

# News



from the Alexandria Sanitation Authority

June 1, 2010

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## **ALEXANDRIA SANITATION AUTHORITY AND ALEXANDRIA FIRE DEPARTMENT HOLD EMERGENCY DRILL**

If you saw the Alexandria Fire Department's trucks, personnel, and equipment rushing to the Alexandria Sanitation Authority (ASA) off Eisenhower Avenue last week, it wasn't due to a fire or accident. Training was underway for both the fire department and ASA employees to prepare for a real emergency should one occur.

The training took place May 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>, 2010, and focused on a simulated rescue from a confined space. The "victim" was a mannequin trapped in a digester, a large structure that looks like a silo and is used to break down biodegradable material into methane gas.

Originally, the fire department requested ASA's facilities to allow all three shifts of its personnel to hone their skills and practice using special equipment and techniques used in a confined space rescue. ASA requested that its employees be involved in the drill to make sure both the fire department and ASA operate as efficiently and effectively as possible.

"ASA has an outstanding safety record, and this sort of accident is highly unlikely," commented ASA General Manager Karen Pallansch. "However, it is critical that ASA employees and first responders be prepared to work together and react quickly and appropriately to emergencies."

The fire department was given free range to the ASA campus, and gave ASA employees the opportunity to work one-on-one with the rescuers. Depending on the day, the drill involved six to eight fire trucks and about a dozen firefighters, as well as several fire department interns.

"There's nothing like a drill to make sure both ASA employees and the fire department communicate effectively and help one another during an emergency. Drills like this can improve the chance of successful outcomes. Not only that, firefighters can walk away from a drill with new knowledge and skills that can be used anywhere in the community. This was an extremely helpful exercise, and I commend everyone involved for planning, participating, and finding even better ways to handle emergencies," commented Ms. Pallansch.

In addition to the fire department drill, ASA also opens its facilities several times a year to allow the police department to train.

Photos from the drill can be seen at <http://www.alexsan.com/events.asp>.

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