



**Emergency Preparedness Drill
May 23, 2008
Frequently Asked Questions**

Q: *What is going on at the high school on May 23?*

A: The Village will conduct an emergency preparedness drill to test its ability to dispense a large quantity of medications in a short time. The high school Field House will be set up as a mock clinic, and students will pretend to be residents coming to pick up medications for their families.

Q: *Why the high school?*

A: The high school is an ideal site for a mock clinic because of its available space and large, on-site population. In a real emergency, the Village would need to dispense 1,080 doses of medicine every hour for 48 hours to treat the entire population of Oak Park.

Q: *Are you going to stay in the high school Field House for 48 hours to see if you can meet this goal?*

A: No. We realistically can't drill to that level. But with the help of several hundred high school students, we should be able to gauge our ability to dispense a fairly high number of doses in a short time, and see where we need to improve our planning.

Q: *How long will the drill last?*

A: About four hours. The drill at the high school is scheduled for 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Q: *What role will students play in the drill?*

A: Students will pretend to be residents who have come to the clinic to acquire medicines for their families, as if there had been a major medical emergency.

Q: *Is this safe for students?*

A: Yes. They won't be receiving any real medications or providing any family information. The process will be similar to how a real incident would be managed, complete with controlled processing, orderly lines and assessment and treatment stations. But students will only be pretending, essentially just going through the motions. They will only get empty medicine bottles, which will be collected at the end of processing.

Q: *Won't this disrupt the school day?*

A: The impact should be minimal on other activities within the high school. The clinic will be in the Field House and the students who participate will be doing so as a health education component of their physical education classes.

Q: *What exactly is being tested?*

A: The exercise at the high school is intended to test the Village's ability to orderly dispense medication to a large number of people as quickly and as safely as possible.

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Drill FAQs
2-2-2

Q: *What have students been told about this event?*

A: Students were given essentially the same information as parents. The Village is conducting an emergency preparedness drill to test its ability to dispense a large quantity of medications in a short time. The high school was chosen for its available space and large, on-site population. With the students' help, the Village will be able to assess its ability to deal with a large number of people in an orderly fashion. The students' role is that of actors. They are pretending to be residents who have come to a clinic to pick up medications for their families.

Q: *Will students get an educational presentation prior to the event to prevent fear and promote awareness?*

A: No special education presentation is planned for this event, since the specifics of the drill do not apply to any aspect of the students' role. However, Oak Park Department of Public Health educators have made presentations to the students about the importance of emergency preparedness and activities constantly underway to ensure the safety of the community. Physical education teachers will give their students advance notice of the activities planned for May 23.

Q: *How will the Village of Oak Park and high school teachers and administrators respond to students' questions and concerns, or expressions of fear?*

A: Since the students are not directly involved in the specifics of the drill, fear is not anticipated. Increased awareness of efforts to prepare for emergencies may, in fact, allay the fears of those students who are attuned to reports of unexpected, tragic public events. However, everyone involved at an administrative level will have been briefed to explain that the exercise has nothing to do with the high school or its students. The students' role is simply to walk through the lines to help determine how many individuals could be processed in a specific time frame.

Q: *What about security for students in the Field House – will the general public be coming in, too?*

A: Except for those individuals conducting the drill, only students will be involved in the exercise. No one from the general public will be entering the Field House. All non-student participants will have badges identifying their roles. Security will be provided by Oak Park Police assisted by high school security personnel. One of the benefits of the Field House as a mock clinic site is that it is attached to the main building, which always restricts access when school is in session.

Q: *Is the emergency response staff just police, fire and health department officials?*

A: No. Oak Park's emergency response staff includes a wide range of public and private employees, as well as volunteers who help the Village implement its emergency response programs. Police and fire department personnel are involved as are representatives of local hospitals, West Suburban Medical Center and Rush Oak Park Hospital. The volunteers are with the local Medical Reserve Corps, which is comprised of citizens who have been trained to help the Village manage an emergency.

Drill FAQs
3-3-3

Q: *Is there more going on than just at the high school?*

A: Yes. The medicine-dispensing event is just the public phase of the drill. Behind the scenes, the Village will be testing its incident command structure, which would manage resources in a real disaster, as well as its mutual aid agreements with other communities. Police and public health officials and equipment from other communities will be involved along with our local public safety and public works departments. Other communities, including Skokie, Stickney and Evanston, also are sending administrators to observe as part of their own emergency planning efforts.

Q: *Is a specific emergency response scenario being tested?*

A: Yes. A specific scenario is planned for the emergency preparedness response teams, but it does not affect the drill at the high school. A fairly specific mock event is necessary so that all components of the response team can test the roles they would play in a real emergency.

Q: *So, what is the scenario?*

A: The scenario entails the release of a biological agent that would, were this a real emergency, require the Village to activate, distribute and dispense its share of national defense medicine stockpiles. Responses to just about any kind of a community wide emergency would have many similarities. By specifying the type of event to the participants, we can make role playing more realistic for our emergency response personnel and better evaluate our activities. The students really are not participating in the response exercise, so they don't need to know the details of the exercise.

Q: *Does such a threat really exist in Oak Park?*

A: We hope never to have to face a real biological threat. But emergency preparedness is all about being prepared for the worst, whether manmade or natural. Drills such as this allow us to practice processes and procedures that will be essential should a real emergency occur.

Q: *Who can I contact for more information?*

A: For more information on the drill or emergency planning in general, call the Oak Park Department of Public Health at 708.358.5480. Information also is posted on the Village web site www.oak-park.us/drill and is available via e-mail to health@oak-park.us.

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