Emergency Preparedness and Response Legal Database

What is it?
A comprehensive legal database of the laws and regulations directing emergency preparedness and response activities in several states which can be searched by using keywords for a given action (e.g. quarantine, evacuate or report); emergency type (e.g. fire, flood, earthquake); and/or by organization (e.g. Emergency Medical System, governmental public health, or employer).

Who will find this resource useful?
Policy makers; preparedness and emergency response planners; individuals with emergency preparedness training responsibilities; and anyone interested in emergency preparedness and response law.

What can this do for me?
If you are a policy maker in a state in the current database:

- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of your state emergency preparedness and response legal infrastructure to use as guidance in order to strengthen your states laws
- Compare state emergency preparedness and response laws across states, which gives you an idea of how your states or other states are structured
- Identify legislative/regulatory options to address identified gaps in your state’s emergency preparedness and response laws

If you are an emergency preparedness and response planner in a state in the current database:

- Identify those organizations required by your state’s law that you should be working with in specific emergencies in order for you to reach out and build relationship prior to an emergency
- Identify gaps in the legal requirements for your plans in order to prepare to compensate for them at the time of an emergency
- Identify the legal requirements of your organization for specific emergencies so when an emergency happens you are prepared to act accordingly

If you are a policy maker or an emergency preparedness and response planner in a state not currently in the database:

- Learn what states similar in structure (urban, rural, frontier, and various hazard exposure) to yours are doing with respect to specific emergencies to help guide you in preparing and planning for your own state
- Compare how different states are handling specific emergencies that you are interested in to inform what actions you may need to address or take during an emergency
How to Use the Database

Link: http://www.phasys.pitt.edu/default.aspx

1. There are three search options on the main screen: keyword search, jurisdiction, or public health system agent node.

2. The user can enter in any word or phrase such as earthquake, evacuate, quarantine, etc. in the ‘Keyword Search’ box and any statute or regulation with that word or phrase in the text will be found. If you do not select a jurisdiction, then it will search across all jurisdictions.

3. The user has the option of narrowing their search to the jurisdiction of a state that has been analyzed (Pennsylvania, Alaska, Maryland, Florida, California, Texas, Wisconsin, and the National Response Framework Nuclear Incident Annex). Should they do so along with a keyword search, then they would have to click on the “And” bubble so it knows to search from both parameters.

4. The user may also narrow it down further by choosing a specific public health system agent.

*Note: A keyword search does not need to be used. One can simply just search by jurisdiction and/or node. Also, multiple jurisdictions and/or multiple nodes may be selected.
5. In the display above, all three search parameters were used. The user used the keyword ‘quarantine,’ chose the jurisdictions of California and Florida, and selected the PHS agents of Administrative Agency, DHHS, and Governmental Public Health. The image below is what appears when clicking on the “Search” button.
Displayed here are seven of sixteen citations found from our narrowed search. These citations are the statutes or regulations in California and Florida that direct or give authority to one or all of the three public health agents regarding quarantine.

A citation can be clicked on to bring up the entire legal text. For example, when clicking on 64D-3.037, F.A.C. the following image appears.
Document Citation: 64D-3.037, F.A.C.

Header:
FLORIDA ADMINISTRATIVE CODE
TITLE 64 DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
54D DIVISION OF DISEASE CONTROL
CHAPTER 64D-3 CONTROL OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES AND CONDITIONS WHICH MAY SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECT PUBLIC HEALTH

Date:
08/31/2009

Document:
64D-3.037 Authority of the DOH County Health Department Director or Administrator and State Health Officer.

(1) The State Health Officer, or the county health department director or administrator or their designee, shall have the authority to give public notice of quarantine as defined in Rule 64D-3.038, F.A.C., and to initiate or terminate conditions of quarantine for purposes of controlling the spread of notifiable diseases or other disease conditions.

(2) The persons in charge of all premises upon which a person or persons or animals are quarantined shall allow access to the county health department director or administrator, the State Health Officer, or either of their designated representatives to assure that provisions of this chapter and orders applicable to the cases involved are observed.

(3) The State Health Officer, or the county health department director or administrator or their designee, shall have the authority to designate a setting as a sensitive situation as defined in subsection 64D-3.029(22), F.A.C., and to initiate or terminate conditions to control the spread of disease in such settings.

(4) The quarantine shall remain in effect until the situation no longer represents a public health hazard as determined by the county health department director or administrator or their designated representative.

8. The screen that appears contains the citation, header, and legal text. It is a Florida statute, contains the keyword search “quarantine” four times, and gives authority/direction to the Department of Health, one of the agents selected.

9. The arrows allow the user the option to save this as a word document to their computer or to print.

10. Selecting “Go Back” on the bottom of the screen takes the user back to the citations from the search, while selecting “Quit” closes the screen.