



Weekend of Fire Training Set for March 19-20

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The Indiana National Fire Academy Weekend will take place March 19 and 20, 2016. Attendees may choose among three courses: Training Operations, Enhancing Safety Culture, and Executive Leadership.

National Fire Academy courses instill confidence and build character for emergency service professionals. The integration of skill and exercise makes the NFA a valuable training asset for Indiana responders.

Academy courses encourage teamwork and the ability to enhance communication in different incident types. The March event will provide upper-level training for attendees. The

courses offered provide opportunities for hands-on practice of skills learned in the classroom.

The weekend training is sponsored by Indiana Homeland Security's Fire and Public Safety Academy Training System, which offers training to all 92 counties. The training opportunities vary from basic knowledge and orientation to safety and survival.

For more information, or to register for the 2016 Indiana National Fire Academy weekend, contact Brandon Wood at BrWood@dhs.in.gov. ♦

College: A Good Source for New CERT Volunteers

A group of students at Franklin College, just south of Indianapolis, finished their fall semester in December by searching for "victims" in a debris-strewn campus building made to look as if a tornado had stuck it.

During the nighttime drill capping off their CERT training, the students set up incident command, triage and morgue areas outside the building; and shut off a "leaking" natural gas meter. Inside, they navigated through overturned desks and chairs, around dangling power cords and swaying lamps. They applied real pressure and



Franklin College students practice basic first aid as part of their recent CERT training.

There Is No Safe Way to Smoke on Medical Oxygen

One scenario that stands out in the minds of many first responders is one in which the victim has total control – when fire injuries or deaths occur because people choose to smoke while on oxygen or breathing treatments.

There is no safe way to smoke in the home when medical oxygen is in use, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

Normal air is about 20 percent oxygen, but the air delivered to patients using oxygen therapy is 100 percent, making it extremely flammable. Individuals on oxygen must be careful to keep the oxygen system away from cigarettes, candle flames, oil-based lotions, lip balm, aerosol sprays and alternative heat sources.

“It’s awful to come across any fire death, but especially a preventable one that occurred because the person on oxygen lit a cigarette,” said Christopher M. Broderick, fire and explosion investigator with the Indiana Department of Homeland Security. “I have

personally worked three of these deaths just since last May and, because they are preventable, I am committed to trying to get more information out there about the dangers of smoking and being on oxygen.”

Broderick says it is relatively simple to quickly discern whether a fire was caused by the deadly smoking while on oxygen combination. The fire usually runs along the tubing, like a fuse, and leaves a trail directly back to the generator. He adds that many people on oxygen also have mobility issues and cannot help themselves once a fire starts.

Unfortunately, quitting smoking can be challenging, even after a person acquires a medical condition that was primarily caused by smoking. Patients newly put on oxygen leave the hospital with breathing equipment and, often, a nicotine patch. Studies show it isn’t long before the patch comes off and the cigarettes are again part of the daily regimen.

Smokers may understand the need to turn off the oxygen flow before lighting a cigarette, but may not know the danger persists even when the oxygen isn’t flowing. Oxygen can build up not only in the home, but on a person’s hair, clothes and body and ignite immediately.

Most hospitals, prior to discharging a patient going home with new oxygen equipment, offer a safety tutorial, but it’s vital that family members stop purchasing or bringing cigarettes to the patient, and instead urge the patient to quit smoking.

Most often, the fire fatality is the person who was smoking while on oxygen, but there are many cases in which a person smoking while on oxygen has caused the death of another person living in the household.

The bottom line, according to Broderick: There is no safe way to smoke when using home oxygen. ♦

EMTs and EMRs Can Check for Diabetes

A law passed in 2015 has cleared the way for more first responders to check patients’ blood glucose levels.

Previously, only advanced emergency medical technicians and paramedics were allowed to conduct the simple finger sticks that can indicate a patient may be diabetic. Now, basic emergency medical technicians and emergency medical responders also can conduct the simple test in the field.

The vast increase in the numbers of responders who can conduct blood sugar tests resulted from the passage of Indiana Senate Bill 461 and subsequent new directives from the state’s

Emergency Medical Services Commission.

The bill expanded the definition of basic life support to include blood glucose checks. The test involves obtaining a drop of blood from a patient’s finger, and then placing the drop on a glucometer’s test strip. Results are available within seconds.

“Knowing a patient’s blood glucose level not only helps provide a more complete and immediate clinical assessment, but also has long-term benefits,” said Robin Stump, EMS education and training chief for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security. “It can provide early detection for

patients who don’t know they have diabetes and are at risk of complications such as blindness, kidney disease or amputations.”

