



## West Valley Annual Exercise Tests Emergency Response to Simulated Fire



*Members of the Emergency Medical Response Team at the West Valley Demonstration Project arrive at the staged scene of an emergency response exercise to provide immediate care to employees with mock injuries from a simulated equipment fire.*

**WEST VALLEY, N.Y.** – It’s been said that during an emergency, you always fall back on your training.

EM and its cleanup contractor at the [West Valley Demonstration Project](#) recently conducted a full-scale exercise testing the skills and response of site and local emergency responders to a simulated equipment fire. All EM team members at the site participated.

“Exercises allow us to safely test the knowledge and response of an organization through a real-life scenario that includes challenging situations,” said West Valley Office of Technical Services Assistant Director Jennifer Dundas, who served as an evaluator for the exercise. “We understand the importance and benefit of having trained emergency responders working at [West Valley](#).”



*The West Valley Demonstration Project's annual emergency response exercise included assistance from onsite subject matter experts and emergency response teams, as well as offsite support from the local fire department's ambulance.*

Area firefighters, 911 dispatch center employees and other emergency services representatives took part in the exercise. Several teams and organizations from the site participated, including the Radiological Controls Department, Emergency Medical Response Team and Emergency Operations Center. Also joining the mock incident response were employees from DOE headquarters and the Department's [Argonne National Laboratory](https://etn.anl.gov/), which delivered [mock social media and news coverage](#). [<https://etn.anl.gov/>]

"Disasters can occur at any time, and a knowledgeable, well-trained emergency response team can significantly improve the outcome of any event," Dundas said. "Exercises provide real-world training and constructive feedback to improve areas identified during the hypothetical emergency scenario."





*The Emergency Operations Center, located off-site, brings West Valley Demonstration Project partners and subject matter experts together in one room to effectively assess, resolve and recover from an emergency incident.*

Held at the **West Valley** site, the event was designed to validate the response to an unannounced hypothetical incident and responders' abilities to minimize potential impact to the employees, the public and the environment.

"We cannot stop unforeseen incidents from happening, but we can prepare ourselves with the knowledge and expertise to effectively deal with any situation that arises," said Kevin Murray, Event and Emergency Management manager for CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley, EM's cleanup contractor at the site. "To be prepared, we are always training, learning and evaluating our performance."

**West Valley** team members helped develop the scenario and supported the exercise as controllers and evaluators. That included coordinating many tasks to make the mock incident realistic and test responders from beginning to end.

*-Contributor: Joseph Pillittere*