



For Immediate Release  
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### Communication Exercise Tests National Guard Capabilities

**CAMP DENALI, Alaska**—The Alaska National Guard, the Washington National Guard, State of Alaska, and emergency management personnel are currently testing their communication ability during the Midnight Sun communication exercise July 7-10.

With a limited road system, large mountain ranges, deep valleys and high latitudes, the size of Alaska makes it difficult to communicate effectively—especially when a disaster strikes. However, the Midnight Sun communication exercise is testing a variety of communication assets to include the National Guard Joint Incident Site Communications Capability in addition to other state assets.

The Joint Incident Site Communications Capability or JISCC is a mobile system that gives Guard personnel the capability to set-up voice, data, video, and radio communications within one hour of a disaster between local, state and federal first-responders.

“The JISCC provides all the capabilities you need. It includes a 20 x 20 tent, computers, wireless internet, radios, generators and satellite communications,” said Lt. Col. David McPhetres, Alaska National Guard Joint Operation Center officer. “It allows you to set-up virtually in the middle of nowhere and provide communication capabilities during a disaster.”

According to the National Guard Bureau, the JISCC is in response to communication problems experienced during the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and again after Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Throughout the last five years, more than 70 JISCC systems have been issued by the National Guard Bureau, with Alaska receiving one earlier this year.

The Alaska National Guard JISCC is currently deployed to Valdez as part of the communication exercise testing our ability to respond to a major earthquake with subsequent aftershocks. The Washington National Guard JISCC is also operating out of

Eielson Air Force Base with additional Guardsmen and state emergency personnel at Camp Denali on Fort Richardson coordinating the efforts.

“With any exercise, we expect to identify shortfalls, but the goal of this exercise is to identify those issues and fix them before the real thing happens,” said Lt. Gen. (Alaska) Craig E. Campbell, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard. “The lessons learned will help us improve our capabilities when disaster strikes, and the Alaska National Guard will be ready to respond.”

Alaska is known for its unique challenges and potential for many natural disasters. Earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, forest fires and volcanic eruptions are but a few of the life-changing events that Alaskans face every year. However, with Guardsmen and other state responders exercising communications interoperability, Alaska stands ready and reliable to effectively mitigate any state emergency.

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**Media: Anyone interested in learning more about the Alaska National Guard JISCC can see it in the Valdez City Hall parking lot. It will be open to capabilities demonstrations and walkthroughs from 2-4 p.m. July 9.**