

THE HOOSIER RESPONDER

FEBRUARY 2023



NEXTLEVEL FIREFIGHTER TRAINING

New legislation aims to enhance Indiana's fire service

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

- National radiation conference coming to Indianapolis
- *Get Shakin'*, Indiana! February is Earthquake Awareness Month
- IDHS names a new Indiana Fire & Public Safety Academy Director
- ImageTrend provides a look at 2022 by the numbers
- Rural volunteer fire departments make good use of DNR grants
- Taking flight with drone skills and new technology



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**EMA
APPRECIATION
WEEK**

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The health and safety of public safety personnel remain a priority in Indiana, and fire departments across the state are displaying that commitment by participating in the state's free PFAS foam collection initiative.

The [PFAS collection dashboard](#) shows more than 32,000 gallons of foam containing PFAS, a known carcinogen attributed to four of the top eight causes of cancer deaths in firefighters, have been collected so far. These “forever chemicals” pose a serious threat to firefighters everywhere and threaten groundwater sources through runoff. The foam typically is used to fight fires involving hazardous chemicals, but Indiana has prohibited the use of PFAS-containing foam for any training purposes due to contamination threats. Safer alternatives are now available.



The [mounting research on the risks of PFAS](#) to the firefighting community led to a partnership between the Indiana Department of Homeland Security and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management to retrieve foam from Indiana departments and properly dispose of the harmful material. In about a year, hundreds of departments have taken advantage of the free service by filling out a [survey form](#) and then setting a date for a state vendor to retrieve the material. You can see how easy this process is by [watching this brief video](#).

Fun fact: The state's vendor has driven more than 16,000 miles across Indiana to retrieve PFAS, longer than the distance between the North Pole and South Pole.

Emergency Management

Indiana has fared well so far this spring with little flooding or storm damage. We still have several weeks of winter left, however, and March brings Severe Weather Preparedness Week.

FEMA Region 5 will once again heavily focus this spring on mitigation and education to prevent flooding disasters or minimize damage from flooding. IDHS also is preparing outreach and communication efforts around flooding later this year. The [Get Prepared website](#) offers great tips for how to be ready and respond as well.

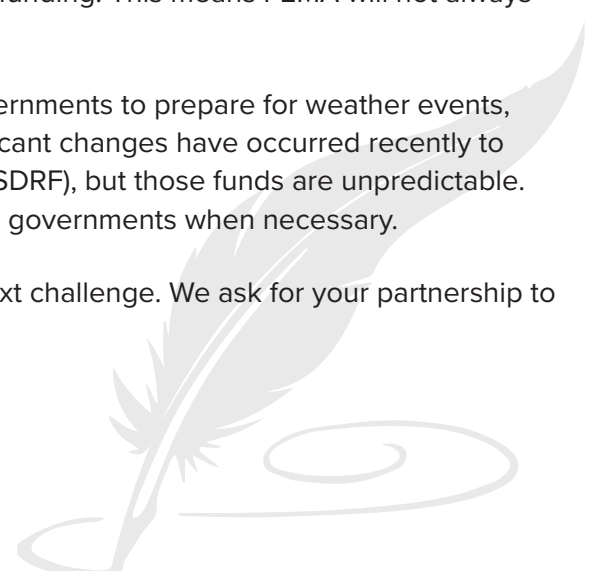
The threshold for FEMA to be involved after a disaster has risen significantly; currently, damages from an event must surpass \$12 million to trigger a federal disaster declaration and funding. This means FEMA will not always be able to swoop in and save the day.

The result of that shift puts more of a burden on states and local governments to prepare for weather events, and officials should expect to handle it at the local level. Some significant changes have occurred recently to make it easier for Hoosiers to access the State Disaster Relief Fund (SDRF), but those funds are unpredictable. Indiana must continue to solidify the SDRF and be ready to help local governments when necessary.

IDHS staff work every day to protect Hoosiers and prepare for the next challenge. We ask for your partnership to do the same to protect our communities, together.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Thacker'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Joel Thacker
Executive Director





NATIONAL RADIATION CONFERENCE COMING TO INDIANAPOLIS

The National Radiological Emergency Preparedness (NREP) Conference will be held in downtown Indianapolis April 3–6 for the first time in the state’s history.

