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Tennessee National Guard's Civil Support Team passes training evaluation

SMYRNA, Tenn. – The Tennessee National Guard's 45th Civil Support Team completed their Training Proficiency Evaluation, Jan. 10 – 12. The evaluation is administered by U.S. Army North and is a congressionally mandated examination to validate the readiness of civil support teams every 18 months.

The 45th CST is a 22-person team comprised of both Army and Air personnel from the Tennessee National Guard. They work primarily with emergency management agencies, local fire and police departments, and the Department of Homeland Security.

“Our primary mission is to identify unknown suspected chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear substances or agents,” said Lt. Col. Bobby Rominger, 45th CST Commander. “We help local incident commanders assess the overall situation and advise them on strategies to mitigate the situation and prevent the loss of life and property damage, should a CBRN incident occur.”

The evaluations are short-notice, quick-reaction scenarios intended to mimic real-world threats and disasters. In this exercise, the team received a call to respond to an office building in Murfreesboro where suspected terrorist activity was occurring. Within two hours of the initial call, team members were on scene and donning protective HAZMAT suits to enter the facility to survey the situation. Once inside, the team identified a faux chemical laboratory with many harmful substances. They took pictures, inspected the area, and left the building to devise a plan with the rest of the unit. A short while later, another team entered the facility to collect samples and run tests to identify the substances in the building.

The second scenario was held in Franklin where chemicals had spilled inside a semi-trailer. The team carefully entered the trailer and located the chemical spill. While samples were being collected, the U.S. Army North team told a CST member to lie down and pretend to be unconscious as part of a “man-down” exercise. Two additional members from the team quickly donned their gear and headed towards the trailer to extract the simulated injured Guardsman. They then gathered their collected samples and conducted decontamination procedures to finish the mission.

“The mission of the CST is very important,” said Derrick “DJ” Johnson, Division Chief, Civil Support Readiness Division, U.S. Army North. “With changes to personnel within the teams and the constant change in technology used by our adversaries, we need to make sure these teams are proficient in everything they do so they can continue to be assets for their state and federal missions.”



The CST is required to train often to remain proficient in the event of unforeseen, real-world disasters. Staying ahead of the curve is important, which is also why they are evaluated every 18 months.

“We conduct eight full-scale exercises annually to maintain proficiency,” said Rominger. “Each exercise can be driven by different parts of the CST mission, and they may focus on each of the CBRN components, interagency coordination, or a specific focus area developed through observation trends of the team.

The 45th CST proved once again this week that practice makes perfect. They received high scores during their evaluation and will continue to train year-round to ensure they’re ready for whatever threats may lie ahead.

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Members of the Tennessee National Guard's 45th Civil Support Team collect readings from chemical samples during their Training Proficiency Evaluation, Jan. 10, in Murfreesboro. The evaluation is administered by U.S. Army North and is a congressionally mandated examination to validate the readiness of civil support teams every 18 months. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Cordeiro)



Members of the Tennessee National Guard's 45th Civil Support Team conduct decontamination procedures on a "man-down" exercise during their Training Proficiency Evaluation, Jan. 10, in Murfreesboro. The evaluation is administered by U.S. Army North and is a congressionally mandated examination to validate the readiness of civil support teams every 18 months. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Cordeiro)



Members of the Tennessee National Guard's 45th Civil Support Team conduct decontamination procedures during their Training Proficiency Evaluation, Jan. 10, in Murfreesboro. The evaluation is administered by U.S. Army North and is a congressionally mandated examination to validate the readiness of civil support teams every 18 months. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Cordeiro)

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