

From Identification to Operational Capability

How ALIGN Applies the Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment for Private Sector and Enterprise Organizations

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The Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA) is the foundational risk assessment approach for private sector emergency programs under NFPA 1600 (Standard on Continuity, Emergency, and Crisis Management) and the baseline risk process supporting ISO 22301 business continuity management. Unlike regulatory risk assessments tied to specific sectors, the HIRA applies broadly to any private sector organization seeking to ground its

continuity program in a systematic analysis of the threats and hazards it actually faces.

The HIRA identifies what threatens an organization. Most organizations stop there.

NFPA 1600 requires that the HIRA inform the organization's continuity and emergency program, driving business impact analysis, capability assessment, strategy selection, plan development, and exercise design. In practice, the HIRA most frequently produces a risk register and a probability-impact matrix that document threat awareness without consistently driving the program changes that the identified risks require.

ALIGN treats the HIRA as the first phase of a complete resilience cycle. The risk findings become planning priorities. Planning priorities drive operational design. Operational design is tested under stress. And findings from stress testing improve the next risk assessment.

HIRA: What the Methodology Requires

NFPA 1600 defines the HIRA as a systematic process encompassing five core activities:

- **Hazard and Threat Identification** — Identifying natural hazards, technological hazards, and human-caused threats relevant to the organization's operating environment
- **Vulnerability Assessment** — Evaluating the organization's susceptibility to identified hazards, including operational dependencies, supply chain fragilities, and technological exposures

- **Likelihood Assessment** — Estimating the probability of each identified hazard based on historical data, geographic factors, and expert judgment
- **Consequence Assessment** — Evaluating the potential impact on life safety, mission-critical operations, financial stability, reputation, and regulatory compliance
- **Risk Prioritization** — Combining likelihood and consequence to produce a risk priority ranking that should directly drive continuity planning priorities, resource allocation, and exercise scenario selection

The HIRA produces the risk intelligence that a continuity program requires to be grounded in operational reality. What it does not produce is the planning architecture, exercise program, or improvement process that translates risk intelligence into operational capability.

The ALIGN – HIRA Crosswalk

ALIGN PHASE	HIRA REQUIREMENT / PROCESS STEP	HOW ALIGN DELIVERS
A — Assess Diagnose	HIRA: Hazard and Threat Identification; Vulnerability Assessment; Likelihood and Consequence Scoring; Risk Priority Ranking; NFPA 1600 Requirements	Systematic hazard identification, vulnerability assessment, and risk prioritization treats the HIRA within the ALIGN framework, producing risk findings structured to immediately drive planning priorities. Decision architecture mapping evaluates not just what threats the organization faces, but how its current operational structure would respond to the demands of the highest-priority risk scenarios.
L — Link Coordinate	HIRA-Informed Stakeholder Mapping; Public-Private Partnership Coordination; Supply Chain Risk Interdependency; Government Resource Awareness	Mapping HIRA-identified risks to government emergency management resources and external coordination frameworks applies NFPA 1600's community-wide coordination requirements using HIRA findings as the priority driver, connecting the

ALIGN PHASE

HIRA REQUIREMENT /
PROCESS STEP

HOW ALIGN DELIVERS

organization to government emergency management structures, ESF resources, and supply chain partners whose actions directly affect recovery.

I — Integrate

Build

HIRA-Driven BIA and Strategy Development; NFPA 1600 Plan Requirements; ISO 22301 Continuity Strategy; RTO/RPO Alignment

Translating HIRA risk priority rankings into continuity strategy, plan design, and RTO/RPO objectives ensures that planning resources are concentrated on the hazards HIRA identified as most consequential, and that continuity strategies address the specific vulnerabilities and operational dependencies the assessment revealed.

G — Generate Stress

Test

NFPA 1600 Exercise Requirements; HIRA Scenario-Based Testing; ISO 22301 Clause 8.5 Exercise Programme; Risk Assumption Validation

Building exercise scenarios from HIRA highest-priority hazards and validating risk assumptions under controlled stress applies NFPA 1600 and ISO 22301 exercise requirements using HIRA findings as the scenario driver. Exercises test whether plans designed

ALIGN PHASE

HIRA REQUIREMENT /
PROCESS STEP

HOW ALIGN DELIVERS

around HIRA risk assumptions actually function when those risks materialize.

N — Normalize
Sustain

NFPA 1600 Program Review Requirements; ISO 22301 Continual Improvement; Annual HIRA Review; Risk Register Maintenance

Maintaining HIRA currency and feeding program improvement findings back into the next risk assessment cycle closes the risk management loop, ensuring that changes in the operating environment, new hazard data, supply chain changes, and exercise findings are reflected in the updated HIRA.

Five Ways ALIGN Transforms HIRA from Risk Register to Resilience Architecture

1. Risk Priority as Planning Architecture Driver

N FPA 1600 requires the HIRA to inform the continuity program. ALIGN enforces this connection: HIRA risk priority rankings directly determine which hazard scenarios drive BIA depth, which continuity strategies are developed first, and which exercise scenarios are selected for the annual program. The risk assessment is the design specification for a risk-matched program.

2. Vulnerability Mapping Beyond Probability-Impact Scoring

S tandard HIRA approach produces a probability-impact matrix. ALIGN extends this analysis to map how identified vulnerabilities cascade through the organization's program structure, tracing how a supply chain disruption spreads through production dependencies, or how a technology failure affects decision-making capacity.

3. Government Resource Integration

A LIGN's Link phase integrates government emergency management resource availability, utility restoration timelines, public safety resource priorities, and FEMA disaster assistance programs into the risk assessment's consequence assumptions, producing more realistic impact scores and more accurate recovery planning.

4. Exercise Scenario Calibration

A LIGN uses HIRA risk priority rankings to select exercise scenarios that test the hazards identified as most likely and most severe, ensuring that exercise effort is concentrated where the risk assessment indicates the program's greatest vulnerabilities lie.

5. Continuous Risk Assessment Currency

A LIGN's Normalize phase builds a risk registry maintenance process that tracks emerging risk signals between formal HIRA cycles, flags significant changes for interim assessment review, and ensures the planning program does not operate on risk assumptions that the environment has already rendered obsolete.

Conclusion

The HIRA is the analytical base that private sector continuity programs require to be genuinely grounded in risk rather than generic planning assumptions. For organizations that complete the HIRA and file the results, it produces a document. For organizations that complete the HIRA and build their program around it, it produces a capability.

ALIGN is the approach that produces the second outcome. Risk identified. Planning driven. Assumptions tested. Program improved. That is the cycle the HIRA was designed to start, and the cycle ALIGN is designed to sustain.

ABOUT SENTINEL RESILIENCE PARTNERS

Sentinel Resilience Partners provides Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment facilitation, NFPA 1600-aligned program design, ISO 22301 BIA support, and HSEEP-aligned exercise programs for private sector and enterprise organizations. ALIGN engagements are structured at four tiers: Audit, Build, Validate, and Sustain.

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