

PRESS RELEASE

Local Emergency Planning Committee Tabletop Exercise

On May 19, 2004, Cuyahoga County tested its capabilities to handle a shipboard fire during a tabletop exercise that simulated a petroleum hazardous materials incident. The annual exercise involved City of Cleveland emergency responders (fire, police and EMS), the U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Office responders, and Cuyahoga County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) members. Other organizations that participated included the Center Terminal Company, Inland Waters, Inc., the American Red Cross, and the Salvation Army. The Cuyahoga County Division of Emergency Services coordinated the training exercise.

The incident simulated a fire aboard the T/V GEMINI moored on the Cuyahoga River at the Center Terminal Company during Off-loading diesel furl activities. The scenario included a disgruntled crew member using a homemade incendiary device to ignite a Class B fire in the engine room. As a result of the shipboard fire, crew members were severely burned. In addition, heavy black smoke emitting from the T/V GEMINI contributed to a four-vehical automobile crash on the I-90 high level bridge with injuries and possible entrapment. The tabletop exercise was designed to test the Incident Command System, Traffic and Access Control, Communication, Personnel Safety, and Emergency Management Services.

Brian Galligher, Ohio Emergency Management Agency State Facilitator, stated, "I was glad to witness the excellent multi-agency cooperation and communication skills demonstrated during the exercise." Jeanne Schmotzer, Assistant Manager of Cuyahoga County Division of Emergency Services, said, "We spend a lot of time developing all different types of contingency plans for emergencies. This drill was a great opportunity to put the plans, and our responders, to the test. We were able to identify what worked well and what areas need further improvement."

In order to receive concurrence for an exercise, the LEPC must demonstrate successfully a majority of the Points of Review for each chosen objective. The LEPC was successful in demonstrating all chosen objectives and was provided with an order of concurrence.