



## Emergency preparedness

Posted by [Yankee](#) on September 1, 2005 - 1:58pm

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

This morning, [Atrios](#) had an entry about emergency preparedness in this country (original link at [Josh Marshall](#)). The author of the question that Atrios posted wasn't talking about the fact that perhaps the low-lying lands in the Gulf of Mexico are unsustainable, or even that the levees were only built to withstand Category 3 storms when it was known that eventually a Category 4 or 5 would come through the region. He was talking about the mess that is the relief effort—the military not being sent in [until today](#), the [evacuation having to be suspended](#) because shots were fired, [FEMA suspending operations](#) because it's violent in New Orleans. (Oh, and the US is [currently blocking help from Canada](#).)

This [Washington Post](#) article talks about how FEMA has been gutted in the past several years in order to prioritize "the war on terror".

This year it was announced that FEMA is to "officially" lose the disaster preparedness function that it has had since its creation. The move is a death blow to an agency that was already on life support. In fact, FEMA employees have been directed not to become involved in disaster preparedness functions, since a new directorate (yet to be established) will have that mission.

I know that this post isn't directly related to the energy issues that Katrina has raised, but there is something important here. To take a more oil-related example: what if a coordinated attack on our oil infrastructure were carried out (as in the [Oil Shockwave](#) simulations)? What if 50% or more of our gasoline deliveries were affected? People would surely go into chaos-mode. And what we see from Katrina is that our government is not prepared to handle it.

Oddly enough, it's [Emergency Preparedness Month](#). Did you know? According to the Dept. of Homeland Security:

National Preparedness Month is a nationwide coordinated effort held each September to encourage Americans to take simple steps to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses and schools. National Preparedness Month 2005 is being co-sponsored by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the American Red Cross.

But nothing on how the government is working toward greater emergency preparedness at a national level. It seems as though this would be important, because if you don't have a home, or a business, or a school, you're going to end up relying on something other than your own preparations.

Technorati Tags: [peak oil](#), [oil](#), [Katrina](#), [Hurricane Katrina](#)



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