In order to conduct the tests, EMTs and EMRs must undergo training and must work for a provider that has medical direction from a physician.

Also, in order to test blood glucose, an EMS agency must obtain a certificate of waiver under CLIA, the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments. CLIA is a federal program designed to ensure high-quality lab testing.

“Most ambulance services are eligible for a CLIA waiver,” Stump said. ♦

College CERT (Continued From Page 1)

real bandages to mock “bleeding” wounds, and removed debris from atop fellow students feigning injury and wailing in “agony.” They extinguished trash-can-size “fires.” They splinted a “broken” leg, and escorted victims to safety.

And they did it all under the watchful eye of their CERT instructor, Johnson County Sheriff’s Deputy Tim White, who had been training them for weeks leading up to the drill and a written exam.

The recent establishment of a Franklin College CERT serves as a reminder that colleges and universities may be good sources for such volunteers.

“The upside is that many colleges promote or require some type of service learning, and CERT is ideal for that,” said Ray Begovich, the Franklin journalism professor who requested student CERT training through Johnson County EMA Director Stephanie Sighting. “The downside is that the students graduate and move away, so you need to keep at it with new students over the years.”

Begovich got the idea for asking his public relations students to volunteer for CERT when he was working for the IDHS Public Information Office in the summer of 2015. He suggests seeking out service learning coordinators or student activity directors at Hoosier colleges to gauge interest in establishing CERTs.

“There is an immediate benefit for having college CERT teams – after all, the possibility of a tornado near campus was quite real just a week after our drill in December,” Begovich said. “Beyond being able to support professional first



Franklin College CERT students practice chair extraction of a friend posing as a pregnant woman injured in a tornado-damaged building.

The

Toolkit

The Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) offers Indiana’s Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) an outreach toolkit they can use to better connect and engage with the public about improving local safety capabilities.

The CERT toolkit contains an outreach plan with detailed examples about the different ways CERT can engage its community, a slideshow presentation, informational posters, press release and media advisory templates and public service announcements.

The CERT toolkit is designed to be a flexible, adaptable resource that local CERTs can apply to their own specific situations. To learn more about CERT or to download the CERT toolkit, please visit dhs.in.gov/citizencorps.htm.



responders if needed, the students gained awareness and skills that could help them protect themselves and their loved ones far into the future. We’re all very appreciative of the excellent training provided by Deputy White and for the support of the Johnson County EMA.” ♦

IDHS Fire Investigator Receives 'Sherlock' Award

The Mutual Insurance Companies Association of Indiana (MICAI) has announced that Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) fire investigator Matt Wells is the recipient of its 2015 Sherlock Award, which "recognizes Hoosiers who have done outstanding work fighting insurance fraud and arson."

"This well-deserved award speaks to Matt Wells' skill and persistence in investigations," said State Fire Marshal Jim Greeson. "His exceptional work strengthens the efforts of justice and public safety in our state."

Wells, 33, is a Certified Fire Investigator (IAAI-CFI®) and has worked for IDHS since 2011. Wells' investigations led to 17 arrests in 2014 and 23 arrests in 2015. Wells holds an Associate Degree in Fire Science and Safety from Vincennes University, where he now instructs, and he has also worked for the Vincennes Township Fire Department. IDHS Fire Investigations Section Chief Bob Dean nominated Wells for the award.

This is the second award given to Wells in the last six months. In



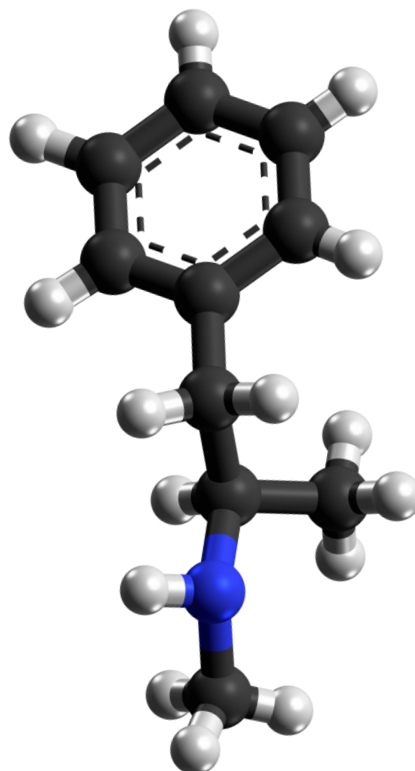
August 2015, the Indiana Chapter of the International Association of Arson Investigators (IN-IAAI) presented Wells with its Lawrence William Tuck Investigator of the Year Award. ♦

Spotting Meth Labs: Tips for Responders

The [September 2015 issue](#) of the Hoosier Responder included an article on methamphetamine operations in Indiana and the potential danger first responders may find walking into what they think is just a routine situation. It's important for first responders to be able to quickly assess a situation to make sure they don't find themselves standing, unaware, in the middle of a meth lab.

