



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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State, local providers practice response to emergency events

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Several state and local agencies, hospitals and others conducted a full-scale exercise involving a simulated terrorist attack July 14 and 15 at Georgia Washington Junior High School in Montgomery.

The Alabama Department of Public Health, the Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences, State Mortuary Operations Response Team (SMORT), and the Montgomery City/County Emergency Management Agency in conjunction with the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Public Health and South Central Center for Public Health Preparedness participated in the exercise. The purpose of the exercise was to evaluate the capabilities of the emergency responders and to practice responding to a complex incident.

The exercise consisted of practicing several aspects of response to a terrorist incident including setting up mobile medical stations, communicating with partner agencies and processing and documenting decedents. SMORT, headed by Douglas Williams of Cullman County, was an integral part of the exercise. Both Cullman County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) and Lee County EMA deployed portable mortuary units to the scene for the team to work through the response process as they would during a real event. Mobile County EMA also has a deployable mortuary unit that can be requested during an emergency.

“Exercising with response partners like SMORT provides agencies with an opportunity to discover and address any issues beforehand so that when emergencies occur in the state, we can more efficiently work together to respond,” said Andy Mullins, director of the Center for Emergency Preparedness at the Alabama Department of Public Health. “ADPH has planned and exercised with SMORT, the Department of Forensic Sciences, the Funeral Directors Association and the Alabama Coroners Association over the past few years and the partnerships continue to strengthen as we work through response issues together.”

Additional participants in the exercise included the Montgomery City/County EMA, Montgomery Fire Department, Montgomery Police Department, Baptist Medical Center East, Baptist Medical Center South and Prattville Baptist Hospital.

For more information on emergency preparedness, please visit the Alabama Department of Public Health’s Web site at www.adph.org.

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