GOVERNOR CRIST AND STATE OFFICIALS PARTICIPATE IN ANNUAL HOMELAND SECURITY EXERCISE

TALLAHASSEE - Governor Charlie Crist today joined Florida’s Cabinet officers, state agency heads, law enforcement and emergency management officials to conduct the seventh annual homeland security “tabletop” exercise at the State Emergency Operations Center. The exercise is an annual drill where the Governor and top state officials respond to mock domestic security threats.

“The time spent and lessons learned by the team today will be invaluable to Floridians should a terrorist or domestic security event occur,” said Governor Crist. “Our ‘all-hazards’ approach to emergency planning, training and exercising helps to ensure that our State Team is ready to respond to all potential threats, from natural events to man-made.”

The scenario of the 2009 training exercise involved the discovery of materials which could lead to the creation of an Improvised Nuclear Device (IND) in the Tampa Bay area. The primary objective of the exercise was to give the state’s top executives and staff an opportunity to engage in policy-level discussions with federal and local officials to test information sharing and to learn the best way to coordinate their response plans and recovery roles with partner agencies.

Representatives from numerous state and federal agencies participated in the half-day drill. Interim Division of Emergency Management Director Ruben D. Almaguer noted the importance of the day’s training, and the responsibility for individual preparedness by all Floridians.

“Our state’s leadership has come together in training today to learn how to best meet the needs of our residents and visitors,” said Almaguer. “It is equally important that all Floridians take the time now, before disaster strikes, to get a plan.”

PREPAREDNESS BY STATE, REGIONAL AND LOCAL PARTNERS

Each of Florida’s seven Regional Domestic Security Task Forces, in coordination with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), has completed numerous tabletop and functional exercises over the past several years. These exercises provide vital training to members of all disciplines, including law enforcement, fire, health, education and the private sector.

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“We will be ready if disaster strikes,” FDLE Commissioner Gerald Bailey said. “We train and prepare with the same partners we work with during the real thing. And that puts us a step ahead when called to respond.”

**FLORIDA’S STRATEGY**

Florida's statewide domestic security strategy is organized around five key goals and objectives:

- Prevent, preempt and deter acts of terrorism
- Prepare for terrorism response missions
- Protect Florida's citizens, visitors and critical infrastructure
- Respond in an immediate, effective and coordinated manner
- Recover quickly and restore

Since September 11, 2001, Florida has received over $1.4 billion in federal and state funding dedicated to ensure the state's domestic security and increase responder capabilities.

For more information on Florida's domestic security efforts, visit [www.fdle.state.fl.us](http://www.fdle.state.fl.us). For more information regarding family preparedness plans and the State Emergency Response Team see: [www.FloridaDisaster.org](http://www.FloridaDisaster.org) or [www.myflorida.com](http://www.myflorida.com).

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