. embassies in Europe have received mail containing a white powder, but tests of the substance have been negative, the U.S. State Department said Wednesday. A deputy spokesman confirmed that 15 embassies have received the powder, which was examined for a variety of hazardous substances. The envelopes were postmarked in the State of Texas. "There have been some initial tests that have been done, and all of them have proved negative," he said, adding the State Department was still awaiting the results of a test on powder mailed to the embassy in The Hague. Embassies in Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland have all received the powder, he said. He did not say what the substance was. The Spanish interior ministry said the powder mailed to the embassy in Madrid

was flour. In addition, the Federal Bureau of Investigation said more than 40 State governors since December 8 have received mail containing the suspicious powder. All postmarked from Texas, the letters began showing up in states last week, according to the Associated Press. They all appear to be from the same source, and have tested negative for any dangerous toxin or other threat.

Source: <http://www.earthtimes.org/articles/show/246753,tests-negative-on-white-powder-sent-to-us-embassies--summary.html>

See also:

[http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5hRXPAl74ls3KjW2x2uc\\_1-UtBfhwD9543OVG0](http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5hRXPAl74ls3KjW2x2uc_1-UtBfhwD9543OVG0)

16. *December 16, KUTV 2 Salt Lake City* – (Utah) **No dangerous substances found in package at Utah National Guard Headquarters.** The Utah National Guard headquarters was evacuated after a suspicious package was found in the mailroom. A Guard spokesman said the package matched a security advisory issued after white powder began arriving at State capitols. More than 400 people were sent home as a precaution. The package included anti-war compact discs.  
Source: <http://www.kutv.com/content/news/topnews/story/No-Dangerous-Substances-Found-In-Package-At-Utah/HD1LBGDZvUunQe7AcrwBuw.csp>
17. *December 16, Denver Post* – (Colorado) **White powder false alarm at Denver Cop Shop.** A white powder turned out to be a false alarm at a Denver police office in the Bear Valley Shopping Center this afternoon. A woman brought an envelope with the powder and a threatening letter into the police Cop Shop just before 4 p.m., prompting officials to lockdown the office. The letter contained a skull and crossbones, the centuries-old symbol for poison. Hazardous material crews raced to the center on South Sheridan Boulevard near West Hampden Avenue, but quickly determined the powder was not toxic, said a Denver Fire Department spokesman. A retired Denver police officer who volunteers at the Cop Shop said the woman is involved in a property dispute and the letter, mailed from Lakewood, might be related to that.  
Source: [http://www.denverpost.com/headlines/ci\\_11246934](http://www.denverpost.com/headlines/ci_11246934)
18. *December 16, News-Review* – (Oregon) **Roseburg Post Office reopens after bomb scare.** After a three-hour closure following the discovery of a suspicious suitcase, the Roseburg Post Office has been reopened. Police removed the black suitcase on wheels at about 3 p.m. today after tracking down its owner, who apparently left it inside the building when she was mailing packages, police said. The building had been evacuated shortly after noon as a safety precaution, and police blocked off Kane Street between Oak and Washington Avenues. Officials at a nearby bank also decided to evacuate. Police were waiting for the Eugene Police Department bomb squad to arrive when they found the suitcase's owner. The woman, who had been waiting inside a Roseburg Fire Department special operations truck, declined to comment as she got in her car to leave with her suitcase.  
Source:  
<http://www.nrtoday.com/article/20081216/NEWS/812169907/1063/NEWS&ParentProfile=1055&title=Roseburg%20Post%20Office%20reopens%20after%20bomb%20scare>

19. *December 16, Camp Verde Bugle* – (Arizona) **Suspicious package brings in bomb squad.** The report of a suspicious package brought the Department of Public Safety's explosives unit to Camp Verde and shut down businesses in the Outpost mall shopping center for almost four hours on Monday. The incident began when a man reported that he had picked up a suspicious package at the Camp Verde Post Office. He reported that he became suspicious when he noticed the package had no return address and reportedly stated that he was not expecting any packages.

