The InfoGram

Online and regional fire training through National Fire Academy

Many volunteer and career fire service personnel cannot take time off to attend the resident programs at the National Fire Academy (NFA) campus in Emmitsburg, Maryland. NFA provides regional and online courses to fill this gap (PDF, 201 KB).

Operated by the U.S. Fire Administration, NFA Online offers free self-paced and instructor-mediated courses for fire and emergency services personnel. Students successfully completing NFA Online courses receive an NFA certificate and the course will be added to your NFA transcript. International students are welcome.

State and local training partners also offer on-site NFA courses for local delivery. These 2-, 6-, and 10-day courses are listed in the NFA course catalog. Students will receive an NFA certificate of completion. Contact your state fire training agency for more information on offerings, application procedures, course dates and locations.

For more information in NFA courses, residential or off-site, see the NFA website.

(Source: U.S. Fire Administration)

Crisis communication in events involving children

Emergency incidents involving children fall into a category all their own. Whether a natural or man-made disaster, as soon as children are involved more people take notice. Your response to the incident will fall under a much bigger microscope. This is also true for your crisis communications.

This summer the world stopped what it was doing to watch the rescue of a youth soccer team from a cave in Thailand. It was a complicated rescue that gained worldwide interest. Thai officials recognized early that it had turned into an international event, and their crisis communication efforts reflected this.

We often focus on lessons learned from mistakes made during an emergency. Here are some positive take-aways from the Thai incident:

- ❯ Know the audience - despite international interest and pressure, officials recognized the children's families were the primary audience.

- ❯ Privacy - no media was allowed near the cave entrance during the rescue, giving the boys privacy. Also, detailed medical information was close-held.

- ❯ Unified response - the Thai enacted a form of incident command. Response was well-managed, there was a single voice and everyone knew their role.

- ❯ Show empathy - the crisis team avoided causing more drama by instituting a "need to know" policy as opposed to feeding those who just "wanted to know."

(Sources: Various)

January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month

One of the more difficult aspects of spotting and stopping human trafficking is that it can remain nearly invisible to us. It does not look the way the movies make it out, either. It can and does happen in our communities, yet we somehow explain

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away indicators of this highly-profitable and demeaning crime.

First responders are in a powerful position to spot victims of this crime, but you need to know the indicators and you should know how to report it. There are a lot of resources available for first responders, here are a few:

- ❯ Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign offers training and resources tailored to first responders. It can be incorporated into a departmental training.

- ❯ Polaris Project hosts resources and a list of common signs of trafficking victims. It operates a national hotline for victims and compiles statistics from those calls.

- ❯ Webinar "Combating Human Trafficking: The Role of Fire and EMS" trains EMS and fire personnel to identify potential human trafficking situations.

- ❯ The U.S. Fire Administration hosts a reference page for EMS and fire personnel.

- ❯ This directory of training and technical resources (PDF, 715 KB) lists resources for all fields involved in stopping human trafficking from discovery to prosecution.

The Polaris Project also conducted a research project to find out more about the business aspect of human trafficking. The resulting report provides investigators a large data set of information on 25 industries that utilize human trafficking.

Report suspected human trafficking to your local law enforcement or to the National Human Trafficking Hotline 1-888-373-7888.

(Source: Polaris Project)

NIST survey: communication technology needs and wants

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) is conducting a research survey to gain a better understanding of the communication technology public safety personnel currently use, need, and want in the future.

As part of this effort, NIST requests feedback from EMS, fire, law enforcement and 9-1-1/dispatch. The survey takes approximately 15 minutes to complete and will help NIST meet first responder communication technology needs moving forward. Your voices are important in this effort.

This is an excellent opportunity to be a voice in future communications technology available to first responders. Participation is voluntary and responses are confidential. Please forward this request to others in your agency or department and encourage them to take the survey. NIST hopes to hear from as many first responders as possible all across the country.

If you have any problems or issues accessing or taking the survey, please call the Help Desk at 1-877-828-3122. For questions or concerns about the survey, please contact Kristen Greene at NIST at 301-975-8119 or by email at kristen.greene@nist.gov.

(Source: NIST)

DHS and the FBI encourage recipients of this document to report information concerning suspicious or criminal activity to the local FBI office and also the State or Major Urban Area Fusion Center.

For information specifically affecting the private sector critical infrastructure contact the **National Infrastructure Coordinating Center** by phone at **202-282-9201,** or by email at **nicc@dhs.gov.**

The U.S. Fire Administration maintains the Emergency Management and Response – Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC). For information regarding the EMR-ISAC visit www.usfa.dhs.gov/emr-isac or contact the EMR-ISAC office at: (301) 447-1325 and/or emr-isac@fema.dhs.gov.

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