

# **Godfrey Officials Advise Community About Upcoming Multiagency Hazardous Materials & Mass Casualty Exercise March 25**

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**GODFREY** - Multiple area agencies are teaming up to coordinate and conduct a large-scale HazMat mass casualty exercise in Godfrey for first responders this week.

Godfrey's Public Safety Administrator and L&C Campus Emergency Management Consultant Chris Sichra has joined forces with Lewis and Clark Community College's Incident Management Team, Nursing Program and Campus Safety Department, along with the Godfrey Fire Protection District, Madison County Emergency Management Agency, Alton Memorial Hospital EMS, AVEC and the Madison County Hazardous Materials Team to conduct an upcoming multiagency exercise.

The drill will begin around 9 a.m., Friday, March 25<sup>th</sup> and should run until 12:30 p.m. Response operations activity will primarily be limited on the college's Godfrey campus near the Hatheway Cultural Center. Local surrounding traffic should not be affected.

Residents and motorists should not be alarmed to see multiple agencies and emergency vehicles operating nearby and throughout the campus during the exercise as at least a half a dozen first response and other local mutual aid companies will be participating in the drill. The exercise will simulate an accidental chemical spill that results in multiple injuries and will present other potential exposure concerns requiring multiple layers of interagency response in order to manage and contain it.

*“It’s critically important for multiple community agencies to train and work together efficiently at complex scenes,”* said Mayor Mike McCormick. *“It will also be a really unique experience for those students who’ll get to work alongside with the first responders as the event unfolds.”*

Sichra said the exercise will be quite different than previous drills, as students from various programs at the college, including the Nursing Program, will participate in the simulation as patients, as well as filling active roles in triage. Other students will also be shadowing and assisting first responders at the incident who will explain/narrate those tasks to the students while they operate on scene.

*“It will be a new learning experience for students who have never experienced a complex incident before, as it is managed - sort of like a disaster academy,”* Sichra said. *“They’ll quickly learn that while emergency scenes may appear chaotic, in reality, everything is choreographed with the same goal in mind, to save lives and mitigate the crisis. I believe this experience will provide a fresh perspective and help them as they move forward with their education and eventually into a career.”*

L&C Learning Assessment Specialist in Nursing Dawna Egelhoff, MSN, RN has been instrumental in the planning and coordination of the drill, which will be the first of its kind on campus involving student volunteers.

*“By collaborating with professionals and community agencies, students will have the opportunity to apply skills while learning from mentors in a realistic controlled scenario. This is an innovative project at a community college level that involves a multidisciplinary approach, as opposed to, an interprofessional simulation. Everyone benefits – local agencies are able to maintain competencies while teaching future professionals. The result, a safer community.”* Egelhoff said.

L&C President Ken Trzaska said the campus is happy to host such an important event.

*“Lewis and Clark Community College is proud to play a part in bringing together first responders from across the region to work as a united team,”* he said.