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# NEWS RELEASE

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## Law enforcement, fire agencies test readiness for complex terrorist attack

**MISSION VIEJO, Ca. (Aug. 26, 2022)** The Orange County Sheriff's and Irvine Police departments on Thursday, Aug. 25, hosted a complex coordinated terrorist attack exercise to evaluate operational strategy and communication between multiple local, state and federal law enforcement agencies.

The full-scale exercise involved more than 300 law enforcement and fire participants from 10 public safety agencies.

"Conducting a training of this scale is critically important to ensure Orange County public safety agencies test our tactics and preparedness and find areas for improvement," said Don Barnes, Orange County Sheriff-Coroner. "We are dedicated to this type of real-world training because we know the more we practice our response and refine our tactics, the better we can protect our community."

The exercise was based on a storyline developed by homeland security professional services company, SenseMakers. The scenario began with homegrown violent extremists planning coordinated attacks at two Orange County houses of worship: The Orange County Islamic Foundation mosque in Mission Viejo and Mariners Church in Irvine.

In Mission Viejo, deputies, officers and firefighters responded to a dynamic active shooter incident that included multiple shooters and more than 40 volunteers who played roles as victims. OC Sheriff investigative teams simultaneously held a tabletop exercise to walk through the process of identifying the suspects and piecing together a case.

The Orange County Fire Authority also dedicated multiple engines to the scenario for personnel to train on medical aid procedures for injuries sustained in an active shooter incident.

"The importance of training and identifying successes and challenges when responding with our law enforcement partners cannot be overstated," said OCFA Fire Chief Brian Fennessy. "In an ever-changing world it is critical that we continually train and be ready to meet the needs of our communities."

The Irvine scenario included a hostage situation compounded by reports of improvised explosive devices placed throughout the Mariners campus. The Joint Hazard Assessment Team, which includes SWAT teams from multiple jurisdictions, hazmat teams and the OC Sheriff Hazardous Devices Section participated in the exercise that included simulated hazmat, chemical and explosive components.

"The Irvine Police Department is committed to realistic, scenario-based training that will prepare our personnel to effectively respond to acts of violence in our community," said Irvine Police Chief Michael Kent. We are grateful to Mariners Church and our public safety partners who helped make this training possible."

Ten public safety agencies participated in this exercise: Anaheim Fire Department, California Highway Patrol (CHP), the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), Huntington Beach PD, Huntington Beach Fire Department, Irvine PD, Laguna Beach PD, OCFA, OC Sheriff and



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Saddleback College PD. The exercise is paid for by a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Urban Area Security Initiative.

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