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## **Protective Measures, Response Actions Prepare Law Enforcement for WMD Threats**

*By CDP Public Affairs*

The WMD threat facing today's emergency responders is frighteningly real. Recent reports show that a terrorist attack using such weapons is likely by the end of 2013. In addition to manmade events, the potential for accidental chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive (CBRNE) hazards also exists.

Whether criminal or accidental, these incidents will require a law enforcement response, as law enforcement responders may be the first to secure the scene. The Law Enforcement Protective Measures (LEPM) and Law Enforcement Response Actions (LERA) courses, offered by the Center for Domestic Preparedness, provide instruction regarding WMD-related topics that include terrorist tactics and targeting, as well as hands-on training designed to show CBRNE-specific response skills.

"You never know what you're going to walk into," said Deputy Raan Lindsay, from the Oklahoma County Sheriff's Department. "It may be a methamphetamine lab or WMD event. This training keeps us alive by not making us victims."

"The training equips the responder with a hands-on approach to seeing what is discussed in lectures, as well as actually entering a toxic agent environment," noted Don Futrell, course manager and WMD instructor. "Law enforcement officers who complete these courses are prepared to provide immediate protective actions and to safely and appropriately respond to a CBRNE incident."

The CDP training center is located in Anniston, Ala., and offers 39 courses designed for all emergency response Disciplines. The CDP features the latest techniques and procedures and some of the best equipment available during training. At the CDP, training for state and local responders is fully funded by FEMA, a component of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Round-trip air and ground transportation, lodging, and meals are provided at no cost to responders or their agency or jurisdiction.

"You never know if you are going to arrive on a crime scene where chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or explosive hazards are present," remarked Mike Aguilar, CDP Training Specialist. "Many of these hazards are invisible to the untrained observer, and responders need specialized training to identify, tackle, and survive hazardous sites. Our training supplies the law enforcement officer with the critical skills necessary to respond to the unique hazards associated with a CBRNE crime scene."

The LEPM and LERA courses are two days combined. But most include a third day at the CDP's toxic agent facility for the WMD Hands-On Training (HOT) course. The Chemical, Ordnance, Biological and Radiological Training Facility (COBRATF) is America's only training center that affords civilian responders the opportunity to train in a nerve agent environment. The experience enables graduates to effectively prevent, respond to, and recover from incidents involving chemical weapons and other hazardous materials.

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### **Protective Measures, Response Actions (Cont.)**

“This training gives the responders a hands-on approach to “seeing and doing”— unlike other training that only offers a [classroom] environment,” commented Shedric Long, CDP WMD instructor. “I’ve learned that the training we offer is often the first of its kind for some law enforcement officers. They learn the correct way to wear and use life saving equipment when responding to a hazardous crime scene—while carrying loaded weapons.”

“When I requested this training I was asked what role law enforcement plays in WMD events,” remarked Officer Dredrick Lane, City of Columbus Ohio Division of Police. “I didn’t completely understand either. This [training] has helped me define what our role is in a hazardous event, and I’m able to go home and inform my chain of command exactly what our role will be.”

The CDP provides emergency responders with necessary skills to respond to and manage incidents. This training provides the tools needed to protect America’s responders from contaminated crime scenes or accidents, and effectively save lives.

“Many police officers focus on the typical reoccurring problems like burglaries and drugs,” added Rick Searcy, CDP WMD instructor. “Those same officers may one day respond to a traffic accident involving dangerous chemicals, or find themselves serving an arrest warrant at a residence and find a lab for manufacturing explosives, radiological dispersal devices, dangerous drugs, chemical weapons, or biological weapons. The training here provides protective actions the officers must take once a threat has been identified or perceived—whether intentional or accidental.”

To learn more about the Center for Domestic Preparedness, visit <http://cdp.dhs.gov> or call 866-213-9553.