

# News from the Savannah River Site

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Simulated Active Shooter Exercise Tests SRS Emergency Response

**AIKEN, S.C.** June 27, 2023 – Savannah River Site (SRS) personnel proactively prepared for what has unfortunately become a familiar scenario by recently conducting its second active shooter training exercise, which involved more than 300 employees.

“This year’s emergency preparedness exercise involved an active shooter scenario resulting in simulated wounded and deceased personnel,” said Greg Hightower, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) Environmental Management Drills and Exercise, Emergency Response Organization (ERO) Group Manager. “Though this hypothetical tragedy is one we hope never occurs at SRS, the reality is we have to be prepared for such a situation. And our preparations must extend not just to the SRS ERO, but also to every one of our employees at SRS, training them to run, hide or fight.”

Hightower also explained that SRS employees need to take this same awareness of their environment and ability to quickly react to dangerous situations when they are off-site, as well.

“This was a highly realistic scenario that fully challenged all involved, which was one of our goals,” said Hightower. “Planning began over a year ago beginning with selecting a location for the simulated attack. Easily, hundreds of hours have gone into carefully planning this exercise.”



*A police officer with the Savannah River Site's (SRS) security contractor collects evidence from the SRS employee who agreed to play the role of an active shooter during a recent emergency response exercise.*

According to Amber Rodriguez, SRNS Site Drills and Exercise Coordinator, making the exercise as real as possible was crucial to test all involved and prepare everyone for an actual emergency.

“We had 40 role players – employees who agreed to play as if they were the wounded, traumatized or deceased for the event,” said Rodriguez. “Many were actually transported by ambulances to Aiken Regional Medical Center. Others were declared dead at the scene by the Aiken County Coroner. It was highly realistic.”

Hightower explained that the ERO, Fire Department personnel and protective force security personnel collectively worked together, each fulfilling their duties to the best of their abilities.

“The active shooter threat has emerged Nationwide, and it is imperative that we continue to train and prepare our Protective Force to respond quickly and effectively to mitigate this type of event,” said Mark Bolton, General Manager at Centerra-SRS, the Site security contractor. “In these exercises, we are able to evaluate our response capabilities and be better prepared to provide a seamless integration of all Site resources, including security, fire, medical and emergency management.”

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*A role-playing employee pretends to be surprised by #SRS Security personnel as he flees from the building where an active shooter exercise was recently conducted. More than 300 Site personnel were involved during the training.*

“We have an amazing team of highly trained SRS personnel who man 92 ERO positions, each with specific responsibilities,” said Hightower. “The training for each specific position – during past annual drills and exercises – paid off, yet again, during the active shooter exercise, which included the participation of the FBI, who led the post-incident investigation, as well.”

Hightower stated that three site-level emergency preparedness drills, one exercise and several tabletop drills are held each year at SRS. From high level executives down to employees within the affected facilities, each is trained and tested within a wide range of potential emergency situations.

take on just about anything, be it radiological, chemical, severe weather or related to security,” said Lee Schifer, Director of Safeguards, Security and Emergency Services. “We fully recognize it’s our responsibility and take that seriously. Protecting our employees, the environment and the public surrounding the Savannah River Site is of the utmost importance.”

“Our Emergency Response Organization is ready to