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Tennessee National Guard supports inaugural Music City Grand Prix

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Racing fans are gearing up for a weekend of thrills as the Music City Grand Prix takes over downtown Nashville August 6-8. With nearly 100,000 fans expected to attend the three-day event, the Tennessee National Guard’s 45th Civil Support Team is on the ground to ensure public safety.

Headquartered in Smyrna, the 45th CST is a 22-member unit that provides first responders and civilian authorities the ability to conduct rapid on-site analysis and identification of Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear agents or materials that could put citizens at risk.

This weekend, the 45th is stationed in downtown Nashville to assist, advise, and support the Nashville Fire Department and Nashville Police Department. With a large turnout expected, the 45th is the best-equipped entity in the state to counter possible threats.

“We are working alongside the Nashville Fire Department Special Operations Unit and the Nashville Police Department Bomb Squad,” said Lt. Col. Bobby Rominger, 45th CST Commander. “Our team is conducting roaming patrols and we will have air-monitoring systems setup throughout the area to detect anything suspicious.”

The 45th trains year-round to ensure readiness for any situation. Their unique skillset and equipment provides unmatched capability and helps keep Tennesseans safe.

“Our team is prepared to respond to natural or manmade disasters,” said Rominger. “We respond to unknown substances, HAZMAT spills or unintentional disasters involving CBRN, and can do so quickly and efficiently.”

Members of the 45th began their mission Friday by conducting sweeps of the area to identify possible threats. Throughout the weekend, they will deploy unique technology that can rapidly detect threats in the area. If something hazardous is detected, Guard members immediately notify law enforcement and first responders.

“The Joint Hazardous Assessment Team was formed with members of Nashville’s fire and police departments, as well as a representative from the Indy Racing League,” said Rominger. “If anything hazardous is detected, the team will be notified and that threat can rapidly be dealt with, to ensure everyone’s safety.”



The 45th has experience in dealing with large-scale events like the Music City Grand Prix. In 2019, they played an integral role in the National Football League’s annual draft, which drew 600,000 football fans to Nashville. The unit also routinely provides support to emergency managers and law enforcement agencies when potentially dangerous situations arise.

“We train constantly to maintain readiness for any situation,” said Rominger. “Our team is top-notch, and Tennesseans can feel better about their safety knowing the 45th CST is on ground and keeping an eye out for potential threats.”

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An AreaRAE air monitoring system is stationed against a tree, outside Nissan Stadium, August 7, during the Music City Grand Prix. The 45th Civil Support Team sets up these sensors to monitor for radiation, chemicals, carbon monoxide and explosives in areas of heavy foot traffic during the event. (Photo by 1st Lt. Sarah Kohrt)



Sgt. Christopher Barriere, a member of the 45th Civil Support Team, and Michael Lawrence, a member of the Nashville Fire Department Special Operations Unit, set up air monitoring systems around the Music City Grand Prix, August 7, in Nashville. These air sensors monitor for radiation, chemicals, carbon monoxide and explosives in areas of heavy foot traffic during the event. (Photo by 1st Lt. Sarah Kohrt)



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