



For Immediate Release

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Press Release:

Alaska Shield 2016 to Test Alaska's Homeland Security Response

Full-scale Exercise to Engage 14 Communities and Numerous Response Organizations

ANCHORAGE, Alaska – Alaska Shield 2016 is a state sponsored Homeland Security exercise. The scenarios and events within the exercise will vary by local jurisdiction, but will all be homeland security-related. Scenarios may include on-scene law enforcement exercises, active shooter exercises, mass search and rescue operations, cyber-attacks, and chemical/biological events. 14 local jurisdictions, more than 9 state agencies, 12 federal agencies, and 27 Non-Governmental organizations (NGOs) are scheduled to participate in events April 1-3. Each community participating in Alaska Shield 2016 has established individual training objectives and developed an exercise plan testing their ability to respond locally, and in coordination with state, federal, and non-government response partners.

Planning for Alaska Shield 2016 began two years ago. The exercise is designed to examine and evaluate 13 core capabilities of participants: community resilience; cybersecurity; environment response/health & safety; fatality management services; intelligence & information sharing; mass care services; mass search and rescue operations; on-scene security and protection; operational communications; operational coordination; planning; public health and medical services; and public information and warning.

"Events around the world have shown us that the last thing we can be is complacent. Many times when we turn on the news, we see and hear about some new terrorism or cyber-attack. Like each of the previous Alaska Shield exercises we have identified a possible real-world hazard and we are testing our ability to respond, and find ways to be better prepared," said DHS&EM Director Mike O'Hare. "These are complicated events and everyone needs to work together in a swift and well-orchestrated manner to stop the damage, and quickly help those affected by the events."

There is no known terrorist or cyber-attack threat targeting Alaska or Alaskans at this time. There will be an active shooter exercise event held in various locations around the state to train first responders and community leadership in how to respond if such an event were to occur. Local law enforcement and city staff may establish security barriers around the exercise locations. Local law enforcement has been trained to respond to active shooter events; this is their opportunity to train in a local facility.

"We want community members to understand that these are exercise events being conducted by local emergency responders and emergency management in conjunction with the State of Alaska. No one is in danger," said O'Hare. "People can help by respecting the importance of the training and avoid the exercise activity areas to protect the safety of those involved."

In addition, local, State, Federal, and private-sector organizations will be practicing their response to a cyberattack. Cyberattacks may include webpage defacement, denial of service, and data theft. Alaskans should not experience any reduction of service to their private internet services as local, State and Federal internet technology professionals conduct the cyber elements of the exercise.

More information on the exercise is available at www.update.ready.alaska.gov

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