

Exercise a valuable experience for employees, planners, first responders

By Thomas Zimmerman 18 July 2018

The Carlisle Barracks team received praise, suggestions on how to improve and gained valuable experience as a result of the recently completed emergency response exercise last week.

On July 12 and 13 the post held their annual full-scale exercise, the most visible representation of the installation's emergency response and security training program. It was the result of months of planning, coordination and cooperation led by Barry Shughart, the Installation Emergency Manager.

During the exercise, the post responded to a simulated accident on I-81 South near the Army Heritage and Education Center, which released a dangerous gas into the air. This led to the immediate activation of the crisis management team who then ordered a shelter in place, and later evacuation of the entire installation.

The exercise was also evaluated by a team of IMCOM professionals. Led by Dale Roth, Chief Protection Branch at IMCOM Headquarters, the team looked at all facets of the exercise, from planning to recovery. During an out brief, a few of the actions and plans were identified as best practices and items to sustain.

"It's very apparent that you have an experienced, hardworking team here," he said during the out brief. "Everyone was fully engaged and look for ways to solve some complex challenges." He pointed out that the installation's use of land mobile radios for communications, coordination with the Carlisle Fire Police for traffic control and the engagement of senior leadership as best practices that will be shared with other installations.

The team noted a few areas Carlisle Barracks could improve for the next exercise or real world event, which is always the goal according to Shughart.

"We constantly need to exercise these skills to keep complacency at bay,"

he said. "It also starts a muscle memory in the population. When an incident happens for real and people are under stress they don't think as well as they do under normal circumstances. People will react to the way they have been trained. If they haven't been trained, they are unpredictable as to what they will do. In the end it is safer, easier to predict and control the population, probably saves lives."

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