The conference, started in 1990, traditionally has been hosted by states that have nuclear power plants in them, but this is the first time the event will be hosted by a state that is “ingestion only,” meaning a state that would be affected by nuclear power plants from neighboring states but does not have any of its own.

“The success of the annual National REP Conference depends on the volunteers from our host state organizations,” said Rae Walker, the chairperson of National REP and the emergency preparedness and continuity of

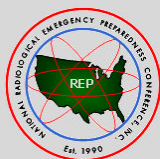
operations (COOP) coordinator for the Texas Department of State Health Services.

“We are grateful that IDHS reached out to us several years ago and volunteered to host our 2023 NREP conference. Since then, the collaboration between NREP and Indiana’s REP Program has been amazing,” Walker added.

IDHS radiation, exercise, planning and information technology staff will support the event, which features more than 30 sessions for attendees to join over the four-day period. Early sessions are hands-

on trainings and workshops for specialists, while most sessions are applicable to a wide range of fields in emergency management and response. The [agenda](#) includes sessions on radiation equipment use, federal agency guidance and updates, respiratory recommendations for responders to nuclear incidents, and public communication and outreach.

“The conference is focused on radiation emergency preparedness and response, so we would love to have local first responders and anyone who works in emergency management in the 11 counties



**National Radiological Emergency
Preparedness Conference, Inc.**

“A tradition worth carrying forward..”

directly in the nuclear power plant [ingestion pathway](#),” said Courtney Eckstein, the IDHS Radiation Program director and chairperson of the FEMA Region 5 conference registration subcommittee. “Whether you work in an ingestion pathway or not, if you are a first responder, you should consider coming, because you would get a lot out of it, especially those who have radiation detection equipment.”

Mental health, medical and EMS personnel also are encouraged to attend, as session offerings would prove beneficial if there is a radiation emergency or attack. Although nuclear and radiation emergencies are uncommon, the threat is significant. First responders would do well to prepare for what the public

response would be in a major radiation emergency, Eckstein said.

“The public would be scared and in need of help more than usual,” she said. “For example, a real-life emergency took place in Washington state, where there was a smaller radiation leak and contamination, and hospitals did not want to treat the people affected. Medical professionals need to learn how a radiation response would work, how to minimize fear and help others understand it is OK to treat contaminated people and tell people where they should go.”

The event offers many useful networking opportunities for emergency management officials from across the country.

“I attended my first National REP Conference when I was a new planner with minimal experience in the REP field,” said Kevin Petty, fixed nuclear facility specialist for the Tennessee Department of Military. “I was able to meet a lot of industry professionals with lots of experience to learn from, and many of them I still keep in touch with years later.”

Registration is open now at nationalrep.org. Eckstein recommends first responders who may need financial assistance reach out to their local healthcare coalition to see if they can be sponsored to attend the conference.

Stay updated on Indiana’s REP Program and sign up for quarterly newsletters at on.in.gov/REP.

RECOMMENDED SESSIONS

FIRE/EMS/EM

- *Emergency Preparedness Fundamentals*
- *Planning, Execution and Valuable Lessons Learned During [Cobalt Magnet 2022](#)*

MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

- *Empathy Isn’t for Weaklings*
- *Public Information to Crisis Management*

PUBLIC INFORMATION

- *Ready, Set, Communicate*
- *Taking Your Public Education and Outreach Strategies Beyond the Basics*

RADIATION

- *Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant: Observations 36 Years After Meltdown*
- *New Direction for U.S. Federal Spent-Fuel Management*

MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

- *Medical Health Physics Support to Respond to and Recover from a Radiological or Nuclear Incident*
- *Study on the Detection Accuracy of DRDs to Low Doses of Radiation*

NOTICE TO ACADIS ACCOUNT HOLDERS

IDHS TO DEACTIVATE INACTIVE ACCOUNTS



The Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) is implementing a Portal User Agreement Certificate to assist in the maintenance of Acadis accounts. This new process will identify inactive accounts that need to be deactivated.

Each individual with an account will be issued a Portal User Agreement Certificate. The certificate will have a two (2) year renewal cycle. Individuals will be responsible for logging in every two (2) years from the issue date and renewing the certificate to keep their account active.

Automatic 90-day and 30-day reminder emails will be sent to the email address on file in Acadis. Accounts that have not been renewed 90 days after the expiration date will be deactivated. Individuals whose accounts are deactivated will no longer have access to records or the ability to register for training.

