



“The plan was to work quickly and effectively to evacuate dignitaries and rescue those left in the building.”

Fire and Rescue Service firefighters assist ‘casualties’ at the mock CHOGM event multiagency exercise.

Joint exercise tests multiagency HAZMAT response

Picture the scene: a chemical is released inside a public venue during a major event in Perth. People struggle for breath and while some collapse injured, others try frantically to get to the closest exit.

This was the scenario participants faced in Exercise Canister, designed to test the multiagency emergency response of FESA, WA Police (WAPOL), St John Ambulance and the ChemCentre.

Manager CHOGM Training Peter Jones, who acted as exercise director, said it was the first time the interagency communication and response procedures for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) had been carried out.

“The drill had two broad objectives which included the utilisation of resources pre-deployed at the CHOGM event, and working with WAPOL and other agencies in a joint command structure to render an incident safe,” he said.

“The plan was to work quickly and effectively to evacuate dignitaries and rescue those left in the building.

“The response initially involved a taskforce of two fire appliance crews, followed by backup from Perth, Osborne Park and Kensington fire stations.”

The exercise design allowed all agencies to examine the scenario before it was enacted, to develop the best outcomes and consolidate plans for CHOGM 2011. Before the practical aspects of the exercise got under way, District Managers Brad Stringer and Brad

Delavale first walked crews through what was to happen.

FESA’s Incident Management Team worked with senior officers from WAPOL and St John Ambulance commanders to discuss the most suitable strategies, tactics and tasks to combat the emergency.

“The scenario was then played out using the agreed strategies, and the real time exercise went very smoothly,” Peter said.

“There were some issues identified and these were discussed immediately afterwards and at a formal post exercise meeting the following week involving all agencies.”

Five fire crews and appliances, a group of State Emergency Service volunteers and 40 Emergency Services Cadets also played roles in the exercise.