



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Mount Rushmore
National Memorial

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Mount Rushmore National Memorial News Release

Mount Rushmore Conducts Disaster Response Training Exercise

(Keystone, S.D.) Mount Rushmore National Memorial conducted a disaster response training exercise on Thursday, April 8 in cooperation with local partner agencies. The exercise simulated a realistic hazardous material scenario to prepare park staff and area agencies for different real-life situations. Memorial staff worked in partnership with the South Dakota National Guard's 82nd Civil Support Team (CST) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to carry out the exercise.

The disaster response exercise began with park staff identifying a hazardous situation at the park. Memorial staff called on the South Dakota National Guard Civil Support Team to assist in the situation and the CST deployed from Ellsworth Air Force base and quickly set up an incident command center at the park. National Guard soldiers worked through their protocols for a hazardous material situation and carried out the full, real-time process for handling the situation.

Mount Rushmore, the National Guard, and the FBI used this experience to learn how the agencies can better prepare for disaster situations. The real-time exercise gave park staff and the National Guard soldiers an idea of how long mobilization, survey, and action take in these kinds of situations. They will use this information to improve response time, create a more efficient disaster response process, and to provide the best visitor safety possible.

The 82nd Civil Support Team is based out of Ellsworth Air Force base and has 22 full-time Soldiers and Airmen capable of identifying agents or substances at a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or high explosive incident. The CST deploys within minutes locally and within hours regionally to expedite response time. Exercises like this help strengthen the teams deployment process and familiarization with their equipment.

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The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Mount Rushmore will continue working with area agencies to improve disaster preparedness. Superintendent Gerard Baker is committed to performing more exercises like the one held on Thursday to better prepare the park for all situations. He noted, “We appreciate the partnerships we have with our local agencies. These realistic training exercises ensure that we are ready for any potential real situation.”



Photo caption: Staff Sergeants Alan Tuschen and Wayne Moser of the National Guard’s 82nd Civil Support Team work through a hazardous materials training exercise at Mount Rushmore National Memorial. NPS Photo.

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