



South Florida Regional Planning Council
Proudly serving South Florida since 1974

Isabel Cosio Carballo, MPA
 Executive Director

Senator Steve Geller, Chair
 Broward County Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
 April 14, 2023

Contact: Jennie Sullivan
 954.924.3653 | jsullivan@sfrpc.com

**THE SOUTHEAST REGIONAL DOMESTIC SECURITY TASK FORCE HOSTS OPERATION HEAT SHIELD IV
 FOCUSING ON REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND OFFERING FIRST REGIONAL EXERCISE FOR FIRST RESPONDER EMERGENCY
 PERSONNEL POST COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

HOLLYWOOD, FL – On Tuesday, March 7, 2023, the Southeast Regional Domestic Security Task Force (SERDSTF) and Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) hosted Operation Heat Shield IV [\[get a glimpse\]](#) which focused on advancing whole community and regional partnerships. The SERDSTF is one of seven such task forces around the state which are dedicated to keeping Florida prepared for an attack.

With unrest across the globe, terrorist attacks can occur anywhere including South Florida. Coordination among first responders to prepare for worse case scenarios is critically important to public safety. Planning exercises like Heat Shield IV provide an opportunity to conduct interagency risk assessments. The exercise is designed and conducted to test and demonstrate critical skills in multidisciplinary areas of expertise and to advance lessons learned during previous exercises. Training to test new capabilities in a controlled environment helps first responders to plan for, prepare, prevent, respond, mitigate, and recover from potential terrorist incidents. In addition, the Heat Shield series provides the region’s partners with the opportunity to identify preparedness gaps for inclusion in future training exercises.

Operation Heat Shield IV exercises were held at Port Miami and other locations throughout Miami-Dade County in March. Event partners included law enforcement, fire rescue, emergency response personnel, joint media, and intelligence sharing entities. Through cross-jurisdictional collaboration response capabilities improve and the region’s vulnerability from a complex coordinated attack is reduced. Planning exercises are a best practice to help keep South Florida’s first responder skills sharp in the event of a real-world emergency.

“The safety of the millions of residents and visitors of Miami-Dade County is paramount. I’m extremely proud of the Miami-Dade Police Department as they continue to strive to be an exemplary law-enforcement agency. Heat Shield exercises are a true testament of the collaborative effort amongst the different law enforcement agencies within Miami-Dade County to better prepare themselves as our first line of defense. It is our responsibility to continue to support our law-enforcement agencies by providing proper resources and training so they may continue to provide first class service.”

~ Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava

“There are multiple ways for a terrorist to attack. Tactics include small arms/explosives, vehicle ramming, suicide bombing, chemical attacks, biological attacks, radiological attacks, nuclear attacks, and complex coordinated attacks which can involve multiple attacks. Our region is prepared to prevent, prepare, respond, and recover from incidents of terror at certain levels. We



constantly strive to improve upon potential areas of weakness through training exercises such as Heat Shield, leveraging federal grants for assistance, and fostering relationships with local, state, and federal partners in the private and public sectors.”

*~ Troy Walker, Special Agent In Charge,
Florida Department of Law Enforcement (MROC), and SERDSTF Co-Chair*

The SERDSTF members include first responders from the disciplines of fire/rescue, emergency management, public health, hospitals, as well as law enforcement. The task force works in partnership with schools, businesses, and private industries in the region. By utilizing a multi-disciplinary approach, the [Florida's seven \(7\) regional RDSTFs](#) provide support to impacted communities by serving as a force multiplier for local agencies and working in conjunction with emergency management professionals.

The South Florida Regional Planning Council is proud to support and coordinate the [South Florida Local Emergency Planning Committee \(LEPC\)](#) who assisted in the planning of this Operation. In addition, the Council thanks the Florida Department of Emergency Management and the State Emergency Response Commission for their invaluable partnership and funding support to the LEPCs. Since 1988, the Council has served as staff to the LEPC which serves Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe counties. The LEPC was established pursuant to the Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act (EPCRA), Title III of the EPA Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA). Congress enacted EPCRA to help local communities protect public health and safety and the environment from chemical hazards.

Since 1974, the South Florida Regional Planning Council has served as the regional planning agency for Monroe, Miami-Dade, and Broward counties, 70 municipalities, and an estimated 4.8 million residents. The Florida Legislature has recognized that regional planning councils are the only multipurpose regional entity in position to plan for intergovernmental solutions to growth related problems and meet the other needs of communities in each region. The Council is governed by a public/private board of county and municipal elected officials and gubernatorial appointees. Ex-officio members include representatives from the Florida Department of Transportation, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and South Florida Water Management District. The Council supports the region's elected leaders and public, private, and nonprofit stakeholders through regional, collaborative planning and the development and implementation of programs and strategies shaping a better future for South Florida. For more information about the SFRPC and services offered, please visit our website at www.sfrpc.org.

For more information about the RDSTF or LEPC, please contact LEPC Coordinator Charlene Burke at 954.924.3653 or cburke@sfrpc.com.

For more information about the SFRPC and the services offered, please visit our website at www.sfrpc.org.

###