

Brig. Gen. Torrence Saxe

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Alaska National Guard

*Department of Military
and Veterans Affairs*

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STATE OF ALASKA

MEDIA ADVISORY

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National Guard units from six states join Alaska and local agencies in exercise

ORCA 2019 practices response to weapons of mass destruction

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — The Alaska National Guard's 103rd Civil Support Team will participate in Exercise ORCA 2019 at various training locations in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley, in partnership with multiple local emergency responders and other Guard CST units. ORCA is designed to allow all participants to respond to hazardous materials incidents, test interoperability between the agencies, increase working relationships and practice requests for assistance methods.

This year's ORCA training events are being conducted at the Alaska State Fairgrounds, Palmer Fire and Rescue Training Center, Fire Station 6-2 in Wasilla, and the Alaska Railroad rail crossing at Pittman Road.

Participating local agencies include Mat-Su Emergency Management, Mat-Su Ambulance Service, Anchorage Police Department, Wasilla Police Department, Alaska State Troopers, Houston Fire Department, Palmer Fire Department, Alaska Railroad, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, and the Alaska State Fairgrounds. The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management is also supporting the exercise.

National Guard CST units from Mississippi, Montana, Utah, Nevada, Hawaii and Washington are joining Alaska's CST, and the the Alaska National Guard Aviation Battalion and Joint Operations Center are participating as well.

CSTs were established to deploy rapidly to assist a local incident commander in determining the nature and extent of a weapons of mass destruction attack or incident; provide expert technical advice on WMD response operations; and help identify and support the arrival of follow-on state and federal military response assets.

National Guard CST units support local and state authorities at domestic nuclear, biological or chemical incident sites by identifying agents and substances, assessing current and projected consequences, advising on response measures, and assisting with requests for additional military support.

More than 200 military and civilian personnel are involved in ORCA 2019, including about 120 National Guardsmen from the 6 states involved.

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Note: Press interested in covering the exercise should contact Pvt. Grace Nechanicky for coordination, **907-428-6031, grace.nechanicky@alaska.gov**