



National Level Exercise 2009 (NLE 09)

National Level Exercise 2009 (NLE 09) is scheduled for July 27 through July 31, 2009. NLE 09 will be the first major exercise conducted by the United States government that will focus exclusively on terrorism prevention and protection, as opposed to incident response and recovery.

NLE 09 is designated as a Tier I National Level Exercise. Tier I exercises (formerly known as the Top Officials exercise series or TOPOFF) are conducted annually in accordance with the National Exercise Program (NEP), which serves as the nation's overarching exercise program for planning, organizing, conducting and evaluating national level exercises. The NEP was established to provide the U.S. government, at all levels, exercise opportunities to prepare for catastrophic crises ranging from terrorism to natural disasters.

NLE 09 is a White House directed, Congressionally- mandated exercise that includes the participation of all appropriate federal department and agency senior officials, their deputies, staff and key operational elements. In addition, broad regional participation of state, tribal, local, and private sector is anticipated. This year the United States welcomes the participation of Australia, Canada, Mexico and the United Kingdom in NLE 09.

EXERCISE FOCUS

NLE 09 will focus on intelligence and information sharing among intelligence and law enforcement communities, and between international, federal, regional, state, tribal, local and private sector participants.

The NLE 09 scenario will begin in the aftermath of a notional terrorist event outside of the United States, and exercise play will center on preventing subsequent efforts by the terrorists to enter the United States and carry out additional attacks. This scenario enables participating senior officials to focus on issues related to preventing terrorist events domestically and protecting U.S. critical infrastructure.

NLE 09 will allow terrorism prevention efforts to proceed to a logical end (successful or not), with no requirement for response or recovery activities.

NLE 09 will be an operations-based exercise to include: activities taking place at command posts, emergency operation centers, intelligence centers and potential field locations to include federal headquarters facilities in the Washington D.C. area, and in federal, regional, state, tribal, local and private sector facilities in FEMA Region VI, which includes the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas.

EXERCISE OBJECTIVES

Through a comprehensive evaluation process, the exercise will assess prevention and protection capabilities both nationally and regionally. Although NLE 09 is still in the planning stages, the exercise is currently designed to validate the following capabilities:

- Intelligence/Information Sharing and Dissemination
- Counter-Terrorism Investigation and Law Enforcement
- Air, Border and Maritime Security
- Critical Infrastructure Protection
- Public and Private Sector Alert/Notification and Security Advisories
- International Coordination

VALIDATING THE HOMELAND SECURITY SYSTEM

Exercises such as NLE 09 are an important component of national preparedness, helping to build an integrated federal, state, tribal, local and private sector capability to prevent terrorist attacks, and rapidly and effectively respond to, and recover from, any terrorist attack or major disaster that occurs.

The full-scale exercise offers agencies and jurisdictions a way to test their plans and skills in a real-time, realistic environment and to gain the in-depth knowledge that only experience can provide. Participants will exercise prevention and information sharing functions that are critical to preventing terrorist attacks. Lessons learned from the exercise will provide valuable insights to guide future planning for securing the nation against terrorist attacks, disasters, and other emergencies.

For more information about NLE 09, contact the FEMA News Desk: **202-646-4600**.

FEMA leads and supports the nation in a risk-based, comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation, to reduce the loss of life and property and protect the nation from all hazards including natural disasters, acts of terrorism and other man-made disasters.