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The InfoGram

Compressed Natural Gas Portable Pipelines

High prices of propane and fuel oil are pushing some businesses to convert to natural gas, currently seeing a production boom in the United States. Businesses using bulk amounts of fuel see a sizable drop in their costs after they switch; their major hurdle is getting access to natural gas if there is no pipeline system nearby.

One answer is a Portable Pipeline, sometimes called a Virtual Pipeline. Trucks are used to take compressed natural gas (CNG) and liquefied natural gas (LNG) from supply sites to storage and decompression or vaporization sites, after which they can be used by business and industry.

A new type of transport truck is very concerning to first responders. The trucks have four 38-foot DOT Type IV long cylinders, but they are covered with walls and from the outside look like a regular tractor trailer box truck. Though the truck is correctly placarded, at first glance the truck might not be identified as a Hazardous Material-hauling vehicle. Other considerations on Portable Pipelines for first responders:

- These trucks can carry 355,000+ standard cubic feet of pressurized gas;
- During an activation of the module safety system, all four cylinders will vent simultaneously from vent piping at the top rear of the trailer;
- Venting cannot be stopped and can take 45-60 minutes to vent completely.

The full life cycle of the Portable Pipeline process and other safety considerations for first responders can be seen in greater detail in the White Paper available on the website. Currently these trucks are used in South Carolina, with a majority in the New England area. The potential is there for Virtual Pipelines to go nationwide, especially with the current fuel cost and availability climate.

(Source: Lebanon (NH) Fire Department)

Ricin Review: Recent Cases in the News

In likely unrelated events, two 19 year old men were arrested in Washington, DC, and Pennsylvania for making and possessing ricin this week. A few other ricin cases occurred in the past few years, including two separate cases where ricin was mailed to several officials in 2013. In both of those cases and in at least one of the recent cases, the individuals found instructions for making ricin on the internet.

The InfoGram is distributed weekly to provide members of the Emergency Services Sector with information concerning the protection of their critical infrastructures.

Here is a list of resources on ricin identification, response to possible ricin incidents, and other materials from the Centers from Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and others:

- CDC fact sheet on the biotoxin ricin, including response considerations;
- Fast Facts sheet on ricin, also from the CDC;
- The Ricin Safety and Health Topics page from OSHA;
- Methods and tactics information from the National Counterterrorism Center;
- Ricin: Information for Medical Providers (PDF, 42 Kb) from Michigan State.

Many state governments also have documents and guides on ricin, which a quick internet search will find.

(Sources: Various)

ESS Roadmap to Secure Voice & Data Systems

Members of the Emergency Services Sector (ESS) meet physical risk often in their daily duties, but cyber risk seems to be something seldom discussed. Things like 9-1-1 systems should be resistant to cyber-attack and accessible when the public needs it.

The recently released "Emergency Services Sector Roadmap to Secure Voice and Data Systems" (PDF, 2 Mb) (Roadmap) addresses our reliance on digital technology and the problems that reliance brings, and shows how to identify cyber risks to their voice and data communications systems and reduce them.

The Roadmap lists the 15 cybersecurity risks identified in the 2012 Emergency Services Sector-Cyber Risk Assessment (ESS-CRA) and how to address them. The document also notes very little federal influence or engagement is expected in most of these mitigation measures, making it clear the ownership of cybersecurity measures is on the regional jurisdiction or individual department.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact the Emergency Services Sector-Specific Agency at ESSTeam@hq.dhs.gov.

(Source: DHS ESS)

FICEMS Strategic Plan

The Federal Interagency Committee on EMS (FICEMS) approved and released the five-year "framework to synchronize interagency efforts and strengthen EMS practices, principles and strategies throughout the United States." The strategic plan maps how the federal government will support EMS and 9-1-1 systems.

FICEMS coordinates interagency policies, programming, and messaging, as well as solicits and integrates stakeholder input. The FICEMS plan identified six strategic goals representing actions the committee should take in the next five years, including promoting improved patient care, developing a credentialed EMS workforce, and more.

The strategic plan is available on the EMS.gov website.

(Source: EMS.gov)