

RELATED TERMS

- Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program
- Exercise planning
- Nerve Agent VX



Lessons Learned Information Sharing

www.LLIS.gov

LESSON LEARNED

PRIMARY DISCIPLINES

- Emergency Medical Services
- Fire
- Hazardous Materials

Exercise Design: Using a Large Number of Actors at a Decontamination Site to “Stress the System”

SUMMARY

Exercise planners should consider designing exercises to include a large number of participants playing the role of potentially contaminated patients at a decontamination site. This can help planners assess the capabilities of emergency response organizations by “stressing the system.”

DESCRIPTION

On May 22, 2007, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the US Army, and several state and local agencies staged the Umatilla Community CSEPP Exercise 2007. This exercise tested the emergency response capabilities of the Umatilla, Oregon, region following an accidental release of warfare agent VX at the Umatilla Chemical Depot (UMCD). Participating agencies included the Oregon Emergency Management Agency; the Washington Emergency Management Division; Umatilla, Morrow, Wasco, and Benton Counties; the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservations; and the American Red Cross.

The exercise scenario described a release of liquid VX due to the accidental detonation of several land mines containing this nerve agent at one of UMCD's storage igloos. The explosion dispersed debris and liquid contamination within 30 feet of the blast site. According to this scenario, two workers died, and five additional personnel suffered trauma and VX exposure injuries.

One of the exercise objectives was to test emergency response personnel's ability to triage and, if necessary, decontaminate a large number of patients. Walla Walla Fire Department (WWFD) personnel established a decontamination site at the St. Mary Medical Center in about 1/3 of the time routinely required for such operations and effectively triaged and decontaminated all patients. However, only three participants were available at the decontamination site to play the role of potentially contaminated patients. As a result, WWFD personnel had to triage and decontaminate these patients multiple times in an

The Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program (CSEPP) is a partnership between FEMA and the US Army. This partnership was established in 1988 to help communities adjacent to the eight US Army chemical stockpile sites enhance their ability to respond to a chemical emergency that may originate at one of these facilities. Under this partnership, these communities participate in annual federally managed CSEPP exercises. For more information on CSEPP, please refer to the [LLIS.gov CSEPP Resource Center](http://www.LLIS.gov/CSEPP_Resource_Center).

VX is a human-made chemical warfare agent classified as a nerve agent. For additional information on VX, please refer to the Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [Facts About VX](http://www.cdc.gov/ncez/vx/).

attempt to simulate a mass casualty incident. The Umatilla Community CSEPP Exercise 2007 after-action report (AAR) observed, "this was one of the best patient decontamination lines ever witnessed by the evaluators." However, the AAR concluded that exercise planners should consider designing future exercises "to include a very large number of patients to attempt to 'stress' the system."

Exercise planners should consider designing exercises to include a large number of participants playing the role of potentially contaminated patients at a decontamination site. This can help planners assess the capabilities of emergency response organizations by "stressing the system."

CITATION

Federal Emergency Management Agency, US Army. *Umatilla Community CSEPP Exercise 2007*. 16 Jul 2007.

https://www.llis.dhs.gov/member/secure/detail.cfm?content_id=26423

DISCLAIMER

This website and its contents are provided for informational purposes only and do not represent the official position of the US Department of Homeland Security or the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT) and are provided without warranty or guarantee of any kind. The reader is directed to the following site for a full recitation of this Disclaimer: www.llis.gov.