Source:

<http://campverdebugleonline.com/main.asp?SectionID=1&subsectionID=1&articleID=21792>

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## **Agriculture and Food Sector**

20. *December 17, BBC News* – (International) **China cull amid bird flu outbreak.** More than 370,000 chickens have been culled in China's eastern province of Jiangsu after an outbreak of the H5N1 strain of bird flu, say officials. Meanwhile, a bird cull is also under way in India. In China, the usual precautions have been imposed: birds have been slaughtered in the surrounding area, farms quarantined and disinfected, and the transport of fowl banned. But no information has been released about the scale of the outbreak — how many birds were found to be carrying the H5N1 strain of the virus and how many of them died. Officials say they think migrating birds might have been the source of the disease.

Source: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7787118.stm>

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## **Water Sector**

21. *December 16, WLOS 13 Asheville* – (North Carolina) **Asheville water chlorine concerns.** A line malfunction led to higher-than-normal levels of chlorine in Asheville's water supply. City crews spent most of the day testing the water supply, and say the levels should be back to normal by now. The problem started with the failure of a feed line at the North Fork treatment plant last night. That forced crews to put chlorine into the system by hand, which led to the higher levels. Chlorine levels reached more than 4 parts per million, which is above the state limit, but officials say there was never a health hazard to the public.

Source: [http://www.wlos.com/shared/newsroom/top\\_stories/wlos\\_vid\\_1838.shtml](http://www.wlos.com/shared/newsroom/top_stories/wlos_vid_1838.shtml)

22. *December 15, KARK 4 Little Rock* – (Arkansas) **Department of Environmental Quality tells two wastewater companies to shut down.** Two companies that dispose of wastewater from natural gas drilling sites are being forced to cease operations. At Central Arkansas Disposal (CAD), big-rigs used to back up this drive and dump hundreds of thousands of gallons of water into these storage tanks, before being pumped into an irrigation system and sprinkled on nearby fields. But today, the place is

completely quiet. The Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) issued an emergency order against CAD, requiring them to cease operations immediately. The report alleges that an individual complained of dumping in a nearby reservoir. Upon testing the reservoir, the report says ADEQ found that chloride levels were too high. It also says an employee conceded that the fluid in the reservoir was from the CAD facility and that nearby Raft Creek had been contaminated, causing fish kills. Lastly, the report adds that the discharge of drilling fluids into raft creek presents an imminent danger to public health and welfare.

Source: <http://arkansasmatters.com/content/fulltext/news/?cid=166071>

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## **Public Health and Healthcare Sector**

23. *December 17, Associated Press* – (New Hampshire) **NH agency mistakenly releases clients' information.** New Hampshire's Department of Health and Human Services mistakenly released personal information about Medicare Part D recipients to its service providers two weeks ago and is now notifying those affected. In letters to clients and providers obtained Wednesday by the Associated Press, the department said it is taking steps to make sure no information is used illegally. But it urged the people affected to initiate credit fraud alerts or freezes on their accounts. The department's associate commissioner said 9,300 clients are affected by the breach, the first at the department. Their information was mistakenly attached to a December 1 e-mail to 61 providers and health-related organizations, such as nursing homes and home health care agencies. The e-mail described changes to Medicare Part D plans, which help people buy prescription drugs. The attached document contained names, addresses, Medicare Part D plan information, Social Security numbers, and the amount of each person's monthly premiums. The department said it discovered the breach on December 4 and began contacting those who got the e-mail to ask them to delete the information.  
Source: <http://wbztv.com/local/newhampshire/nh.information.breach.2.889335.html>
24. *December 16, Reuters* – (National) **Health, emergency staff get drugs first in pandemic.** Health care and emergency services workers who might help sick people during an influenza pandemic should take antiviral drugs throughout the epidemic, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services said in new guidance released on Tuesday. Employers such as hospitals should be responsible for stockpiling the drugs and designating who gets them, HHS said in its latest guidance. People with weakened immune systems, such as cancer patients, should also get prophylactic antivirals, HHS said. Two antiviral drugs can both prevent and treat all forms of influenza A, including H5N1. They are Roche and Gilead Sciences Inc's Tamiflu and GlaxoSmithKline and Biota Holdings Ltd's Relenza.  
Source: <http://www.reuters.com/article/scienceNews/idUSTRE4BF7P320081216>
25. *December 15, Reuters* – (International) **Egyptian girl dies of bird flu.** A 16-year-old girl died of the deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu Monday, the 23rd fatality and 51st case of the disease among humans in Egypt, state news agency MENA said. The girl from a village in the central Egyptian province of Asyut caught the disease after exposure to

