



NEW YORK CITY **OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

Office of Public Information

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**THE NEW YORK CITY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (OEM)
HOLDS OPERATION WINTER SUN MULTI-AGENCY FIELD EXERCISE**

*Field Exercise Designed to Evaluate the City's Response to a Weapons of Mass
Destruction Attack*

The New York City Office of Emergency Management (OEM) today conducted a major multi-agency field exercise designed to test New York City response to a weapons of mass destruction attack. The exercise, titled Operation Winter Sun, was a five-hour, real-time drill administered by OEM, and conducted in cooperation with the United States Department of Homeland Security, Office of Domestic Preparedness (US DHS), Titan Corporation, the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC), the New York City Fire Department / Emergency Medical Service (FDNY/EMS), the New York City Police Department (NYPD), the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ), the Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC), and the Greater New York Hospital Association (GNYHA).

Operation Winter Sun was designed to provide a realistic environment to test the skills, equipment use, decision-making capacity, and interagency coordination amongst the agencies that would respond to a weapons of mass destruction event.

John T. Odermatt, Commissioner of OEM said, "OEM is proud to bring together major City, State, Federal, and private entities to keep New York City safe and well-equipped in light of a world changed by the events of 9/11. This exercise goes beyond basic classroom instruction and puts to test the City's emergency responders in a life-like situation. In doing so, New York City will continue to ensure it is the best prepared for whatever challenges our City may face."

Operation Winter Sun took place on Sunday, May 18, 2003 at the EDC Pier, located on 39th Street and 1st Avenue in Brooklyn, NY. Members from OEM, Titan, FDNY/EMS, NYPD, and the EDC supervised the response of over 300 emergency responders and the



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treatment of 150 volunteers who took on the role of victims of this staged WMD incident. A simulated 9-1-1 call was dispatched to initiate the exercise.

During this field exercise, the “patients” simulated the ill effects of a chemical, biological, or radiological attack and was treated and decontaminated, as they would be in the aftermath of an actual attack. In addition to the activity that was on going at the site, eight public and private hospitals also participated simultaneous to the event. These hospitals “treated victims” and also “decontaminated” walk-in “patients”. OEM reached out to all other hospitals by activating OEM’s interagency radio notification system in connection to this exercise.

City officials and members of Titan Corporation evaluated the aims of this exercise—the utilization of newly issued counter-terrorism equipment, the assessment of patients by emergency responders, and consequence management that took place to contain the incident. These officials also studied the response and decisions made by the players to be used as examples for future WMD training in other agencies and cities.

OEM, in partnership with the Department of Homeland Security, Office of Domestic Preparedness, and Titan Corporation are currently planning for future tabletops and field exercises. Funding for these drills, along with Operation Winter Sun, are provided by a federal grant through the Department of Homeland Security.

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