If you believe your account has been deactivated and would like to request an account reactivation, you may complete the reactivation form on the [Acadis homepage](#) and submit it to IDHS.

GRANT OPPORTUNITY: COMMUNITY ENERGY SECURITY PLANNING GRANT PROGRAM

The Indiana Office of Energy Development (OED) is accepting applications for the Community Energy Security Planning Grant. Communities are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to enhance energy reliability and resilience at a local level by developing or enhancing energy security planning efforts, with a focus on critical infrastructure.

An energy security plan will identify, assess and mitigate risks to energy infrastructure and plan for, respond to and recover from

events that disrupt energy supply. Energy infrastructure and delivery systems are vulnerable to a variety of threats and hazards, including severe weather, cyberattacks, system failures, pandemics and deliberate physical attacks. Because most of Indiana's critical infrastructure is privately owned and operated, both the public and private sectors have a mutual motivation to reduce the risk of disruptions to critical infrastructure.

Communities may receive up to \$50,000 with a 10% match

component. Applications must be submitted to grants@oed.in.gov by March 1, 2023.

More information is on the [OED website](#).

Questions about this grant may be directed to grants@oed.in.gov.



KEEP THEM COMING!

SHARE YOUR FIRST RESPONDER STORIES

First responders are unsung heroes, and frequently their stories are known only by those at the scene of an incident. But IDHS wants to share them throughout the year with the first responder community and the public.

Please share your stories from the last year – or as they happen – at the IDHS Share the Good webpage at on.in.gov/sharethegood.

IDHS continues to collect stories about 911 telecommunicators, EMS personnel, firefighters, law enforcement and emergency managers. Hoosiers yearn for feel-good stories, and your tales of going beyond the call of duty help build respect for the field and could inspire people to join your ranks – or remind fellow responders why they do what they do, and to keep going.

EMA STORIES NEEDED



EMA Appreciation Week is Feb. 19–25, 2023, and IDHS wants to highlight ways EMAs have made a difference over the past year. Now is the time to show your local EMA some love! If you have a story or two about EMAs from 2022 or 2023, share them!

EXAMPLE STORY

Honey Creek Fire Department was dispatched with Trans Care Ambulance on a possible cardiac arrest. When the crew arrived on scene, they found the patient's wife performing CPR. Crew members quickly took over and began BLS interventions. They placed the patient on the floor and continued manual CPR, as some members of the crew readied the LUCAS Compression Device. The device was placed on the patient and began to do compressions on him. Crews worked together as a team, working with Trans Care Ambulance for 30 minutes. The patient regained a pulse and was transported to a local hospital. A month after his cardiac event, the patient came to the firehouse with his wife and thanked everyone that helped him, with a dinner.



GET SHAKIN', INDIANA!

Earthquakes in the Hoosier state may sound far-fetched, but quakes are not an unrealistic event. Indiana is near two major seismic zones: the Wabash Valley Seismic Zone and the New Madrid Seismic Zone. Both zones have recorded past earthquake activity. Scientists believe incidents similar to the 1811–1812 New Madrid earthquakes will impact Indiana again, so preparedness is vital.

Remembering to Drop, Cover and Hold On when an earthquake begins is important, but staying safe is possible if that process cannot be followed.

WHEN AN EARTHQUAKE STRIKES

- Take shelter under sturdy furniture and hold onto it. The furniture will help protect against any falling debris.
- Cover your head and neck with your arms.
- If outside, stay away from power lines, tall buildings, falling rocks or anything that could collapse.
- If in a vehicle, drive slowly to a location away from buildings, overpasses, underpasses and utility wires.
- If in a building or enclosed structure, never go outside.



STUDENT VIDEO CONTEST

To encourage Hoosier students to take an active role in learning how to prepare for and react during an earthquake, IDHS is launching the 2023 *Get Shakin'* Student Video Contest.

The top submissions will win their class or group a Raspberry Shake® RS3D seismograph to use for a year to track worldwide seismic activity. One grand prize winner will receive an “Indiana

Earthquake Day” event. To enter, classes and groups from public schools, charter and private schools that are eligible for federal funding can submit student-produced videos focused on earthquake preparedness and/or safety. A panel of IDHS judges will choose a winner. More information on this contest, including how to submit a video, is on the [IDHS website](#).

The contest is open now. Video entries will be accepted until Aug. 31, 2023. Additional information about the video contest and earthquake safety is on the [Get Shakin' webpage](#).

