

**Governor's Office of Homeland Security  
and Emergency Preparedness**  
State of Louisiana

JOHN BEL EDWARDS  
GOVERNOR



JAMES B. WASKOM  
DIRECTOR

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

March 27, 2017

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Mike Steele  
[mike.steele@la.gov](mailto:mike.steele@la.gov)  
225-788-0095

**GOHSEP/Louisiana National Guard to Lead Emergency Response Exercise**

**BATON ROUGE (March 27, 2017)** – The Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) and Louisiana National Guard (LANG) will coordinate the state Disaster Response Exercise (DRX) on April 1, 2017. This exercise will incorporate key state agencies affiliated with actions such as search and rescue (SAR), evacuation operations, restoring civil order after a disaster, commodities distribution, re-establishing communication and publically demonstrate our combined capabilities to synchronize emergency response functions. More than 200 employees from several agencies will be taking part in the exercise along with nearly 1000 members of the Louisiana National Guard.

"GOHSEP and LANG utilize these type events to make sure we stand ready for a coordinated response to any emergency event impacting the state," said GOHSEP Director James Waskom. "The time for planning and exercising those plans is before you face a crisis. The DRX allows all state agencies to evaluate intra-agency coordination during an emergency. Weather experts continue to say our warm, winter conditions could mean an increase in severe weather for the spring and early summer. We are also only two months away from the start of hurricane season. GOHSEP continues to work with our local, state and Federal partners through this type of training to make our state more resilient."

"The disaster response exercise allows us to partner with our local, state, Federal and non-governmental organization agencies to test our response capabilities," said Maj.

March 27, 2017

Gen. Glenn H. Curtis, the adjutant general of the Louisiana National Guard. "This ensures our Guardsmen maintain a high-level of training and preparedness so we are ready to go at a moment's notice, to protect what matters - our citizens and communities."

The exercise will be staged in three locations: Bonnet Carre Spillway in St. Charles Parish, the Michoud Assembly Facility in Orleans Parish and LANG's Roseland Regional Staging Area in Tangipahoa Parish.

Other agencies participating include the Louisiana State Police, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Department of Corrections, Louisiana State Fire Marshal's Office, Department of Children and Family Services, the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals and the Department of Transportation and Development.

Local leaders from key parishes are also expected to take part in the event.

The Louisiana Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (LASPCA) is providing up to 10 adoptable animals so that Louisiana National Guard units can practice scenarios in which boat rescuers transfer stranded residents with pets into their vehicles and transport them to points of safety known as lily pads which are areas of refuge throughout an impacted area. In the past, it has been observed that owners will not evacuate without their animals and will put themselves and responders at risk, so it is critically important both that the city plan for such an eventuality, and that our responders have the training to handle frightened animals.

LASPCA Communications Disaster Planning Coordinator Heather Rigney said, "The Louisiana SPCA is proud to partner with LDAF on this exercise, as it is critical for water rescuers to know how to effectively handle pets in an emergency environment. The ability to evacuate pets with their owners in times of need is critical so that responders, pet owners and pets stay safe."

### **Disaster Response Exercise:**

**When: Saturday, April 1st**

### **Bonnet Carre Spillway (St. Charles Parish)**

Media Hours: 9:00am- 12:00pm

- Boat, land and air search and rescue operations
- Lily pad operations (A Lilly Pad is a consolidation point at which civilian personnel are brought after being rescued.)
- Communications capabilities
- Tiger Dam/Aqua Dam operations

**11:45 am press conference**, interviews will be available

March 27, 2017

### **Michoud Assembly Facility (Orleans Parish)**

Media Hours: 11:00am- 2:30pm

- Boat, land, and air search and rescue operations
- Lily pad operations (A Lily Pad is a consolidation point at which civilian personnel are brought after being rescued.)
- Communications capabilities
- Hesco operations (Hesco bastions are used for rapid, flood mitigation operations.)

**2:00 pm press conference**, interviews will be available

### **Roseland Regional Staging Area (St. Tammany Parish)**

Supply distribution systems will be tested along with medical evacuation plans.

**\*\*\*There are no media events planned for this location\*\*\***

### Media Flight Information:

- Flight pick-up Locations:
  - Esler Air Field, 7625 Esler Field Rd., Pineville, LA 71360
  - Lafayette Regional Airport, 23 Grissom Drive, Lafayette, LA 70508
  - Greater Baton Rouge Metropolitan Airport, 4225 Chuck Yeager Ave, Baton Rouge, LA 70807
- Media should arrive at Esler at 08:55 am, Lafayette at 09:30 am and Baton Rouge at 09:35 am.
- **POC for media reservations:** Staff Sgt. David Kirtland  
[david.c.kirtland.mil@mail.mil](mailto:david.c.kirtland.mil@mail.mil) or (504) 278-8672. **Deadline: Tuesday at noon.**

March 27, 2017

*Find more tips on weather and preparedness on GOHSEP's Facebook and Twitter accounts. You can receive emergency alerts on most smartphones and tablets by downloading the new Alert FM App. It is free for basic service. The Get A Game Plan App is another resource available to help you and your family prepare for any type emergency. You download the Louisiana Emergency Preparedness Guide and find other information at [www.getagameplan.org](http://www.getagameplan.org).*

**###**