

BioWatch



Program Overview

The BioWatch Program is the only civilian biodetection system able to provide early warning of a biological attack, and provides leadership, guidance, and support to state and local partners. Studies have shown that the combination of early warning and a rapid public health response saves lives and significantly reduces the illness rate in the event of an intentional release of specific aerosolized biological agents.

Key Objectives and Goals

The BioWatch Program's goal is to reduce morbidity and mortality following a bioterrorist attack through the detection, initiation of rapid public health response, and early warning by meeting the following objectives.

- ▶ **Operate and sustain a biodetection capability** throughout the United States.
- ▶ **Engage state and local stakeholders** on preparedness and response activities.
- ▶ **Establish coordination mechanisms** between federal, state, local, and tribal stakeholders for normal and enhanced operations.

Core Activities and Capabilities

- ▶ **Monitor and Identify.**
BioWatch operates air samplers in designated U.S. locations. The filters from those air samplers are retrieved daily and analyzed in BioWatch laboratories, which are held to rigorous quality standards, to determine the presence of specific biological agents.
- ▶ **Plan and Prepare.**
BioWatch Jurisdictional Coordinators help state and local partners plan and prepare by facilitating trainings, drills, and exercises to enhance coordination, communication, and decision-making. These efforts integrate BioWatch into broader emergency planning, strengthening all-hazards preparedness and building a critical network for responding to bioterrorism.
- ▶ **Notify and Respond.**
Upon detection of a biological agent, BioWatch alerts federal, state, and local partners, and coordinates initial actions to ensure timely and efficient response.

Successes and Impacts

- ▶ Operates daily in **30+ metropolitan areas in 22 states**, protecting approximately one-third of the U.S. population during its routine operations.
- ▶ Provides increased capability and coverage by **supporting 80+ high-visibility special events per year**.
- ▶ BioWatch delivers **1,100+ trainings annually**, covering all aspects of the program's biodetection, incident characterization, and notification and response activities.
- ▶ BioWatch supports more than **100 jurisdictional exercises** and drills annually.



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For more information,
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