DOWNLOAD THE RULES



TORNADOES
FLOODING
EARTHQUAKES
HOUSE FIRES
DISASTERS
FOLLOW
NO SCHEDULE





A HUB-AND-SPOKE REGIONAL FIRE TRAINING MODEL

LEGISLATION WOULD ADDRESS LONG-STANDING ISSUES IN INDIANA'S FIRE SERVICE

"IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME COMING."

"THIS IS WELL OVERDUE."

"FINALLY, SOME RECOGNITION THAT OUR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS NEED HELP."

These are a few of the common responses from the Indiana fire community to [a new proposal](#) to expand firefighter training across the state and purchase new Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for volunteer firefighters.

Governor Eric Holcomb, in collaboration with the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, has requested \$24.2 million to more than double the number of primary, physical training locations in Indiana (from 14 to 30) and upgrade PPE equipment for volunteer fire departments, specifically turnout gear and Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA).

The Hub-and-Spoke training model builds on the current infrastructure for state-supported firefighter training in Indiana. The Indiana Fire and Public Safety Academy, under the authority of the Indiana State Fire Marshal, would coordinate basic physical skills training for firefighters (Firefighter I, II) at the proposed 30 sites. Each site would be similarly equipped with a training tower to allow for the live fire training necessary to qualify candidates to fight fires. Funds would enhance 14 existing sites while creating 16 additional sites across the state, making physical training more accessible to firefighters.

“IDHS provides a lot of good things across the state for the fire service, and this is another service that will benefit career and volunteer firefighters,” said Dale Henson, executive director of the Indiana Fire Chief’s Association. “Volunteer firefighting is the backbone of Indiana public safety, and training and PPE are critical to the safety and effectiveness of all firefighters. We are very grateful to Governor Holcomb and other leadership for their support.”

If approved by the Indiana General Assembly, \$13.1 million would go toward expanding the training model and \$10 million would purchase new PPE for

volunteers (across five years). Another \$1.1 million would go toward training props to be shared across the state. A few things of note:

- No new locations have been finalized.
- The new sites will be locally owned.
- To receive state funding, all sites must allow regional departments to utilize the training facilities.
- No departments are pre-determined to receive the PPE.

IDHS has launched a [survey](#) on the IDHS website for departments to express interest in either a training site or new PPE for volunteers.

“This is the first time someone has done something for us that is a little extra,” said Eric Hufnagle, chief of the Fremont Fire Department, which includes three full-time firefighters and about 30 volunteers. “Our budget is OK, and we’re extremely thankful for the support we do get from our local elected officials, but many other departments, especially in the smaller, rural areas, continue to struggle.”





learn how to be firefighters. We need to strike while that attention is there,” Jones said.

Paoli and four other surrounding departments have begun planning for a regional training location in Paoli, even before the proposal was announced. The Hub-and-Spoke proposal could accelerate their timeline. Jones also considers his department lucky, with the support of local leaders and a workable budget for equipment and training. In the 24 years he has served as a firefighter in a rural area, he has heard and seen many horror stories of volunteer departments in much worse shape.

“The average person doesn’t really know. If they knew [the poor equipment and training conditions of some smaller fire departments], they would be scared to death,” Jones said.

“I’m glad [Holcomb] is recognizing that and some of our elected officials are recognizing that,” Hufnagle said. “I don’t think a lot of the elected officials realize all that small-town fire departments do for their communities.”

It is not unusual to see small, rural departments in Indiana utilizing outdated PPE equipment, maybe some that other departments have discarded. Replacing this basic gear can cost as much as \$12,000 per person, and finding those funds is a considerable challenge for areas with a limited tax base and revenue. Equipment challenges, accessible training requirements and a sharp climb in response calls in recent years have pinched volunteer recruitment, and these issues continue to threaten emergency response in some areas.

“When someone calls 911, I can guarantee a truck will show up and that the people who show up know what they’re doing, but I can’t say how many people will be there,” said Mark Jones, chief of the Paoli Fire and Rescue, an all-volunteer department that fields more than 350 calls a year.

The accessibility of training and the quality of equipment is connected directly to recruitment and retention, Jones said. Paoli upgrades PPE equipment to no more than two firefighters each year, upgrading equipment over time.

