

PRESS RELEASE

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COUNTY TO TEST EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

For Immediate Release:

Cuyahoga County officials will get an idea of how well local emergency workers in the southeastern portion of the county respond to a hazardous materials emergency, when it stages its annual disaster training drill June 13, 2007 from 9a.m. to noon at the Bedford Heights Wastewater Treatment Plant, 25301 Solon Road, Bedford Heights..

Cuyahoga County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) and the Cuyahoga County Division of Emergency Services are sponsoring the test, which will involve police and fire departments, emergency medical teams, and hospitals in the southeast suburbs, as well as the Red Cross and employees from the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

“Having a hazardous materials emergency response plan for Cuyahoga County is important for the health and welfare of our community, if there is a release,” said Melissa Rodrigo, Manager of Cuyahoga County Emergency Management, the local agency responsible for coordinating Hazardous Material planning. “Testing the plan tells us if it works.”

The local departments and first responders have worked together to develop plans and procedures in the event of a hazardous materials accident as part of the County’s overall planning for chemical emergency response. The Bedford Heights Fire Department will be in command of all first responders during the simulated disaster and will direct the response, while State emergency response officials will monitor and evaluate.

During the exercise, local business traffic along Solon Road will be maintained during the simulation, however through traffic will be re-routed.

Chief Kenneth Ledford of the Bedford Heights Fire Department said there is no way to anticipate exactly how a hazardous materials accident would affect nearby residents or the environment, but that it is important to have plans on how to contain and limit damage.

“We hope we never have to use such a plan, but a functional exercise will assist the fire and police departments in understanding the magnitude of what might occur,” Chief Ledford said.

THIS IS A DRILL