sick household poultry, MENA quoted a health ministry official as saying. The official said she began suffering symptoms a week ago, after two of the household ducks died and the remainder of the flock was slaughtered in the house. Her death is the first bird flu fatality in Egypt since April, and the first of the current winter season. The virus, which first appeared in Egypt in February 2006, tends to be less active in summer.  
Source: <http://uk.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUKTRE4BE5YD20081215>

26. *December 15, U.S. Food and Drug Administration* – (National) **FDA announces class I recalls of two unapproved devices.** The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced a Class 1 recall Monday for two unapproved and uncleared devices whose manufacturers claimed could treat various medical conditions. A Class 1 recall means that there is a reasonable probability that the use of a device will cause adverse health consequences or death. The manufacturers, VIBE Technologies of Greeley, Colorado, and Nebion LLC of Los Angeles, California, claimed their devices treated conditions ranging from cancer to migraines. The FDA is concerned that based upon the original health claims made by the company, patients may forgo approved therapies, and that this could result in more severe illness or death.

Source: <http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/NEWS/2008/NEW01925.html>

27. *December 15, NextGov.com* – (National) **HHS head calls for voluntary e-health privacy guidelines.** The head of the Health and Human Services Department called for the health care industry to develop voluntary guidelines to ensure the privacy of patient-controlled personal health records rather than allow the Federal Government to mandate rules. The Secretary, speaking Monday at the Nationwide Health Information Network Forum in Washington, said if the government mandated how vendors must protect the privacy of personal electronic health records, then he would not see widespread adoption of e-health records “in my lifetime.” He said the government should develop basic privacy guidelines, but should not establish privacy rules.

Source: [http://www.nextgov.com/nextgov/ng\\_20081215\\_3876.php](http://www.nextgov.com/nextgov/ng_20081215_3876.php)

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## **Government Facilities Sector**

28. *December 16, Nextgov.com* – (National) **AT&T to offer secure Internet connections under telecom contract.** The General Services Administration announced on Monday that AT&T has been awarded the first contract to deliver secure Internet connections to federal agencies via the Networx Universal telecommunications program. AT&T will offer Managed Trusted Internet Protocol Services under the Office of Management and Budget’s Trusted Internet Connections initiative, announced in November 2007. The goal is to reduce the number of Internet connections in the federal government to fewer than 100 in 2009; the exact deadline has yet to be determined. “GSA has provided resources to assist the successful implementation of the TIC initiative and made information systems security a priority in their strategic plans,” said the OMB administrator for e-government and information technology. “Fewer external connections mean fewer vulnerabilities and better secured networks.” Networx Universal is an indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity contract vehicle with a ceiling of

\$48.1 billion over 10 years. Combined with Network Enterprise, it is the federal government's largest telecommunications program. AT&T's latest offering will include a system to detect computer network intrusions as well as a security operations center to protect agencies' networks. GSA still is evaluating secure Internet connection proposals from Verizon and Qwest Communications, the other two vendors on Network Universal.

Source: [http://www.nextgov.com/nextgov/ng\\_20081216\\_1938.php](http://www.nextgov.com/nextgov/ng_20081216_1938.php)

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## **Emergency Services Sector**

29. *December 17, Times-Picayune* – (Louisiana) **New Orleans regains level 1 trauma center.** For the first time since Hurricane Katrina's floodwaters devastated Charity Hospital, New Orleans once again has an emergency department that has been designated one of the best in the country. The American College of Surgeons has declared the Interim LSU Public Hospital a Level 1 Trauma Center, meaning that it has not only beds and equipment but also a full complement of surgical specialists on hand to deal with all potential emergencies. That designation, which is to be announced today at a news conference, is one that the New Orleans hospital shares with about 115 other American institutions, according to the American College of Surgeons' Web site. The only other Level 1 Trauma Center in Louisiana is at LSU Health Sciences Center in Shreveport.