“New recruits want to be able to go out and practice and train, and they want to be able to

“TRAINING SHOULD BE THE FOUNDATION OF OUR FIREFIGHTERS.”

Steve Jones, Indiana State Fire Marshal

Indiana State Fire Marshal Steve Jones (no relation to Paoli’s Jones) understands the proposal is not a magic pill to resolve all the problems of rural fire service. However, it is a big step in the right direction.

“We have a real recruitment and retention issue for the fire and EMS service,” Steve Jones said. “As we bring people through the door, they need to know that

they are supported and that their safety is a top priority. I want them and their families to know that Indiana supports them.”

“Training should be the foundation of our firefighters,” Steve Jones added. “It helps them work more rapidly and effectively during emergencies and then go home to their loved ones.”

IDHS has been working for more than a year with Holcomb and his team to design the proposal and help leadership understand some of the challenges of the volunteer fire service. IDHS Executive Director Joel Thacker has seen it firsthand. Now, the key is to convince legislators to support the proposal.

“Some of our volunteers are wearing rags and hosting weekly fish fries to put gas in their engines,” Thacker said. “These are men and women who put their lives on the line to protect us. At IDHS, our job is to provide the support they need to continue this essential service, and I’m proud our lawmakers are beginning to better understand the need here.”

It is a challenge for volunteer firefighters, many of whom have full-time day jobs, to drive much distance for training. The Hub-and-Spoke proposal would establish a training site within a 30-mile radius (45-minute drive in apparatus). This would help ongoing training needs and the ability to get new recruits into a class quickly while they remain interested in becoming a firefighter.

“I hope this is only a start,” Hufnagle said. “The volunteer fire service can’t keep going unnoticed. Our biggest investment here for success has to be the people.”

IDHS NAMES FIRE/TRAINING ACADEMY DIRECTOR

The Indiana Department of Homeland Security named John Shafer as the new director of the Indiana Fire and Public Safety Training Academy system.



With 30 years of experience in the fire service, Shafer brings extensive knowledge and expertise in fire training and public safety at the local, state, national and international levels. He has traveled throughout the United States and Canada to lead training courses for building construction, fireground search, fire behavior and more. He also has taught nationally at the Fire Department International Conference (FDIC), Firehouse World and Firehouse Expo.

Shafer most recently served as the Chief of Training and Safety for the Washington Township Avon Fire Department. His first day with IDHS will be Monday, Feb. 20.

“When we considered the needs of the Academy system and the potential for future growth, it was clear John was the perfect candidate to lead this effort. Under his guidance, the Academy will bring high-quality, consistent training across the state and support safety and innovation throughout the fire service,” said Indiana State Fire Marshal Steve Jones.

Shafer previously served as the IDHS District 7 Fire Training Coordinator and is familiar with the Academy system and its impact in Indiana.



IMPROVED IMAGETREND DATA REPORTING PROVIDING INSIGHTS

Data reporting by local fire departments was on the rise in 2022, reaching an average monthly reporting rate of 75% for the year, compared to about 40% in mid-2022.

As of July 1, 2022, Indiana law requires fire departments to report their run data to be eligible for any grant funds from IDHS.

The data is to be reported monthly to [ImageTrend](#), a software system available for free to all Indiana fire departments. The state then submits that data to the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS).

A [community risk reduction task force](#) continues to analyze the data submitted to ImageTrend as it works to create a report and strategy to address Indiana community risk factors.

2022 FIRE DEPARTMENT RUNS

TOTAL REPORTED RUNS

581,471

201,788

EMS (excluding vehicle accident with injury)

107,090

Medical/EMS Assist

50,010

Dispatched and Cancelled En Route

19,080

Vehicle Accident with Injuries

17,966

Fires (types not specified)

Disclaimer: The top five categories listed here represent 2022 runs reported by fire departments to IDHS through ImageTrend as of late January 2023. Some figures are reported only generally as "Fire" or "EMS."

HOW TO SURVIVE A FALL THROUGH ICE

1 KEEP CALM

As soon as you realize you are falling through the ice, hold your breath so you do not take in water. Try to keep calm. Panic is your worst enemy.



2 STAY AFLOAT

Keep your head out of the water. Get to an edge that you can reach. Snap off thin ice until you reach thicker ice.



