



*****MEDIA ADVISORY***MEDIA ADVISORY*****

October 13, 2009

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COAST GUARD, LOCAL AND STATE AGENCIES TO CONDUCT JOINT LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING IN LAKE PONTCHARTRAIN

- Who:** U.S. Coast Guard
Port of South Louisiana
St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Department
St. Charles Parish Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness
Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Department
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
- What:** Inter-agency law enforcement training exercise that will utilize new first responder radios, demonstrate helicopter hoist capabilities and focus on strengthening partnerships to better respond to incidents, such as hurricanes, oil spills, vessel collisions, search and rescue and law enforcement operations.
- When:** Wednesday
October 14, 2009
8:30 am until 10:30 am.....Static Display, first responder radio drill, interviews
10:30am until Noon.....Helicopter hoist training and demonstration in Lake Pontchartrain
- Where:** Lake Pontchartrain
U.S. Coast Guard Station New Orleans
201 Hammond Highway
Metairie, Louisiana 70005

Background: As part of the Coast Guard's modernization effort, all of the Coast Guard's MH-65C Dolphin search-and-rescue helicopters are going to receive the new RT-5000 radios. These new radios are capable of communicating on all state and local first responder frequencies. In addition the RT-5000, another upgrade to the MH-65Cs allows aircrews to make phone calls

directly from the helicopter over the HF radio. Both capabilities will significantly improve coordination between the Coast Guard and state and local rescue agencies.

Coast Guard Air Station New Orleans recently upgraded their five MH-65C Dolphin helicopters with these new radios and is one of the first to employ this new capability with state and local first responders.

Soon after the upgrade, Coast Guard Air Station New Orleans completed successful radio communication with the St. Bernard Parish Sheriff's Department on the state's new 700 MHz digital communications network.

"This represents a significant first step in achieving the Department of Homeland Security mandate, that the Coast Guard be able to communicate with other state and local emergency response agencies on common frequencies," said Cmdr. Whit Irwin, assistant operations officer from Air Station New Orleans. "With the number of reports that we get from local sheriff's departments and other agencies, this greatly increases the effectiveness of on-scene coordination."

******MEDIA NOTE*** Any media members planning on attending should contact U.S. Coast Guard Public Affairs and plan to arrive at Station New Orleans no later than 8 a.m. Media members are encouraged to attend this event. There will be a media boat available during the hoist demonstration portion of the event.***