



STRATEGIC NATIONAL STOCKPILE

1. What is the Technical Assistance Review tool?

The Technical Assistance Review (TAR) is a measurement tool utilized by the CDC's Division of Strategic National Stockpile (DSNS) to determine a project area's level of planning to receive, stage, store, distribute and dispense DSNS provided materiel. It is utilized on both the state and local levels. The state TAR is used to assess a state's plan to receive stage, store and distribute SNS assets during a public health emergency. The local TAR is used to assess a local jurisdiction's (city or metro statistical area) capability to dispense mass prophylaxis within 48 hours of a bioterrorist act, per the Cities Readiness Initiative.

2. What are the functions that the project areas are rated on?

Generally, the TAR focuses on the key elements that are regarded as either critical or important planning steps within various functions. These functions include:

- *Developing an SNS plan*
- *Managing SNS operations*
- *Requesting SNS assistance*
- *Tactical communications*
- *Public information and communications*
- *Security*
- *Receiving, staging, and storing*
- *Controlling inventory*
- *Repackaging*
- *Distribution*
- *Dispensing*
- *Hospitals and alternate care facilities*
- *Training, exercising, and evaluating*

The qualifiers used to justify the scoring for each element have been provided to officials in each of the project areas.

3. Describe the new system.

Project areas are visited annually by a DSNS program service consultant. If the project area's review is scored 69% or higher, then the next review is performed the following year. On the other hand, if the project area's review scores are below 69%, then recommendations are made for improvement, and a follow-up review takes place within six months of the initial review.





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4. How does the current review process differ from the old system?

The current methodology for reviewing a project area's preparedness planning for receiving SNS materiel took effect as of September 11, 2006. Overall, the new TAR process is more objective and enlists descriptive and quantifiable processes that better denotes planning expectations.

5. How was the old system rated?

The old review process was based on a color coded system. Green represented the highest level of preparedness planning, amber represented average, while red was the lowest rating.

6. Why did we change the rating system?

To minimize the subjectivity of the review process, HHS enlisted the RAND Corporation to assist DSNS in the review of the state and local TAR tool. HHS and DSNS requested recommendations for improving the review process that would help states and locals develop comprehensive preparedness plans and explore methods to measure capability and overall readiness. The tool was changed to assess gaps, to target technical assistance activities, and to monitor areas of improvement.

7. Will their scores be made public? If not, why not.

Scores are provided to the Department of Health and Human Services and other stakeholders requesting data in aggregate. Due to the sensitive nature of security related information, individual project area assessment reports and ratings are not disclosed to the general public.

8. How do the states view the new system?

The developmental of the new rating system was vetted through the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials and the National Association of County and City Health Officials for their review and comments, and initial feedback from state and local governments has been positive.. Individual states have commented in various meetings that the new process is much improved over the old evaluation system.