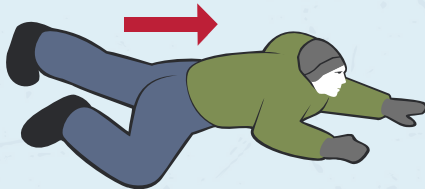
3 PULL YOURSELF OUT

Lean forward onto the ice and kick your feet as you would if you were swimming. Use your arms and elbows to lift yourself up.



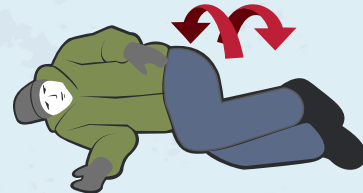
4 CRAWL FORWARD

Do not stand up right away. The ice around the hole may be weak.



5 ROLL AWAY

Roll away until you are several feet away and are certain you are out of danger.



IDHS HAS A NEW PODCAST

Catch the latest episode with Indiana State Fire Marshal Steve Jones as he discusses the Indiana Hub-and-Spoke training model.

Listen online at on.in.gov/hoosier-homeland or subscribe to the podcast using one of the podcast services below:





RURAL VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS MAKE GOOD USE OF DNR GRANTS

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) offers multiple programs to fire departments covering smaller and rural areas that make up most of the state. Millions of dollars in equipment have been acquired by Indiana fire departments over the years. Some receive such assistance every year, yet many others do not avail themselves of these opportunities.

The DNR grants complement federal programs facilitated by IDHS and the [fire training and infrastructure grants](#) issued by the IDHS Fire and Public Safety Academy.

“Grants are game changers for many communities with tight budgets, and that is why agencies like IDHS and DNR

offer programs like these: to help our fire departments get equipped so they can do what they need to do when they need to do it,” said State Fire Marshal Steve Jones.

March 1 is the deadline for the Volunteer Fire Assistance Matching Grant, which requires a 50% match from the applicant, while other programs are available to apply for at any time and have no matching component. All grants can be applied for at the same time using the same application at wildfire.dnr.in.gov.

Matching Grant Program

The matching grant program awarded more than \$350,000 to 80 rural and volunteer fire departments across 50 counties last year. DNR Assistant State Fire Coordinator Mark Huter said completing the online application takes only about 10 minutes and after doing so once, repeating it in following years is simple. The completed application is only about six pages long when printed.

“It’s very easy. There is some leg work to get the resource information together before applying, but it does not take very long,” said Ellettsville Volunteer Fire Department Deputy Chief Chris Clouse. “I just did the federal Assistance for Firefighters Grant, which has so much more

DNR
Indiana Department
of Natural Resources

information to put in it. But the people at the DNR make it pretty simple, respond very quickly and help answer any questions. Everyone should be trying to do this.”

After the annual March 1 deadline, DNR makes sure the paperwork is in order and submits it to the federal government. Awards are announced after federal funding is approved and available, which means that projects applied for by the March 1 deadline usually are awarded in the fall.

“It is not for applying for things you need right away, so it should be stuff that your department always needs or would like to have,” Huter said.

The hardest part, Clouse said, is the waiting: “But it’s free money, so I’ll wait.”

Agencies can apply every year, and it has paid off for departments like Ellettsville. The department has received DNR grants 15 times in the past 20 years, resulting in tens of thousands of dollars that have helped pay for equipment such as gas detectors, lights, saws, thermal cameras and hoses.

Depending on the number of applications received in a cycle, every applicant may receive up to \$5,000. Most requests are for turnout gear, and Huter said some departments apply every year for new sets since they know the equipment must be replaced on a regular basis.

Other typical requests are for radios and pagers, emergency lights, water-handling equipment and wildland clothing such as leather boots. Some applicants used the grant to outfit wildland-fire-suppression utility vehicles.

A key factor for departments to consider when applying is to put the cost of their labor on a project toward their portion of the matching grant.

“For example, if a department wants to install a dry fire hydrant at a rural pond, they could install it on their own and count the equivalent labor cost toward their match,” Huter said.

Departments must be NIMS-compliant, and preference is given to applicants that did not receive funding in the previous cycle. If departments no longer need equipment acquired through the program, DNR will accept the return of an item and reallocate it to another department that could use it.

Hand Tools Program

Departments can indicate interest for the Firefighting Hand Tool Program on the same application as the other programs, and when DNR makes purchases of wildfire-fighting equipment, some of it is distributed to local departments that signed up.