Source: <http://www.emsresponder.com/features/article.jsp?id=8669&siteSection=24>

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## **Information Technology**

30. *December 16, The Register* – (International) **Nine in ten emails now spam.** Nine in ten emails are now spam with an estimated 200bn junk mail messages a day clogging up the Internet, according to a new report by networking and security giant Cisco. Drive-by download attacks — planting redirection scripts on legitimate sites that lead onto hacker controlled websites full of exploits — have become a popular method for spreading all forms of malware, including botnet clients that turn PCs into spam-churning zombies. The United States is the single biggest source of spam, accounting for 17.2 percent of junk mail. Other big offenders include Turkey (9.2 percent), Russia (8 percent), Canada (4.7 percent), Brazil (4.1 percent), India (3.5 percent), South Korea (3.3 percent), Germany and the United Kingdom (2.9 percent each). The compromise of legitimate domains is all part of the bigger picture of increasingly sophisticated attacks which these days are usually tied to cybercrooks looking to turn a fast buck, rather than teenagers looking to make a name for themselves. Vulnerabilities are the fodder of these cyberattacks — Cisco reports that vulnerabilities increased 11.5 percent from 2007. One of the big growth areas in this overall figure was a rise in vulnerabilities involving virtualisation technology, which almost trebled from 35 last year to 103 in 2008.

Source: [http://www.theregister.co.uk/2008/12/16/spam\\_plague/](http://www.theregister.co.uk/2008/12/16/spam_plague/)

31. *December 16, DarkReading* – (International) **Researcher: Poor SSL implementations leave many sites at risk.** Major sites continue to operate with expired or misconfigured SSL certificates, according to a researcher at Canola & Jones. Flawed implementations of the Secure Sockets Layer encryption algorithm could be exposing Websites to attack and compromise, according to new research scheduled to be released later this month. A researcher at security consulting firm Canola & Jones is working on a paper about SSL vulnerabilities that will be presented at the Chaos Communication Camp (CCC) hacker conference in Berlin at the end of this month. The paper outlines the results of tests he conducted using simple search engines and his knowledge of cryptography and SSL certificates. While much of the blame for these faults lies with the companies who operate the Websites, the research also suggests there may be a strong need for better standards and practices among SSL certificate authorities, the researcher says.  
Source: <http://www.darkreading.com/security/encryption/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=212500786>
32. *December 16, DarkReading* – (International) **Researcher releases free DoS hacking tool.** ‘LetDown’ can take down a Website, find DoS weaknesses. A researcher has unleashed a free denial-of-service (DoS) hacking tool for flooding TCP sessions. Called LetDown, the penetration testing tool is part of a larger package of tools called Complemento that was created by an Italian researcher. “Complemento is a collection of tools that I originally grokked up for my personal toolchain for solving some problems or just for fun,” he wrote in his post announcing the availability of the tools. He also admits having concerns about releasing LetDown to the public. “Basically, LetDown is a TCP flooder that completes the three-way handshake and sends a request to the server without closing the connection,” he said. “LetDown is aimed specifically at pen testers and server owners that want to test the resiliency of their networks against DoS attacks in order to properly configure the rules on resource management on their systems.” The other Complemento tools include a domain scanner called Reverse Raider that brute-force scans target subdomains or performs reverse-resolution for IP address ranges, and Httsquash, an HTTP server scanner, banner grabber, and data retriever.  
Source: <http://www.darkreading.com/security/attacks/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=212500752>
33. *December 16, ZDNet* – (International) **Apple plugs 21 Mac OS X security holes.** Apple has released a peck of patches to cover at least 21 documented security vulnerabilities affecting Mac OS X users. With its eighth security update for 2008, the company shipped fixes for flaws that could lead to remote code execution and denial-of-service attacks. The patch batch also covers a range of serious vulnerabilities in the Adobe Flash Player plug-in.  
Source: <http://blogs.zdnet.com/security/?p=2311>
34. *December 15, SC Magazine* – (International) **Security issues present in browser password management.** Among Web browsers, Google Chrome and Apple’s Safari provide the least amount of protection for stored passwords, according to new research from Internet security consultancy Chapin Information Services. When logging into

