

NSA Panama City annual exercise renews focus on force protection mission
By Re-Essa Buckels | NSA Panama City Public Affairs

PANAMA CITY, FL – Naval Support Activity Panama City annual Navy-wide exercise reinforces the need for base personnel to maintain a force protection mindset.

“Our utmost responsibility to the Navy and the NSA Panama City community is protection of our assets, facilities and personnel,” NSA Panama City Antiterrorism Officer Christopher McDaniel said. “This is a necessary evil for us to be prepared in the event of a real world incident.”

The anti-terrorism force protection exercise ensures all Navy personnel maintain a high level of readiness to respond to threats. Additionally, it provides the security forces an opportunity for dedicated training and renewed focus on the force protection mission.

It is Navy policy not to discuss specifics of force protection measures, including exercises, so information of that nature will not be released to the public. The two-week exercise include reality-based situations and is underway until February 12.

During the first week, Citadel Shield exercise focuses on security personnel’s response to simulated threats.

Security Director Leon Leath, NSA Panama City, explained the exercise is a great time to ensure resources are available.

“We also take into account of what we already have and making sure equipment works ... If I have a vehicle. Does the vehicle still work properly?” Leath outlined. “You say today it’s supposed to work and on the day of (an event) it doesn’t and that was the primary vehicle so do we have a backup vehicle?”

Solid Curtain is the second portion of the exercise and uses simulated events to test incident command and communications between units.

“All Navy installations will be on a common operating system ... so the training that the Sailors and civilians receive can transfer to other installations,” McDaniel remarked.

Base personnel can also expect the installation to increase its force protection levels, which will spur an increase in traffic and delays at the main gate.

“If you have to be somewhere at a specific time, you need to (plan) for delays,” McDaniel said.

Personnel should remain aware of their surroundings throughout the exercise and not to assume a suspicious activity or threat is part of it.

“We still want you to practice ‘if you see something, say something,’ Leath added.

“Some people are apprehensive or reluctant to say something because they don’t want to stir up a problem or seem like they’re singling someone out,” McDaniel explained.

Security leaders say it’s critical for base personnel to know the real world procedures. All personnel should report suspicious activity to security forces at 850-234-4332 for non-

emergencies or dial 911 for an emergency. If possible, they should provide the following information:

WHO did you see?
WHAT did you see?
WHEN you saw it?
WHERE it occurred?
WHY it's suspicious?

Base personnel should not confront a suspicious person directly but maintain a visual and allow security forces to handle the situation. The safety and security of the installation community requires a team effort.

These exercises are not related to any current threat; rather it is designed and executed to increase readiness and to deter or respond to potential security threats.

NSA Panama City officials encourage the public to stay tuned about potential exercise impacts by following the installation's Facebook page (@NSAPC).

###