The tools are not available every year, and the types of equipment change. Staples include hand tools

like fire shovels, council rakes and flappers, but in other years DNR has awarded chainsaws, backpack blowers, bladder bags and portable pumps for use at rural ponds.



Excess Property Program

The Federal Excess Personal Property (FEPP) program has been around for decades, allowing rural fire departments to acquire used federal government or U.S. military equipment on a lease-agreement basis with departments serving populations under 10,000 receiving higher priority for requests.

“But if there are no takers, we will try to get the equipment to someone who can use it,” said Lonnie Kern, DNR excess property specialist and manager of the programs in Indiana.

The newer Department of Defense (DoD) firefighter program is similar but is not focused on population density. After applying, departments register for the DoD database system and

then they can go to the online databases themselves, look for items and request them. Unlike FEPP, the DoD program allows departments to take ownership of qualified equipment.

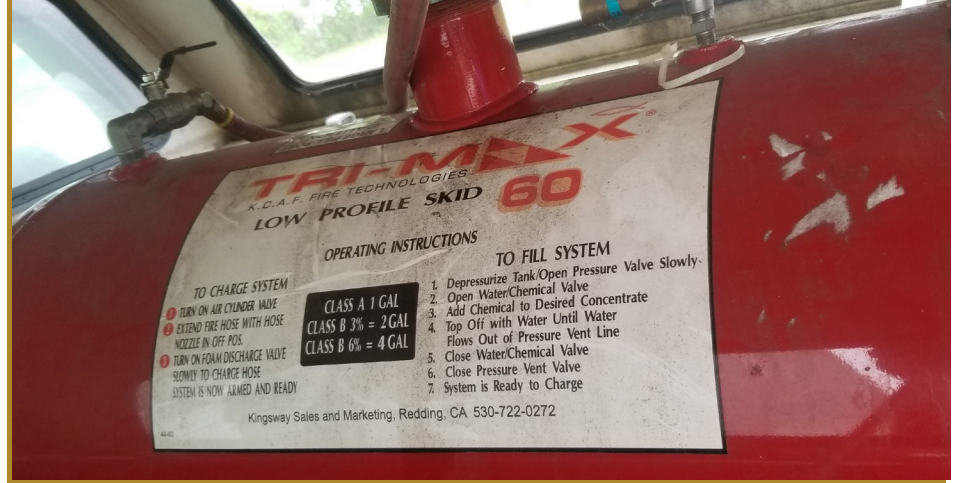
“As long as it is not a military sensitive item requiring demilitarization, departments get ownership. Weapons and Kevlar are not available to fire departments,” Kern said.

Letts Community Volunteer Fire Department Chief Matt Morrow says he is on the program website every day looking for what is available, as items are updated daily. Morrow estimated his department has received millions of dollars’ worth of equipment over the years from the excess property programs.

He said, “We obtained a ladder truck from New York, a heavy rescue truck from Los Alamos, N.M.; an ambulance from Albany, Ga.,” just to name a few. Items his department has received also include stretchers, ventilators and even high-fidelity simulation manikins for EMS training.

“New ones cost like \$120,000. We had to buy some software for about \$2,500, and now we use these manikins for every EMT class we teach,” Morrow said. “These things are so expensive that a department my size could never afford it otherwise.”

Most items available through both programs come from



military installations, and the only costs to departments are the time and money spent to get equipment transported and set up at home.

Sometimes the Letts fire department will send people to drive and pick up the equipment from far away, or it arranges for shipping. It is worth the cost to ship, Morrow said, as his department once got a \$22,000 ambulance cot for only about \$500.

Morrow said he cannot believe every department does not apply, considering how simple the application process is and

how many rural departments like his could use the type of equipment being offered. Nevertheless, Kern said the DoD program is underutilized, with only 385 active departments out of roughly 1,000 possible in Indiana. All departments with an active NFIRS number are eligible.

“We need to bring as many federal dollars back to Indiana and lighten the burden on our taxpayers,” said Morrow. “If we don’t apply and bring the equipment to our state, someone else will.”

DNR FIREFIGHTING GRANTS

Volunteer Fire Assistance Matching Grant (March 1 deadline)

Hand Tools Program (ongoing)

- Mark Huter, mhuter@dnr.in.gov

Department of Defense (DoD)/Federal Excess Personal Property Program (FEPP) (ongoing)

- Lonnie Kern, lkern@dnr.in.gov

For more information, visit wildfire.dnr.in.gov.

