Building Momentum for a Homeland Security Risk Management Program

In some ways, building a risk management program is no different from any other organizational change effort undertaken in the public or private sector. Program personnel may be met with opposition from both internal and external stakeholders. As a result, there is value in reviewing tested approaches for managing change that can be applied to building a homeland security risk management program in order to increase the likelihood of success.

A number of different approaches can be used to counter resistance to change, depending on its root cause and the time available to implement the changes. These approaches include:

- Education and communication, including one-on-one conversations, group presentations, fact-sheets, reports, or memos
- Participation and involvement in designing and implementing the change
- Facilitation and support through training opportunities or consultations to dispel fears
- Negotiation and agreement that create incentives for constructive engagement
- Behind-the-scenes positioning to obtain endorsement
- Coercion that forces acceptance of change

Be watchful of common mistakes that can impede change efforts as they apply to creating a homeland security risk management program.

- Don’t try to impose a “cookie cutter” solution developed somewhere else. Consider the unique requirements that your agency, jurisdiction, state, or region is facing and craft a solution from within that addresses them.
- Don’t look to a vast top-down initiative to drive transformation. While leadership is important and management buy-in is critical, the effort could stall if unaccompanied by a bottom-up engagement with participation from operators and program staff.
- Don’t look to technology as a panacea. Software and hardware are enabling tools and can be part of a risk management solution, but people drive change, set priorities, make decisions, and implement actions.
- Don’t try to do everything all at once. Think about how to sequence actions in a way that is sensible from a resource standpoint while still reflecting agreed-upon priorities.

Referenced from: