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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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### **The Rockford Fire Department to Host a Large Scale Disaster Exercise**

ROCKFORD- On Monday March 21, the City of Rockford will host a large scale exercise designed to simulate the effects of a tornado impact. As we know all too well, the Northern Illinois Area has sustained numerous natural disasters over the past several years. The Rockford Fire Department has developed a realistic scenario that will be sure to challenge the responding rescuers. Firefighters and rescue professionals from throughout Illinois will converge on Rockford to test themselves in various structures that were slated for demolition and have now been partially demolished to mimic damage seen in other natural disasters.

The exercise will test our response capabilities, communications, and equipment. We will also request response from various state assets such as the Illinois Terrorism Task Force (ITTF) Urban Search and Rescue Team, Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS), and the Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System (ILEAS). These teams will respond with advanced communications equipment, search and rescue capabilities, medical staff, specialized training, and are designed to be entirely self-sufficient for up to 72 hours.

"Our personnel have spent hundreds of hours training and preparing for just this type of incident", says Division Chief Matthew Knott, "whether the structures were collapsed by a tornado, severe wind, earthquake, explosion, or in this case, heavy machinery, the planning and response are still the same."

The exercise will conclude on Thursday evening following nearly 100 hours of continuous activity.

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