

**Kiowa County Division of Emergency Management**  
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**MEDIA RELEASE – For Immediate Release**

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**KIOWA COUNTY EMERGENCY RESPONDERS PREPARING TO TEST THEIR SKILLS**

(EADS, COLORADO) Final plans are in place for nine Kiowa County emergency agencies, a Colorado State Patrol Hazardous Materials Unit and Bent County Dispatch to conduct a full-scale training exercise Saturday, August 26, at the Kiowa County Fairgrounds in Eads, Colorado.

The exercise will begin at 9:00 a.m. and be centered on a simulated passenger vehicle and semi truck crash which results in a simulated chemical spill. The exercise is scheduled to conclude in three hours, depending upon how the scenario unfolds, and will be followed by a session that will allow responders to talk about the events and how issues were handled.

As the scenario progresses, expert observer-controllers will monitor each agency's personnel to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their actions and decisions. Full details of the scenario are not being revealed prior to the exercise so that participants can effectively test their skills and reasoning against unknown elements.

Normal traffic flow in and around the Eads area, including Highways 287 and 96, will not be interrupted by the exercise. Emergency vehicles will be pre-staged on the fairgrounds in order to avoid impeding traffic or posing a safety concern.

Anyone who would like to watch the events unfold will need to arrive at the southeast fairgrounds entrance by 8:30 a.m. and will need to remain in a designated observation area for their safety. Anyone leaving the area before the exercise concludes is asked to be alert for responders and emergency equipment.

County agencies expected to participate include the Eads, Haswell, Sheridan Lake and Towner Volunteer Fire Departments; Kiowa County Emergency Medical Services, Weisbrod Memorial Hospital, Sheriff's Office, Public Health, and the Division of Emergency Management (KCDEM). Other area agencies may also be participating.

KCDEM Director Elaine Lindholm states, "This is an opportunity for all of us to learn a great deal about the effectiveness of the training our agency members have had, and identify skills we can strengthen. We will all benefit from this exercise no matter how well we perform, and will be better prepared for a real emergency."

If a real emergency occurs during the exercise, the simulation can immediately be suspended or cancelled so that any needed personnel can quickly respond to the emergency.

Residents who would like to learn more about the Kiowa County Division of Emergency Management and the exercise may contact Director Elaine Lindholm at 719-438-2288.

Funding for the exercise is provided by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) via the Colorado Division of Emergency Management as part of an effort by DHS to improve the nation's readiness for a variety of natural and man-made emergency situations. Similar exercises have been held in other Colorado counties, and will continue to be held in other communities.

Kiowa County is part of the Southeast Colorado All-Hazards Region, which also includes Baca, Bent, Otero, Prowers and Crowley Counties.

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