

New Jersey National Guard Working with FEMA to Provide Fuel to First Responders and Utility Crews

Sunday, November 4, 2012 Tags: [Hurricane Sandy](#)

Executive Order Suspends Restrictions, Permitting Fuel Retailers to Sell Fuel Shared by Other Retailers

Trenton, NJ – The New Jersey Army National Guard is working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and New Jersey State Police to provide fuel to vehicles supporting first responders, critical infrastructure workers such as gas and electrical crews, and personnel who are critical to the recovery and aid for the state of New Jersey.

From National Guard Armories in West Orange and Freehold and from an Atlantic County Office of Emergency Management in Egg Harbor Township, a fleet of 17 Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Trucks (HEMTT) filled with fuel are making deliveries to agencies across the state in an operation that launched Thursday using seven New Jersey Army National Guard trucks. The fleet expanded on Saturday evening with the arrival of 10 Pennsylvania Army National Guard trucks and their crews.

At the West Orange armory, where a small fleet of commercial tanker trucks were operating as part of a broader FEMA effort and National Guard Soldiers were filling their HEMTTs and planning routes, 1st Lt. Zhao Chen described the operation.

"We are currently managing 8 vehicles which contain either or both unleaded gasoline and diesel fuel" said Chen, the Officer in Charge, Task Force North Emergency Re-fueling Mission. "Six of the 8 vehicles are dual containers meaning they carry both types of fuel. The other two only contain diesel."

"There are also 7 FEMA contractors working the distribution activities" said Chen.

"The FEMA sponsored refueling mission is two refuel missions happening simultaneously" explained Maj. Andrew Hague, 50th Brigade Special Troops Battalion Executive Officer. "There is stationary or static refueling that is happening for first responders and other folks that are critical to state recovery. There is also a mobile refueling operation which is a convoy style mission."

Both missions which began November 1 are driven and sustained by FEMA contracted fuel trucks which deliver bulk fuel drops and fuel truck swaps.

"Over 400 vehicles came through the facility on November 2" said Hague. "The day before that we were only open half the day and took care of over 200 vehicles. So we are expecting to take care of between 400 to 450 vehicles each day."

The static refueling mission relies on National Guard Military Police to man entry control points 24 hours following vehicle criteria guidance directed by FEMA.

Hague explains that the criteria are first responders in their official vehicles, vehicles that support the servicing, repairing, or rebuilding of the infrastructure through public services such as electric and gas for example, and State Police, ambulances, fire trucks, and contractors who have been hired by those agencies who need fuel to work on recovery from Hurricane Sandy.

Personnel from hospitals are able to get refueled as well so they can get back and forth to the hospital to do their missions.

People who think they can sneak into line are out of luck.

"There is 100% ID check" Hague said "Medical personnel are pre-screened and must have identification showing which hospital they work for with a badge or some form of ID issued by the hospital. If there is a question or grey area, like if a pharmacist meets the criteria during the screening, there is a FEMA rep who will make the ultimate decision on whether a person is considered critical personnel."

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The convoy style mobile refueling missions are assigned from the Regional Operations Center through the NJ State Police who are consolidating the bulk fuel requests.

The mobile mission takes care of assignments such as the refueling of a generator bank at a waste treatment facility. Soldiers take HEMTTs filled with diesel from the FEMA tankers and drop it where it needs to go.

“So far we have accomplished 16 of those types of missions” said Hague “We contact the civilian authority and come up with the route to get there and ensure we are able to link up to do drops. We have been doing that 24 hours a day as well with sleep plans in place.”

The leadership of the missions have nothing but praise for the personnel carrying out these very important missions.

“The soldiers have been doing a great job” said Hague “ It’s all junior non commissioned officers that are out there. The teams are made up of enlisted people who are truck drivers and fuelers who are qualified to run the pumps. “

“We give them the mission, but it is the enlisted soldiers who roll out execute the job. In all their missions, the enlisted people are the National Guards direct liaison with the civilian authorities and they are doing an excellent job.”

Photos available at www.dvidshub.net

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