

## ***Critical Infrastructure Protection – Are we willing to try a Disaster?***

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### **Abstract:**

A precondition for the development of the modern welfare society after the Second World War was the increased development in infrastructures and societal functions. As a result of this, society became increasingly dependent on the various infrastructures and societal functions. Security measures were based on the threat from the Cold War. Market forces, technological advancements and a desire for more efficient and cost-effective management drove the development and application of infrastructures and societal functions following the end of the Cold War. Gradually and in some degree simultaneously to this development the awareness of society's technological dependency increased. In Norway the concept of "a vulnerable society" was established following the report by the government commission on the vulnerability of society headed by former Prime Minister Kåre Willoch, published in 2000.

The challenges related to "a vulnerable society" are as present today as they were in 2000. "New" challenges to our safety and security such as terrorism and the consequences of technological failures, space weather or climate change relate to the society as a whole and constitute a particular challenge to enterprises that are responsible for critical infrastructures and critical societal functions. Those enterprises must be able to deal with both new and old challenges to safety and security, whether they are caused by antagonistic or non-antagonistic threats. Rapid shifts in society, as well as a high demand for profit and production makes it important to be able to adapt quickly to meet new professional, technological and organizational demands. At the same time, the process of adaptation must not be limited to ensuring that only these demands are met. It is equally important to ensure that the interests of national security and other interests that are considered vital to the nation are safeguarded. This is something that enterprises with a well defined culture of security are more capable of doing. The authorities must ensure that the all of these different changes, across different sectors or within one sector, do not reduce the overall safety and security of society.

The choice of public ownership as an instrument to ensure that the interests of national security and other interests that are considered vital to the nation are safeguarded, must be based on comprehensive assessments, where the desire for public control is weighed against potential economic benefits introduced as a result of privatization. When assessing ownership of critical infrastructures and critical societal functions, considerable emphasis must be given to the special circumstances that are necessary for ensuring an acceptable level of safety and security of society. Norway is generally a safe and a secure country. We are accustomed to important goods and services being delivered according to our demands, and in a safe and secure way. Still, the high degree of complexity and dependency on critical infrastructures and critical societal functions makes it difficult to predict what can go wrong, and what the consequences of disruption in these infrastructures and functions are. In this perspective, the consequences of what can go wrong must be emphasized more than the likelihood of the incident happening. Therefore, measures for the protection of critical infrastructures and critical societal functions require the highest priority and thorough preparation, even if the theoretical probabilities of incidents happening are low.

In order to protect critical infrastructures and critical societal functions, legal requirements given by the supervisory authorities to businesses must be clear and the supervision and control that is carried out must be as efficient as possible. At the same time, businesses need to be aware of their own responsibilities. In any case, as citizens of a vulnerable society, we must all be prepared for disruptions in the supply of important goods and services. The work on protection of critical infrastructures and critical societal functions is about protecting those services that are necessary for the basic needs of society, and to maintain the feeling of safety and security.