

BUSH OKS SUCCESSION PLANS FOR CABINET, AGENCIES

From John King
CNN Washington

WASHINGTON (CNN) --President Bush signed executive orders Thursday detailing the order of succession at Cabinet departments and several other major federal agencies.

The new guidelines stem from an administration-wide review of steps considered necessary to better prepare the government for the possibility of a catastrophic terrorist attack on Washington or a major region of the country.

At the Department of Justice, for example, the plan put in place by Bush takes into account the possibility of a strike that would leave the department's entire Washington-based chain of command incapacitated.

In such a scenario, the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York would be the next in line to assume the duties of attorney general. From there, the list reflects planning for the possibility that an entire region of the country could come under terrorist or some other major attack.

After the New York post, the line of succession for attorney general would be:

- U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia
- U.S. attorney for Utah
- U.S. attorney for the Western District of Texas.

For the Treasury Department, the line of succession already in place includes the deputy secretary and other senior agency officials. The new contingency planning goes on to list several other top agency officials in Washington, and then officials based in Georgia and West Virginia.

And for the Archives of the United States -- the keeper of critical government records and documents including the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence -- the contingency planning goes as far as listing the director of the Jimmy Carter presidential library as a potential successor should the archivist of the United States and a half-dozen others in the new line of succession be killed or otherwise incapacitated.