



**Press Release**  
**North Fond du Lac Police Department**  
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**North Fond du Lac Officials Offer Self Critique of Emergency Preparedness**

Following the mock disaster held on Tuesday, April 12, Village of North Fond du Lac officials assessed their preparedness for large-scale critical incidents. The evaluation included administration, the police and fire departments, and the public works department. The exercise conducted Tuesday involved an anhydrous ammonia leak from a tanker in the rail yard, a suspicious vehicle leaving the area at the time of the leak, and a fuel truck that crashed into a box car resulting in diesel fuel being spilled. At the end of the day, village officials identified a number of strengths and some areas in need of improvement.

Chief of Police William Lamb was pleased overall with the abilities and performance demonstrated by the police department. According to Lamb, two of the main objectives that had been established by the design team for this exercise were effectively and efficiently met.

The primary exercise design objective was to demonstrate the ability to direct, coordinate, and control multi-jurisdictional emergency response activities through operations of a Unified Command structure. Chief Lamb explained that the administration and staff of North Fond du Lac had very successfully operated under the Unified Command structure last year when responding to the flooding experienced during the spring. "This exercise allowed us to expand our experiences with Unified Command to include operations with a number of neighboring agencies and organizations. Not only were we successful in coordinating with other village departments and other municipalities, but we also demonstrated a highly successful teamwork approach with private entities including Canadian National Railroad and community healthcare providers."

Fire Chief & EMS Director Dana Sechler agreed. "This exercise was the first time that the Fond du Lac County Hazardous Materials Response Team was called into service since being restructured under the coordination of Fond du Lac Fire Chief Joe Clow and me. The teamwork and unity of that unit and Eldorado, Van Dyne, and Fond du Lac Fire Departments, who provided mutual aid, was consistently praised by all involved."

A second exercise design objective was to demonstrate the capability to maintain law and order, provide evacuation traffic direction and flow control, and provide security

and access control at shelters, vital facilities and evacuated areas. Chief Lamb indicated that the police department was very successful in meeting this objective. “The exercise allowed us to test our call-in procedure and general response times, and it also tested our mutual aid agreements with the Fond du Lac Police and Sheriff’s Departments. After quickly establishing a safety perimeter around the affected area, we were able to maintain that zone with the assistance of area agencies and redirect our officers to provide security at our schools.” According to Lamb, the department also made a rapid and smooth transition to scene security and evidence protection as soon as the chemical releases were rendered safe by the Hazardous Materials Response Team. Lamb acknowledged that the artificialities of an exercise make it impossible to completely demonstrate every aspect of required responses. Still, he is confident that his department’s strong emphasis in recent years to prepare for terrorism incidents allowed the police department to execute its responsibilities effectively and efficiently.

Chief Lamb was also quick to point out that work still needs to be done to improve some areas of response. A third exercise objective identified by the design team was to demonstrate the ability to establish, use, maintain, and manage communications essential to support emergency or disaster response and recovery. “This exercise brought to light some deficiencies in our current communications systems and procedures. Even so, no operations were ever completely halted or ineffective; that’s a credit to the dispatchers and the responders on the street.” Lamb explained that during debriefing of the exercise with representatives from participating agencies, it was agreed that the municipalities would immediately begin working to implement changes in procedures that would improve the current situation.

“The North Fond du Lac Police Department has been and will continue to be proactive in preparing for acts of terrorism and mass disasters,” Lamb stated. “We will use the lessons learned during this exercise to work toward improving those glitches identified and continue to build on our strengths as well.”

Chief Sechler also cited communications as an area of concern. According to Sechler, the various types of radio equipment being utilized by all the different participants presented some problems in identifying and utilizing available channels. “As Chief Lamb said, those challenges have been identified, and we will begin looking into solutions that will better prepare us for future incidents.” Even with some weaknesses identified, Chief Sechler stated that the mock disaster served to build the confidence of his department and others in the ability to handle such incidents and to work together as a team.

Director of Public Works Mike Tolvstad was very impressed by the exercise. “We tend to view response to critical incidents as something emergency responders need to worry about. This was a real eye-opener for many of us in that we now recognize we, too, will have a significant role to play in such emergencies.” Tolvstad also noted that as a result of this experience, he has identified Critical Incident Management training as a need for his department. An additional benefit that Tolvstad commented about was the strengthening of community partnerships. He indicated that Canadian National Railroad has offered to provide his department some training materials to begin working toward better preparing the public works department for future incidents.