



AROUND THE REGION IN HOMELAND SECURITY

The Northwest Regional Technology Center (NWRTC) is a virtual resource center operated by Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) to support regional preparedness, resilience, response, and recovery. The center enables homeland security solutions for emergency responder communities and federal, state, and local stakeholders in the Northwest.

COMPLICATING THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC: THE MANY FACES OF FENTANYL

While Covid has ruled the headlines for two years running, a different epidemic is claiming the lives of more than 100,000 Americans every year: fentanyl. To help protect first responders from the substance in the field, PNNL is expanding the library of data on known fentanyl variants. Each addition to the fentanyl catalog is a step toward safety for law enforcement, paramedics, and others.



“New forms of drugs are appearing constantly,” said Richard Ozanich, NWRTC deputy director and an analytical chemist at PNNL. “That means that sometimes, we don’t know exactly what we’re looking for; a new form may not yet be on the radar of law enforcement.”

Ozanich leads a project funded by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate to help close the gap. His team is updating the libraries that police, hazardous materials teams, and other first responders use to identify and understand hazardous substances they encounter. PNNL has added about 50 chemical structures to the libraries, which also include information on drugs like heroin, cocaine, and methamphetamine.

“Knowing what hazard you’re up against in the field allows you to take appropriate action to protect yourself and the public,” he added.

OPPORTUNITIES

Events current at time of publication. Have a virtual resource or event to share? Email us!

- March 29-30 – [Innovations in Climate Resilience](#)
- May 4-5 – [Energy Storage Systems Safety & Reliability Forum](#)
- June 9-12 – [International Hazardous Materials Response Teams Conference](#)
- July 11-14 – [National Homeland Security Conference](#)
- July 24-28 – [Pacific NorthWest Economic Region 31st Annual Summit](#)

CONTACT

- Want to know more? Visit us at pnnl.gov/projects/nwrtec.
- Contact the NWRTC with questions and comments at nwrtec@pnnl.gov.



The library update is part of a broader two-year project Ozanich is heading to assess the performance of detection equipment used by emergency responders around the nation. PNNL has brought together 14 manufacturers of 21 key instruments that first responders and others use to detect and measure fentanyl. Those instruments cover nearly all the forms of fentanyl found on the streets today.

The project dovetails with another project focused on fentanyl standards. Ozanich brought together more than 100 scientists, first responders, drug enforcement officials, equipment manufacturers, and others under the auspices of [ASTM International](#) to develop three new laboratory standards. Without proper standards, police and paramedics would be at more risk as they do their jobs.

To learn more about PNNL's work in the fight against fentanyl, see the [news release](#) or [watch the video](#).

EXERCISE TESTS BIOLOGICAL THREAT PREPAREDNESS

On January 25, 2022, the DHS Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office, Seattle area emergency managers, public health officials, lab officials, and first responders conducted a virtual tabletop exercise of the BioWatch program. Participants discussed how they would respond in the event of a bioterrorist incident and identified ways to improve coordination. BioWatch hosts regular training exercises across all jurisdictions to

equip partners with guidance, tools, and expertise to develop response plans for worst-case scenarios.

Seattle area public and private area organizations including Washington State Department of Health, Seattle Fire Department, Sound Transit, Northwest Healthcare Response Network, University of Washington Police, the Washington State Fusion Center, and others joined representatives from DHS and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to review the roles and responsibilities of each organization in the event of an incident.

The exercise tested, evaluated, and allowed for improvements in coordination, communication, and decision-making should an actual bioterrorist attack occur. The combination of detection, rapid notification, preparedness, and planning helps communities take steps to save lives and mitigate harm. To learn more, read the [DHS press release](#).



LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

Want to see some of the latest science and technology in action at PNNL? Tune in to <https://youtube.com/pnnlgov> where you can watch videos on national security, computational sciences, energy and environment, and a suite of homeland security solutions including [immersive imaging systems](#), [airport risk modeling and resource allocation](#), and [rapid analytics for disaster response](#).

For more information, contact Director Ann Lesperance (ann.lesperance@pnnl.gov | (206) 528-3223) or Deputy Director Richard Ozanich (richard.ozanich@pnnl.gov | (509) 375-4586) or visit pnnl.gov/projects/nwrtc. PNNL-SA-170688