



Media Advisory

23-031

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Alaska National Guard to train in Nome, Kotzebue for state-wide emergency response exercise

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska – As part of a state-wide, interagency comprehensive disaster exercise, the Alaska National Guard's 103rd Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support team will conduct training in Nome and Kotzebue respectively June 12-14, 2023.

Less than ten AKNG service members plan to arrive in Nome June 12 via an Alaska Air National Guard C-17 Globemaster III aircraft. The team will conduct its training at the Alaska Army National Guard aviation facility for approximately 24-hours in Nome before departing for Kotzebue to conduct its follow-on training mission at the Kotzebue Fire Training Center. The entire exercise is expected to be completed no later than June 14.

The multi-agency chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive exercise called ORCA 23 provides an opportunity for participating agencies to assess and enhance their capabilities, refine interagency coordination, and ensure a timely and efficient response during emergencies.

Communities can expect to see an increase in Air and Army National Guard aircraft, vehicles, and personnel. Community members may observe service members in hazardous material response suits with a variety of detection equipment as part of the exercise's realistic scenarios. These visible elements are part of the comprehensive training and are not indicative of an actual emergency or threat to public safety.

ORCA 23 brings a range of agencies together, including the AKNG's, 103rd WMD-CST, 12 National Guard units from Alaska, Washington, Nebraska, Mississippi, Kansas, Ohio, Hawaii, and Kentucky, eight local and state agencies, three federal organizations, and various community partners.

Visiting military units and various local, state and federal agencies will simultaneously conduct training at the Anchorage Fire Training Center, the Mat-Su Borough Fire Training Center, Providence Alaska Medical Center in Anchorage as well as the University of Alaska Anchorage.

This biennial exercise is part of the 103rd WMD-CST's routine training schedule, designed to maintain readiness, validate response procedures, and collaborate with community first response agencies across the state.

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Exercise Name: ORCA 2023

Date: June 12-15, 2023

Location: Nome, Kotzebue, Anchorage, Mat-Su