



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

10-28

Sunday, October 17, 2010

**OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT HOSTS NYC RESILIENCE MASS-CASUALTY INCIDENT EXERCISE**

*More than 800 First Responders Participate in Simulated Car Bombing Drill in Long Island City*

Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Commissioner Joseph F. Bruno today joined Police (NYPD) Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly, Fire (FDNY) Chief of Counterterrorism and Emergency Preparedness Joseph Pfeifer, American Red Cross in Greater New York (ARC/GNY) CEO Vikki Pryor, and representatives from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), Mayor's Community Affairs Unit (CAU), Department of Information, Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT), Human Resource Administration (HRA), and Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), at a full-scale emergency response exercise in Long Island City, Queens. *NYC Resilience* is a series of six drills and workshops designed to test the City's response to a mass-casualty incident. More than 900 first responders, other City employees, and volunteers have participated in the exercise series, which also tests the City's Unified Victim Information System (UVIS), and Family Assistance Center (FAC) Plan.

"We are exercising a plan we hope we never have to use," said Commissioner Bruno. "However, it is our responsibility to make sure New York City is prepared for the worst, and by training in an environment that is as real as possible, all of our agencies and partners learn what we already do right, and what we can improve on."

"We are in the business of preparing for every contingency and thinking the unthinkable," Commissioner Kelly said. "Just last week we conducted the ninth critical incident response training for officers trained in heavy weapons. In the same vein, the Police Department supports and is an active part of multi-agency exercises designed to increase and enhance readiness citywide."

"Our members train and drill every day to make sure they are ready to respond to any incident, including mass causality incidents like today's drill," said Commissioner Salvatore J. Cassano. "NYC Resilience is a great exercise, because it allows us the opportunity to train with other agencies and first responders, so together we can all improve how we protect the people of New York City."

"As an integral part of the NYC team of emergency response agencies, the American Red Cross in Greater New York is greatly appreciative for today's opportunity to participate in OEM's mass casualty exercise," said ARC/GNY CEO Vikki Pryor. "This exercise helps to strengthen our readiness and resilience as a team to successfully manage the challenges of these types of disasters."

“In a city as large and complex as New York, regular emergency response drills are critical,” said Dr. Thomas Farley, New York City Health Commissioner. “Each time we respond to a drill we become better prepared for potential large-scale and city-wide emergencies. By practicing fast-acting interagency collaboration, we will be able to have a coordinated response to emergencies and to uphold our priority of protecting the health and safety of all New Yorkers.”

“HRA is very committed to ensuring that staff responding to emergencies continue to be prepared to assist New Yorkers,” said HRA Commissioner Robert Doar. “These exercises are crucial to ensure the City is prepared to respond efficiently to mass casualty incidents. In the event of such an incident, HRA’s Office of Emergency Intervention Services would provide necessary services through the Family Assistance Center. I congratulate OEM Commissioner Joe Bruno and his staff for the extraordinary efforts in coordinating NYC Resilience 2010.”

“The safety and security of our customers is always our top priority, and that means being prepared for very difficult emergency scenarios,” said MTA Chairman Jay Walder. “This full-scale multi-agency exercise is an example of the deep level of commitment toward preparedness that we share with all of our partners in security and emergency management.”

### **Simulation Scenario:**

An MTA bus is picking up passengers at a bus stop at 44<sup>th</sup> Drive and Hunter Road during a weekday rush hour when a car explodes next to the bus. According to the simulation, 40 people are killed and 90 others are injured. Shortly after first responders arrive on the scene, a second simulated explosion occurs at the entrance to the Midtown tunnel. In that scenario 30 people are killed and dozens more are injured.

Note: **There was no real explosion.** Simulated play was limited to the Long Island City site. There was no real activity by the Midtown Tunnel and the tunnel remained open during exercise play. Also, for the purposes of the exercise mannequins represented fatalities and volunteers wearing make up played the role of injured survivors.

### **Full-scale Response:**

At 10 AM, Sunday more than 800 personnel from City agencies, the MTA and ARC/GNY responded to the scene of a simulated car explosion at the intersection of 44<sup>th</sup> Drive and Hunter Road. Nearly 100 volunteers, including members of OEM’s Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) played survivors injured by the blast. During the four-hour exercise, FDNY members extinguished fire from the explosion and assessed and treated injured people. NYPD secured the scene, conducted interviews with scripted volunteers who played survivors and witnesses, and gathered intelligence from a simulated surveillance video. A reception center was also set up at a nearby school where DOHMH and ARC/GNY provided mental health services to survivors and the families of victims. Throughout the exercise, OEM staff in a nearby command trailer coordinated exercise activities. DoITT also assisted by supporting interoperable radio communications with equipment and personnel.

### **NYC Resilience Exercise Series:**

Sunday's full-scale exercise was one of six drills and workshops designed to test the City's response to a mass-casualty incident. The exercise series also included:

- On September 28, representatives from FDNY, NYPD, HRA, OCME, OEM, CAU and ARC/GNY held a human services workshop to set protocols to ensure that people receive the services they need and law enforcement is able to collect time-sensitive information for intelligence gathering during a mass casualty incident. The goal of the workshop was to share agency protocols, identify areas where protocols do not align and make recommendations for improvement.
- On September 30, NYPD, OCME, OEM and 311 tested the City's UVIS call center, which is designed to help identify missing people during a mass-casualty event. More than a dozen 311 call takers and NYPD missing-persons detectives fielded calls and collected information from OEM staff posing as family members of people missing after an explosion. In total they handled nearly 100 cases.
- On October 20, OEM, CAU, DOHMH, HRA, NYPD, 311, OEM CERT, and ARC/GNY will participate in FAC workshop to discuss agency roles and key decisions such as triggers that could lead to a plan activation.
- On October 24, OEM will host a second full-scale exercise by opening a FAC near LaGuardia Airport with NYPD, OCME, CAU, DOHMH, DoITT, HRA, CERT, and ARC/GNY. The FAC will provide City services to the victims' families, played by volunteers. Participants from NYPD will brief the victims' families on the state of the investigation and conduct interviews if necessary. OCME will collect items and samples that may contain DNA information and will assist in victim identification. DOHMH and ARC/GNY will provide mental health services.

## **Evaluation**

More than 50 evaluators from participating agencies observed the exercise. The evaluators checked to see how each agency met its individual objectives and how the agencies worked together to achieve shared objectives. When the exercise series concludes, participating agencies will use the lessons learned from the six events to improve the City's emergency plans. For more information about OEM's exercise program visit [www.nyc.gov/oem](http://www.nyc.gov/oem).