



NEWS FROM
ULSTER COUNTY
County Executive Jen Metzger

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Ulster County Enhances Emergency Preparedness with Simulated 'Tabletop' Emergency Response Exercise

KINGSTON, NY - On Saturday, September 7, the Ulster County Department of Emergency Services, in conjunction with numerous stakeholders, executed a mass casualty tabletop drill at HealthAlliance Hospital in Kingston.

The exercise, designed to evaluate and strengthen the County's emergency preparedness and response strategies, involved emergency first responders, including EMS, fire, police, County 9-1-1-dispatch, as well as government officials and community partners. The exercise simulated a mass casualty incident on a busy roadway, providing attendees with a realistic and challenging scenario to test their response plans and coordination capabilities.

Throughout the session, participants engaged in strategic discussions, decision-making, and problem-solving to address the evolving situation. The exercise featured a detailed, multi-stage scenario that tested participants' ability to respond effectively to a mass casualty incident, including triage, resource allocation, and public communication.

Representatives from various agencies worked together to enhance coordination and communication, including:

- Ulster County Department of Emergency Services
- Esopus Volunteer Ambulance (TEVAS)
- Esopus Fire Department
- Port Ewen Fire Department
- St. Remy Fire Department
- HealthAlliance Hospital (WMCHealth)
- Ulster County Sheriff's Office
- New York State Police

“I had the opportunity to see first-hand the incredible value of these exercises for enhancing our county’s emergency preparedness and response strategies in a mass casualty incident,” **said Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger.** “While such incidents are rare, they do happen, making it all the more important that our first responders and emergency management teams are prepared and can respond seamlessly and effectively in these kinds of situations, which involve a high level of coordination across agencies and strategic decision-making and problem-solving. I want to thank Ulster County Emergency Services for organizing the exercise, and also thank HealthAlliance Hospital, the Sheriff’s Office, the Town of Esopus, and all first responders who participated.”

“This tabletop exercise exemplifies Ulster County's commitment to preparedness and interagency cooperation,” **said Everett Erichsen, Ulster County Emergency Services Director.** “By simulating a challenging mass casualty scenario, we've strengthened our collective ability to respond swiftly and effectively in real-world emergencies. The collaboration demonstrated today between County services, local fire departments, law enforcement, and healthcare providers is crucial for protecting our community. These exercises are invaluable for identifying areas of improvement and ensuring we're always ready to serve Ulster County residents when they need us most.”

“Being able to come together and train is crucial to the safety and wellbeing of the community, residents, and all stakeholders,” **said Michael Madison, Ulster County Emergency Services Deputy Director.** “A tabletop exercise or any exercise is the best way to accomplish the coordination and collaboration of first responders before an incident occurs.”

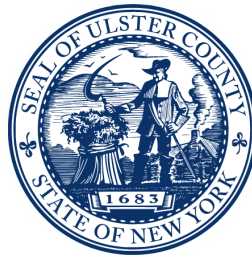
“Participating in this tabletop exercise underscores our commitment to community safety and preparedness,” **said Josh Ratner, HealthAlliance of the Hudson Valley Chief Executive Officer.** “By collaborating with Ulster County Department of Emergency Services and other key agencies, we are better equipped to respond swiftly and effectively to emergencies. This exercise not only enhanced our coordination and communication but also strengthened our collective ability to protect and serve our community in times of crisis.”

“Our squad primarily covers the Town of Esopus, a large and busy area with 5 fire districts,” **said Taylor VanVliet, Town of Esopus Volunteer Ambulance Squad Captain.** “Since being a member and after speaking with many experienced members, I realized that it has been a long time since an MCI drill has been conducted. I want to do this to ensure that our volunteers and surrounding departments are prepared in the event that a large-scale incident occurs. This table-top exercise gave us just a glimpse on how many agencies and resources

are required to be optimally prepared for an MCI and how we should structure the upcoming drill itself. I want to thank everyone who helped put this event together and all of our participants for volunteering their time off to give us ideas on how we can conduct a great drill in the near future. The time to learn is now, not when an event occurs.”

This tabletop exercise is part of Ulster County's ongoing efforts to ensure a robust and coordinated response to emergencies. By regularly conducting these exercises, the County aims to build resilience and ensure that all stakeholders continue to be prepared to act swiftly and effectively during an incident. The insights gained from this exercise will be used to update emergency response plans and further strengthen these agencies' preparedness for any future incidents.

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