



NEW YORK CITY **OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**
Office of Public Information

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**NYC OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (OEM) HOSTS PODEX
A MULTIAGENCY FIELD EXERCISE**

The New York City Office of Emergency Management (OEM) today hosted PODEX, a major multi-agency field exercise focusing on the request for, receipt of and distribution of [Strategic National Stockpile assets] in response to a terrorist use of a biological weapon. Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP), PODEX was staged at four New York City Department of Education (DOE) facilities in the borough of Queens.

PODEX is part of the City's continuing efforts to test and refine its preparedness plans and emergency response protocols

Coordinated by OEM, the two day drill began yesterday with the City's health monitoring equipment testing positive for anthrax. Day one of PODEX involved the request of medical and non-medical supplies from the federal government, as well as their receipt at points of dispensing (POD) around the city. It also included the training of supervisory POD staff from the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). Day two of the exercise consisted of the setup of mock PODs for distribution of medications to affected individuals, as well as the related security, public information and transportation issues that would arise in such a circumstance.

"We are continually working to keep New York City the most prepared city in the country," said OEM Commissioner Joseph F. Bruno. "Exercises like PODEX allow us to evaluate both our decision making process and our operational plans."

"The Health Department uses state-of-the-art technology to perform laboratory testing and to monitor thousands of health events including emergency department visits and ambulance runs every day for any signs of a public health threat, natural or man-made," said Commissioner Frieden. "We've had more than our fair share of health emergencies in New York City. Every drill exercise is an opportunity to find ways to perform our job even better."



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Some of the many challenges exercise participants faced were to simultaneously staff and manage multiple POD locations, handle unsolicited volunteers, serve special needs and non-English speaking populations, provide accurate information to the public and oversee operations from the City's Emergency Operations Center.

Designed to test the City's ability to provide medication to individuals affected by a biological attack, PODEX examined interagency coordination in accordance with the Citywide Incident Management System (CIMS), overall emergency response, the integration of federal, state and regional assets and the City's ability to protect the public.

PODEX was planned in conjunction with partners including:

- NYC Office of the Mayor
- NYC Community Assistance Unit
- NYC Police Department
- NYC Fire Department
- NYC Fire Department– EMS
- NYC Human Resources Administration
- NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
- NYC Department of Education
- NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services
- NYC Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications
- NYC Department of Parks and Recreation
- NYC Office of the Chief Medical Examiner
- NYC Office of Emergency Management
- NYC Department of Transportation
- City University of New York
- Metropolitan Transportation Authority
- NYS Emergency Management Office
- NYS Department of Health
- NYS Office of Homeland Security
- New Jersey State Police
- US Department of Homeland Security
- US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- US Marshals Service
- Federal Bureau of Investigation
- Port Authority of NY and NJ



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- Regional Emergency Medical Services Organization
- American Red Cross of Greater New York
- New York Cares

City officials and DHS representatives will also evaluate the objectives of this exercise and study the response and decisions made by the participants for future training in other jurisdictions.

OEM is currently planning future tabletop and field exercises. Funding for these drills, as well as PODEX, is provided by a federal grant through DHS. The City is grateful for DHS' continued support of such efforts to ensure New Yorkers' safety.

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