

COMMENTARY BY DALE SALTZMAN ON Putnam County Police Department

The Putnam County Police did a good job with the information available to them at the time of the drill. There were many feelings of inadequacy and unpreparedness for so large an undertaking as an actual class 9 emergency. But, using the skeletal plan made available by the Westchester County they proceeded with their day. What really seemed to hold them together was the added benefits of a secondary plan made up by two of their own who had had extensive military training with nuclear weapons. And what they had gleaned from these experiences with nuclear materials and human management procedures in emergency situations helped them to focus on the kind of drill I observed that day.

One interesting communications note is that this police station is located within the 10 mile zone and would therefore get bad effects from an accident before they would get communication information from their county superiors located outside of the 10 mile zone.

Without slighting the ability of these men and women to handle emergency situations several human failings must be noted. One, captain Jacob and Officer Murray did not seem convinced that all of the sirens in the 10 mile zone had gone off. But only those located in their jurisdiction. The reason they thought this was so was because Connelly was not following the prescribed scenario of steps in the county plan; that is the steps in notification of upgarding the event and responses to it. The second note would be that the Putnam County sheriffs were discovered in the field by Captain Jacobs patrolmen by visual contact only as there was no communciation between the sheriffs office and our police station. So at one point Captain Jacobs asked the radio dispatcher to have all sheriff patrol cars positions noted and given to his patrolman. But what actually went out on the radio was that if any patrolman see a sheriffs car it was to be reported to the Con Ed crews standing by at the sirens. This mistake was scratched when discovered, but it stuck in my mind.

Intervenor Observer

Dale Saltzman

Observation Point

Putnam Valley Police Department

Time of Observation

7:47 am - 10:45 am

7:47 Logged in and had ID checked

7:58 Alert had come in, but not to the station; it came to County Control, now on alert. Captain Connelly called in alert from County EOC. The Chief and Supervisor are notified.

7:59 Police Officer comes in and gets Post #7 instructions and dosimeter. Posts are numbers 4, 5, 7, 9, and 14. These posts were developed by the Putnam Valley Police Department plan. Putnam Valley, according to Officer Murray, has developed its own evacuation plan because it is felt that the county plan would have the people react to a disaster and they would prefer to deal with an emergency.

Everyone is told that they are on alert and to stand by.

Chief tells me that the men would not be leaving if this were a real event.

8:00 Chief sets tape recorder to record all calls. Officer says to call Dutchess Airport for wind direction and conditions.

8:15 Officer Murray shows me their plan books and their radio operation method. Wind NE at 10-20 mph. Precipitation: light rain at Westchester Airport.

8:18 Everyone comments that they are safe because of the wind direction.

8:22 Discussion of ten-mile zone. Lots of Putnam is not in the zone. County-wide Westchester Police walkie-talkie is set up.

8:27 Officer Murray gives me a talk about their plan and says they want to deal with an emergency, not react to a disaster. They have developed their own plan with tow trucks, etc. However, it's only on paper. They use the county plan.

8:30 Both Chief Jacobs and Officer Murray comment that their area is the first to get trouble from Indian Point and the last area the county communicates with. In other words, they are in the Southwest corner of the county and they get their orders from the Northeast.

8:33 Officer Murray continues about their set-up, which he and another officer put together. He has been in the military for seven years with nuclear weapons and has an appreciation for making plans of this nature. All doors have been double-locked for security. The Indian Point response plan is posted on the wall with other pertinent materials, which were received the day before.

8:44 Chief says, "So far, we are only on standby."

8:50 Chief gives me a talk on the chain of command.

9:02 The temperature is 39 degrees in Westchester.

- 9:05 Chief says to Officer Murray that there doesn't seem to be any communication at all. Officer Murray responds, "No, nothing involving the exercise."
- 9:15 Capt. Connelly calls from EOC.
- 9:20 Capt. Connelly calls back to be sure that they have the number where he can be reached. Asks to have calls transferred to 3304, which is Officer Murray's desk.
- 9:25 Dosimeters are divided up and checked. Chief says they were issued ten.  
In the Putnam Valley plan:
- |                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| unusual           | condition white |
| alert             | green           |
| site emergency    | yellow          |
| general emergency | red             |
- 9:30 The Carmel plan is based on support from the Sheriff's office.
- 9:34 Discussion of use of Fahnstock State Police, who have been totally left out of plan. The radio is turned low but many calls are in about Westchester calls -- Route 9 construction is mentioned.
- 9:46 Capt. Connelly calls. Requests that Putnam Valley personnel go on standby, which Putnam Valley did, one hour ago.
- 9:51 Officer Murray calls back EOC to state that order has been carried out.  
Sirens go off.  
Chief says to call Continental Village Fire House, but can't find the number posted. Chief says they haven't heard anything by standby alert; no calls about sirens going off.
- 9:47 Continental Village is put on standby.
- 10:02 Officer Murray calls Continental Village to see why the sirens went off two steps ahead of the plan. The Chief does not know what the sirens mean -- it is not in the plan.  
One call comes in about the siren. Officer on duty says it is because so many tests have occurred lately. Chief says to sign a dosimeter out to Detective Ryan.
- 10:09 Officer Babnik calls in to say that there are Con Ed personnel at Oregon Corners. Chief tells Debbie Kaleda to tell officers in cars to call in if they see any sheriff's cars. D. Kaleda calls out and tells patrolmen to tell the Con Ed crews where the sheriff's cars are located. Chief realizes the call that went out was wrong and quickly corrected it by telling Debbie to scratch the last call.
- 10:10 Officer Murray comments again that Putnam Valley is the first affected but the last notified by any disaster plan.
- 10:25 Officer Murray calls Westchester County Control Center to find out why Putnam Valley got the call on the Continental Village Fire phone. They are unsure of whether sirens went off anywhere except Putnam Valley.

- 10:30 Capt. Connelly calls. He says that Westchester County is simulating roadblocks on the county line.
- 10:45 Call comes in from Westchester County Control Center:  
Advise mobile units to use PA system to advise people to stay indoors. (There is no evacuation, no escalation from alert.) By the county plan, this should not be done until a site emergency is declared. This has not happened.  
They received map (Indian Point Evacuation Response) yesterday, March 8, 1983.  
Chief says to have the Fire Department called to back up Police. He says that's where the manpower is.