Unfortunately, it's a real possibility that first responders will encounter meth labs, as Indiana leads the nation in meth production.

Indiana Department of Homeland Security Hazmat Specialist Larry Hamby teaches first responders the telltale signs they can use to quickly assess whether or not a meth operation is going on at a location. Often, it's as easy as first responders noticing common household items in non-common quantities. There might also be unusual security measures or



"Methamphetamine molecule from xtal ball" by Jynto (talk) - Own workCrystallographic data from P. Hakey, W. Ouellette, J. Zubieta and T. Korter (May 2008). "Redetermination of (+)-methamphetamine hydro-chloride at 90 K" Acta Cryst. E64, o940. DOI:10.1107/S1600536808011550 This chemical image was created with Discovery Studio Visualizer.. Licensed under CC0 via Commons.

elaborate ventilation methods in a home. There might also be a strange odor in the home.

Being aware of items in trash cans or laying around the area can help first responders make decisions to increase their safety. Also there are certain behaviors and signs people can exhibit that are indicators of meth use, such as lost or decaying teeth, agitated or aggressive behavior, hyperactivity, paranoia, dilated pupils and talkativeness.

Here are some specific signs first responders and others should quickly look for when entering a location.

Chemical odors – these can be:

- Ether-like, sometimes described as a "hospital odor" and can be nasal irritants;
- Solvent-like, similar to the smell in an auto body shop. These can come from paint thinners, paint removers and

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Vial of Life can Help During Emergencies

During emergencies, it can be hard for people to think straight and supply much-needed information to first responders. Or, worse yet, a person may not be able to respond to questions at all. Emergency personnel often need to gather patient information quickly, including what medications a person takes, what medical conditions are known or who serves as an emergency contact. That's where Vial of Life can help.

Vial of Life (Lifesaving Information For Emergencies) is a simple program that allows individuals to have all their medical information in one place for first responders to access during an emergency. The materials are free, and easy to obtain and use.

The idea was modeled after the old practice of putting medical information in a prescription bottle and attaching it with a rubber band to a refrigerator shelf. Today's version is similar. The vial, usually an empty bottle, plastic sandwich bag or magnetic sleeve,

is labeled with a Vial of Life sticker and contains all pertinent medical information. People may choose to put the vial in the refrigerator, in the freezer or on the outside of the refrigerator door. It is suggested that stickers be placed in the front window of the home so emergency personnel will know to look for the vial.

"It may not be part of the required curriculum, but most responders are trained to at least look at the outside of refrigerators to see if there is a Vial of Life placed inside," said Indiana Department of Homeland Security EMS Director Michael Garvey. "It is also important for patients or their families to keep the information updated as medications change or if there is a change in physicians and preferred hospitals."

Interested persons can visit vialoflife.com to download and print a form, which asks for a list of medications, medical

conditions, emergency contact and other pertinent information. Stickers can also be printed from the site. Along with the completed Vial of Life form, it's a good idea to also include in the vial:

- a recent photo to help emergency personnel make sure the information in the vial pertains to the right person;
- a Living Will (if a person has one);
- a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) order, if applicable;
- any other documentation like blood type, recent EKG (electrocardiogram) strip, sight or hearing limitations or even preferred language.

Vial of Life also recommends people make additional copies of the completed form and keep one in a purse or wallet and give one to a family member or friend. ♦

Spotting Meth Labs (Continued From Page 4)

cleaning fluids. These are eye and nasal irritants; or

- Ammonia-like, which is intense and similar to, but much stronger than, wet diapers, glass cleaners or fertilizers. These are eye and nasal irritants.

Unusual security and/or ventilation measures – these can be:

- Windows blacked out or covered;
- Exterior video surveillance systems;
- Elaborate fencing and heavy-

duty locks;

- Fans positioned to ventilate the home;
- Protective, aggressive dogs;
- Weapons and booby traps;
- Baby monitors used outdoors.

Items in trash cans or around the house in large quantities – these can be:

- Cold or allergy medicine, or numerous empty punch packs they come in;
- Lithium batteries or empty battery packaging;

- Acetone;
- Crumpled burnt foil or battery casings;
- Bottles (like plastic two-liter bottles) with plastic tubing in the cap;
- Reddish-stained coffee filters or canning jars with multi-colored liquids;
- Table or rock salt;
- Brake cleaner;
- Camping fuel;
- Matchbooks;
- Iodine;
- Gas-line additive;
- Rubbing alcohol;
- Anhydrous ammonia. ♦

Red Cross Streamlines Financial Help Process

Every eight minutes in the United States, the Red Cross responds to a disaster, providing food and shelter to those in need, who often have questions like:

“Where will we stay?”

