

NJ Office of Emergency Management



Colonel Rick Fuentes
Superintendent, New Jersey State Police
State Director of Emergency Management

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NJ State and Local Agencies Complete Full-Scale Emergency Response Exercise

250+ Emergency Responders Successfully Test Plans and Equipment

WOODBIDGE, NJ, Sept. 24, 2008 – Today, state, county and local public safety officials conducted a full-scale emergency response exercise, the Garden State's first exercise of this kind in a petrochemical facility. The New Jersey Office of Emergency Management in coordination with the New Jersey Division of Fire Safety, the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness and Northeast New Jersey Northeastern New Jersey Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) held the multi-agency exercise at Hess Corporation's Port Reading refinery and terminal.

During the exercise, more than 250 emergency responders from numerous state and local agencies and departments worked together to successfully deploy plans and equipment to respond to a variety of emergency scenarios. Participants included local and county fire departments, state and local police departments, the U.S. Coast Guard, the Middlesex County Rapid Deployment Team and Hess Port Reading's fire brigade.

"Today's exercise provided an outstanding opportunity for professional responders from across the state to take our emergency preparedness to an even higher level," said Colonel Rick Fuentes, Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police and the state's Office of Emergency Management Director.

The exercise was designed to test multi-agency operational and response capabilities including fire suppression, emergency medical techniques, search and rescue efforts, technical apparatus function and rapid resource deployment. Most notably the state's Neptune System a state-of-the-art high volume water and foam delivery system was deployed.

"The Neptune System will be a key tool in protecting and assisting people during emergencies," said Department of Community Affairs Commissioner Joseph Doria. "Today's exercise allowed us to test this equipment and ensure its capabilities."

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Hess Corporation accepted the invitation to host the exercise as part of the company's commitment to operating safely and making a positive impact in the community. "We see emergency preparedness as a vital part of running a safe and effective operation," said F. Borden Walker, Hess Corporation Executive Vice President and President, Marketing & Refining. "This exercise continued to build the strong working relationship between Hess and emergency response agencies so we're ready to work together if a serious incident should occur."

State officials see cooperation between the public and private sector as fundamental to the effectiveness of today's exercise. "Conducting large-scale exercises that include emergency personnel from multiple state and local agencies and the private sector enhances our ability to respond to any type of large-scale disaster," said Richard L. Cañas, Director of the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness. "We thank the Hess Corporation for hosting and participating in today's exercise, as enhancing our private sector partnerships is key to New Jersey's homeland security strategy."

"My fellow Freeholders and I are steadfast in our commitment to keep our residents safe," said Freeholder Christopher D. Rafano, chair of the County's Law and Public Safety Committee. "We embrace all opportunities to train with our federal, state, local and corporate partners because by working together, we enhance our ability to respond effectively and efficiently to keep our residents safe."

"Middlesex County has an outstanding reputation for its emergency preparedness policies and programs," said Freeholder Director David B. Crabel. "We've earned that reputation because we emphasize training, we work closely with agencies at all levels of government and we take a proactive approach to our emergency preparedness plans. Today's exercise falls in line with our philosophy."

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