



Office of Environmental Management

## West Valley Conducts Virtual Exercise to Prepare for Emergency Incidents

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**WEST VALLEY, N.Y.** – [EM](#) and its cleanup contractor at the [West Valley Demonstration Project](#) (WVDP) conducted a training exercise with local emergency response agencies, held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Based on a hypothetical emergency, the exercise tested the skills and response of the local agencies and WVDP's security force and operational response team. Participants were tested on their ability to minimize the scenario's potential impact to employees, the public, and the environment. Representatives from Cattaraugus County Sheriff's Department, Cattaraugus County Special Response Team, and West Valley Volunteer Hose Fire and Rescue took part in the event.

"We understand the importance and benefit of having trained emergency responders working at West Valley," EM WVDP Safety and Site Programs Team Leader Jennifer Dundas said. "We appreciate their continued commitment to training, and their effort to protect the health and safety of our workers and the public."



Emergency response personnel at the West Valley Demonstration Project participate in an exercise to evaluate their response to a hypothetical emergency incident.

WVDP personnel helped develop the scenario and supported the exercise as controllers, which included coordinating tasks to make the exercise realistic and test the responders.

"You can never practice enough for emergencies," said Kevin Murray, the event and emergency management manager for CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley. "We must always be learning, training, and evaluating our performance so that we can effectively handle whatever comes our way."

Participants described actions they would take to minimize the mock incident's impact. These discussions provided insight to the controllers and evaluators on whether the exercise's objectives were being met, and helped them determine if the participants would effectively handle an emergency event. Participants received constructive feedback on areas for improvement.

"Disasters can occur at any time, and a knowledgeable, well-trained emergency response team can significantly improve the outcome of any event," Murray said.

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