Gmail, for example, a user's credentials will go to the Gmail server. But if the code were to be altered so as to redirect usernames and passwords to a malicious domain, it turns out that IE, Safari, and Chrome will send the information to the criminals.

Source: <http://www.scmagazineus.com/Security-issues-present-in-browser-password-management/article/122880/>

### **Internet Alert Dashboard**

To report cyber infrastructure incidents or to request information, please contact US-CERT at [soc@us-cert.gov](mailto:soc@us-cert.gov) or visit their Website: <http://www.us-cert.gov>.

Information on IT information sharing and analysis can be found at the IT ISAC (Information Sharing and Analysis Center) Website: <https://www.it-isac.org/>.

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## **Communications Sector**

35. *December 17, Smoky Mountain News* – (North Carolina) **Verizon cell tower violates county ordinance.** Verizon Wireless added 20 feet to the height of its tower off Mauney Cove without the necessary permits from Haywood County, North Carolina. When it eventually submitted one last month, it failed to mention the work had already been done. The construction not only needed a permit, but also an exemption from the county's cell tower ordinance. The extra 20 feet built onto the tower means the tower's fall zone is too close to the neighboring property line. A commissioner said the commissioners should go ahead with the public hearing on the merits of the application, unswayed by the fact the work has been done. If the county commissioners decide not to grant the variance, the company will have to take down what they have built. County commissioners decided the original application is flawed, however, since it makes no mention of the work already being done. So the commissioners decided the company should start over by submitting a new and accurate application, and a new public hearing date would be set.

Source: [http://www.smokymountainnews.com/issues/12\\_08/12\\_17\\_08/fr\\_verizon.html](http://www.smokymountainnews.com/issues/12_08/12_17_08/fr_verizon.html)

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## **Commercial Facilities Sector**

Nothing to report

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## **National Monuments & Icons Sector**

Nothing to report

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## Dams Sector

36. *December 17, Republican Eagle* – (Minnesota) **County to pay \$14,200 for dam study.** Goodhue County will pay Ayres Associates \$14,200 to calculate the probable maximum flood model for Byllesby Dam in Cannon Falls. The probable flood will be based on the possible maximum precipitation upstream of the dam, a scenario the county has hired a separate group of consultants to determine. County officials were forced into action when the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission ordered Dakota and Goodhue county officials to make structural improvements at the 100-year-old dam so it passes the probable maximum flood.

Source: <http://www.republican-eagle.com/articles/index.cfm?id=55365&section=News>

37. *December 16, Bakersfield Californian* – (California) **Evacuation plan for dam failure outlined.** Kern County supervisors got a glimpse Tuesday of a draft evacuation plan that would be launched if the two dams at Isabella Lake failed. The dams, which are leaking and located on an active earthquake fault, are unlikely to fail, according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. But the county and the Corps are preparing for a worst-case scenario — massive flooding of all communities down river from the dam, including most of Bakersfield. The county emergency services manager said the dam is likely to fail slowly and in stages. “Being an earth-filled dam — they do not fail immediately,” said a county consultant. “They don’t burst like a concrete dam will.” So the county has prepared a six-level plan that ties levels of risk to immediate emergency response and evacuation plans. Early in 2009, the county emergency services manager said, the Corps will release a list of alternative solutions for repairing the dam.

Source: <http://www.bakersfield.com/102/story/640170.html>

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To report cyber infrastructure incidents or to request information, please contact US-CERT at [soc@us-cert.gov](mailto:soc@us-cert.gov) or visit their Web page at [www.us-cert.gov](http://www.us-cert.gov).

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