

“Never one thing and seldom one person can make for a success. It takes a number of them merging into one perfect whole.”

- Marie Dressler, Canadian Actress (1869-1934)

New Jersey Render Safe Task Force

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The attacks of September 11, 2001, focused attention on the manner in which law enforcement has aligned resources and conducts training and exercises in order to meet the challenges of the future. In 2000, recognizing the urgent need for law enforcement to expand regional collaboration and to develop dynamic, broad-based prophylaxes which provide effective deterrence, detection, disruption, and/or response to weapons of mass destruction and other CBRNE threats, New Jersey established a statewide Render Safe Task Force. The establishment of the task force represented the State of New Jersey’s attempt to address deficiencies in its domestic preparedness capabilities. Through a more efficient coordination of explosives detection and remediation assets, New Jersey has implemented a highly cohesive and comprehensive explosives detection and mitigation response strategy. All ten bomb squads operating in New Jersey have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the State’s Attorney General’s Office. As part of the MOU, task force members are called upon to provide 24 hour response coverage for all areas of the state, including critical infrastructures. The task force has been activated over the last few years to support the NJ Transit system after the



London train bombings, the Republican National Convention, PGA Golf Tournament, Gubernatorial Inauguration, periods of high profile events and during times of increased threat levels.

The task force consists of the ten law enforcement bomb squads within the state of New Jersey, (Atlantic City Police Department Bomb Squad, Bergen County Police Bomb Squad, Essex County Sheriff’s Bomb Squad, Jersey City Police Department Bomb Squad, Newark City Police Department Bomb Squad, New Jersey State Police Bomb Squad, Morris County Sheriff’s Bomb Squad, Passaic County Sheriff’s Bomb Squad, and Union County Police Bomb Squad). In addition, there are other members of the task force: Federal Bureau of Investigation SABT, Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco Firearms and Explosives, and Federal Air Marshal Service.





Recent Task Force Training with Remotec Personnel

A formal MOU establishing the task force was drafted and endorsed by participating agencies. The principal goals of the task force are to enhance New Jersey's explosive detection and mitigation capabilities, particularly as they pertain to large-scale terrorist attacks, such as suicide bombers and VBIEDs. These goals are being accomplished by utilizing all available resources; by implementing uniform and consistent protocols, training, and equipment for detection, response, and remediation to overwhelming explosives incidents. The task force integrates canine explosives detection assets and hazardous devices technicians to be deployed as one.

The task force is activated during multiple and / or large-scale explosives incidents (as set forth by the MOU), by a Task Force Commander appointed by the Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police. Currently, the role of Task Force Commander is performed by the supervisor of the New Jersey State Police Arson/Bomb Unit. During task force activations and deployments, the Task Force Commander also performs the function of Incident Commander in an Incident Command structure.

The task force establishes the basic framework within which the State's explosives detection and mitigation assets are coordinated and deployed. The adequacies of policies, plans, and procedures for responding to multiple incidents and /or large-scale events have yet to be tested. To be certain, U.S. law enforcement must begin to seriously consider large-scale VBIED attacks and the deployment of suicide bombers by well organized terrorist groups. The task force has begun to exercise

vigorously in preparation for large-scale VBIED attacks against a variety of critical infrastructure. Similarly, the escalating threat of suicide bombers in U.S. cities requires the development of effective response protocols and mitigation techniques.

Task force personnel have conducted enhanced training in responding to CBRNE type threats. The vulnerability of hazardous chemical facilities in New Jersey, though a priority concern of law enforcement, remains constant. Explosive threats in these extremely hazardous environments demands a continual review and upgrading of deployment and remediation protocols. Ongoing cross-disciplinary training between explosives technicians and HazMat personnel, relative to interface issues, will remain a priority of the task force. The Task Force today has invested approximately four and half million dollars in equipment and training.

The available homeland security funding has permitted state coordinators to purchase current and state-of-the-art interoperable equipment for all task force members to ensure enhanced response capabilities and the highest level of officer safety. These equipment purchases have included bomb response trucks, robotics, bomb technician suits, fiber optics, hand / power tools, WMD transport vessels, and x-ray systems, both digital and conventional. The fiscal year purchases were directed at additional advanced, specialized equipment which will enable technicians to respond to increasingly sophisticated, mass casualty threats, such as those posed by large VBIEDs, suicide bombers, chemical and dirty bombs. In addition, the task force has two regional trailers with equipment and robotics to assist with a VBIED, and an additional trailer with a foam tent and equipment is on order. One of the latest initiatives is to have at least two members of each bomb squad trained as an explosive breacher. This initiative will be completed by spring 2008. The task force prides itself with the interoperability that is afforded between all of its members with like equipment and trucks. Each squad has a task force purchased truck that is fully equipped, including a pan disrupter, Hal rigging kit, Allen-Vanguard MK II robot, Golden XR-200 x-ray, LOGOS digital x-ray system, Zisto's fiber optic system, etc. Also, each squad has a Kawasaki Mule 3010 (ATV) with an enclosed cargo trailer for transportation. The Mule is for large scenes or range work.

The Render Safe Task Force is an ongoing initiative. The initiative is intended to achieve and sustain, in the long term, the State's targeted capabilities as they pertain to coordinating, directing, and conducting explosive device response operations as one. At the direction of the Domestic Security Preparedness Task Force, it resides within a formal Memorandum of Understanding between participating agencies. It's success is dependent upon the robust and adaptive collaboration of various state, county, and local law enforcement authorities. While the continued cooperation and mutual aid will continue unabated, the task force will continue to grow, providing New Jersey with advanced render safe capabilities.



One of Two Recently Purchased Remotec Wolverine Robots with the Large Vehicle Bomb System