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LESSON LEARNED

Incident Site Safety: Cross-Training SWAT and HazMat Personnel Prior to Joint Missions

SUMMARY

Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) and Hazardous Materials (HazMat) teams should undertake training in joint operations and cross-training to engender a better understanding of each other's respective needs.

DESCRIPTION

The US Northern Command (NORTHCOM) and Joint Forces Command co-sponsored the Ardent Sentry exercise from May 7 to 18, 2007, in the US and Canada. Ardent Sentry consisted of five exercise components: the National Guard full-scale exercise (FSE) Vigilant Guard, the Northern Edge FSE in Canada, the Hoosier Sentry combined functional and full-scale exercise in Indiana, the Alaska Shield combined functional and full-scale exercise in Alaska, and the HURREX tabletop exercise in Rhode Island. The main goal of Ardent Sentry was to demonstrate multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional unity of effort in support of a civilian-led response to a national crisis. Ardent Sentry simulated a Category 3 hurricane making landfall in New England, a nuclear detonation in Indiana, and several terrorist attacks on critical infrastructure in Alaska and waters along the western US – Canadian border. Ardent Sentry required the coordination of over 3,000 federal, state, and local responders and more than 2,000 active-duty personnel.

Canada served as a full partner in the Ardent Sentry exercise through the coordination of Canada Command and US military resources. Canada Command oversees the operations of Canadian forces and coordinates with NORTHCOM.

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NORTHCOM, the National Guard, the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, the Indiana National Guard, and the Indianapolis—Marion County Emergency Management Division co-sponsored the Hoosier Sentry combined functional and full-scale exercise from May 10 to 13, 2007, at 6 locations in south-central Indiana. Hoosier Sentry simulated the detonation of a 10-kiloton nuclear device by a terrorist cell in northeastern Indianapolis. Exercise objectives focused on integrating National Guard and active-duty military resources with emergency response operations. The combined exercise also evaluated federal and state abilities to support local responders during a weapon of mass destruction/hazardous materials incident. The exercise required emergency response and military teams to provide sheltering operations for over 77,000 notional civilians and to treat over 500 role-playing victims. Over 104 federal, state, and local agencies and 1,000 response personnel participated in the Hoosier Sentry exercise.

During the exercise, a tactical scenario required SWAT and HazMat teams to enter and clear a building believed to contain radiological contaminants as well as armed, escaped, and potentially contaminated convicts. As both teams moved throughout the building, SWAT team members provided protection for HazMat technicians as they measured contamination levels using radiological detection equipment. However, SWAT team members often moved and cleared so rapidly that HazMat technicians could not obtain proper readings. This could

have exposed responders to undue risk if they had entered a contaminated area unnecessarily or without proper personal protective equipment.

SWAT and HazMat teams should undertake training in joint operations and cross-training to engender a better understanding of each other's respective needs.

For additional information on this topic, please refer to the following *Lessons Learned Information Sharing* Good Story, [The Greater Louisville Region's Joint Emergency Services Unit](#).

CITATION

Indianapolis - Marion County Emergency Management Division. *2007 Ardent Sentry, Indiana Homeland Security District 5 After Action Report*. 16 Aug 2007.

<https://www.llis.dhs.gov/docdetails/details.do?contentID=26593>

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