

PRESS RELEASE

Solon, Ohio May 5, 2003

For Immediate Release:

On May 21, 2003, Cuyahoga County will test its capabilities to handle an accidental chemical release during a simulated hazardous materials incident. The annual exercise is scheduled to begin at approximately 9 a.m. and should be completed by noon.

Firefighters, police officers and hazardous materials technicians from Solon Fire-Rescue, Solon Police Department and the Chagrin/Southeast Hazardous Materials Response Team will participate in the drill, while members of the Cuyahoga County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) and the County's Division of Emergency Services will coordinate the training exercise.

The incident will simulate the release of a chemical from Saint-Gobain Crystals, 6801 Cochran Rd., Solon. "Saint-Gobain was very generous to volunteer the use of their facility for the training session. They have an excellent safety record, but their safety managers recognize the importance of training and planning," says Mark Vedder, Battalion Chief with Solon Fire-Rescue.

"Saint-Gobain is pleased to be part of this exercise" says Heather Harper, Supervisor of Environmental Health and Safety at the facility. "We are looking forward to working with the hazardous materials response team, and it's an excellent opportunity to evaluate our own internal safety procedures, as well."

"Solon firefighters and haz-mat team personnel will take action to control the chemical, as well as protect people who are down wind. In addition, the city will test its procedures for public notification, just like in a real emergency," says Solon Fire Chief William Shaw.

Jeanne Schmotzer, Assistant Manager of Cuyahoga County Emergency Services says, "We spend a lot of time developing all different types of contingency plans for emergencies. This drill is a great opportunity to put the plans, and our responders, to the test. We can identify what works well and what areas need improvement."

The Ohio Emergency Response Commission (SERC) will monitor the procedures of the responders to evaluate performance and effectiveness.

Other Organizations assisting with the drill include the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the Ohio Emergency Management Agency, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and the Cuyahoga County Department of Health.

CONTACT

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