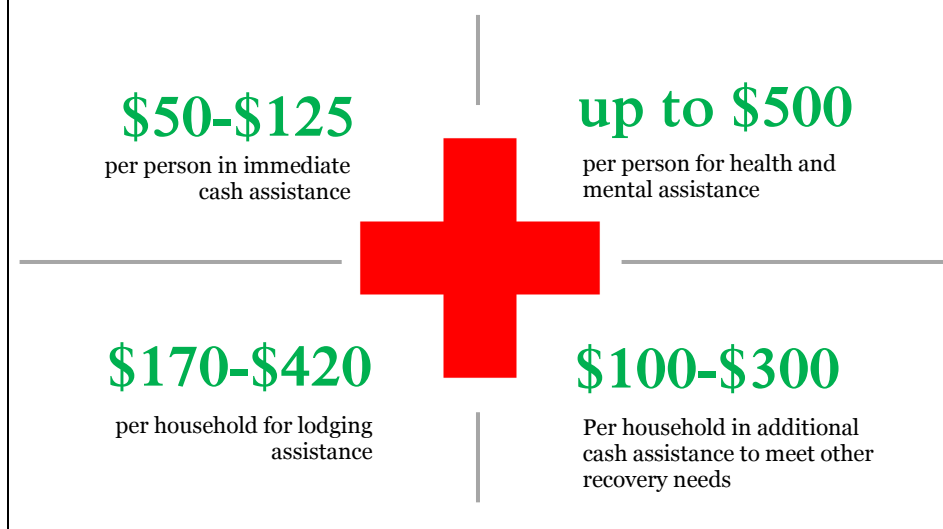
“How will we eat?” or

“What will we wear?”

In some situations, the Red Cross provides direct financial assistance for food, clothing or the means for finding a place to stay. Recently, the Red Cross streamlined its process and qualifications for receiving monetary help so that assistance can come faster to disaster victims.

Now, in as little as 30 minutes, a Red Cross caseworker can determine a family’s needs and provide them with a prepaid card that can be used at various merchants that accept MasterCard. People can use this financial assistance to buy food, hotel lodging and a few changes of

To help families recover, the Red Cross may provide the following:



clothes – all designed to buy time so that the family can figure out what’s next. Caseworkers follow up with the families after 72 hours for additional help and referrals.

Another benefit of the streamlined process is consistency. Now people who get assistance from the Red Cross receive consistent and standard help for similar events, regardless

of where they live. On average, the Red Cross provides about \$600 per family. Caseworkers also provided one-on-one support and are able to refer affected families to other community partners for additional aid. From July 1, 2014, to June 30, 2015, the Red Cross provided help in 76,300 cases nationwide, the majority of which were house fires. ♦

Intense Smoke Alarm Push in City of Frankfort

Thanks to a group effort by the American Red Cross, the city of Frankfort and the Frankfort Fire Department, more than 1,200 smoke alarms have been installed in homes there over a five-month period.

Kurt White, disaster program specialist with the American Red Cross, said he can’t express how happy he is with the passion and helpfulness of this smoke alarm effort. He said everyone involved went “above and beyond their duties and they bring hope and safety into communities that may not have that every day.”

White cites Chief John Kirby and Mayor Chris McBarnes for much of the alarm campaign’s success and said they were both sold on the program as soon as he spoke with them.

“The program got a great jump start from the beginning as they loved it and everything about it,” White said. “I wish I could spread the passion these firefighters have to other departments around the state. They came in on their days off to volunteer during canvassing events and they showed up again and again on their days off. I

can’t thank them enough for what they did.”

Chief Kirby set a goal of 500 alarms installed during the city’s 200-day campaign. A total of 1,201 alarms were installed and 87 batteries were replaced in existing alarms. Of the 546 homes visited during the campaign, 388 of them had no working smoke alarms. After the installation of the alarms and batteries, residents from each home were also briefed on fire prevention tips. ♦

Mission

The Indiana Department of Homeland Security will provide statewide leadership, exemplary customer service, and subject matter expertise for the enhancement of public and private partnerships and the assurance of local, state and federal collaboration to continually develop Indiana's public safety capabilities for the wellbeing and protection of our citizens, property and economy.

Contact

The Hoosier Responder is a publication of The Indiana Department of Homeland Security. Please direct any questions or comments to the IDHS Public Information Office at (317) 234-6713 or pio@dhs.in.gov.

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