BILLS AFFECTING IDHS STAKEHOLDERS

HOUSE BILL 1222 (IDHS AGENCY BILL)

Regional Public Safety Training Fund

If passed, the bill would combine the current Fire Training Infrastructure Fund and the Homeland Security Fund into the Regional Public Safety Training Fund.

HOUSE BILL 1001

State budget

If passed, this bill would allow the investment of nearly \$40 million for the Hub and Spoke Fire Training system and address the EMS workforce issues outlined in the Governor's Public Health Commission.

HOUSE BILL 1016

Police and Fire Merit Systems

If passed, this bill would allow a fire protection district or fire protection territory to establish a merit system.

HOUSE BILL 1025

Firefighter Discipline

If passed, this bill would state that a fire department of a fire protection district or fire protection territory is subject to certain disciplinary and due process requirements.

HOUSE BILL 1136

Mental Health Care for First Responders

If passed, this bill would establish the Indiana First Responders Mental Health Wellness Fund and Program.

HOUSE BILL 1219

PFAS Biomonitoring Pilot Program

If passed, this bill would establish the PFAS biomonitoring pilot program under the Indiana Department of Homeland Security to collect and analyze blood samples of individuals who were previously, or are currently, firefighters.

SENATE BILL 43

Residency of 911 Operators

If passed, this bill would state that a public safety agency may not establish or maintain residency requirements for a public safety telecommunicator employed by a public safety agency.

SENATE BILL 269

Leave Following a Critical Incident

If passed, this bill would allow a first responder to take up to 48 hours of leave immediately following a qualified critical incident.

SENATE BILL 316

Computer and Emergency Dispatch Systems

If passed, this bill would require the statewide 911 Board to conduct a feasibility study on potential ways in which the computer-aided dispatch (CAD) systems used by public safety answering points (PSAPs) in Indiana could be made interoperable to facilitate the dispatch of EMS resources based on the closest and most appropriate EMS resource to respond to an emergency.

Watch this video
to learn more!



TAKING FLIGHT WITH DRONE SKILLS AND NEW TECHNOLOGY

Drone technology is evolving rapidly, meaning public safety agencies are gaining new tools to aid emergency response. In January, IDHS offered agencies the chance to come together to train and learn the trade secrets of drones.

IDHS teamed up with the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department and the Fort Wayne Police Department to host an Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) Skills Camp. This camp is important, especially during winter months, to make sure pilots keep practicing.

“Flying drones is a perishable skill. You have to practice routinely to make sure your hand-eye

coordination is there, your systems are functioning well and that you can perform emergency procedures on your aircraft if you have to,” said Matthew Woodings, IMPD tactical flights officer/UAS pilot.

Matt Rowland of the Fort Wayne Police Department described getting flight time as similar to police officers going to the gun range.

“It is just like everything else. We train with firearms as police officers. We have to shoot so many times a year. We practice defensive tactics. Just like everything else, it is a skill that you want to stay on.”

This year was the second year for the skills camp. Along with flying time, the camp gives attendees the chance to meet other departments and share techniques and procedures.

“It’s a great chance to network. We’ve met people from all over the state. We’ve been talking to them about their programs. They’ve asked us about our programs. We can see what we like and what we don’t like. We can try to explain different ways our programs work, what they respond to and what we respond to. A lot of it is the same, but it is still cool to get a different view of what people are doing,” Rowland said.



“The benefits are to practice techniques. A lot of time, you don’t have time to learn the techniques to search for people that are missing,” said IDHS Assistant Hazmat Section Chief Mike White.

“Interagency operations are great because all of us have different capabilities with drones. So, we rely on each other for different capabilities.”

Jefferson County Emergency Management Operations Director Matt True said they take advantage of having so many flight teams in one location. They can practice large-scale exercises at the camp and be able to scale them up or down for real-life events.

“At some point, the tornado is going to happen. The flood is going to happen. They’ve done [the skills] now. They understand the communications piece and how they need to work together and communicate through the exercise as a whole, so it

won’t be foreign to them when they have to do this for real,” True said.

Right now, IDHS, police departments, fire departments and other public safety agencies use drones for search and rescue operations, mapping incidents like crashes or disaster events and searching for criminals. But drone technology is constantly pushing the limits on how the devices can help emergency response personnel.

“Drones are a force multiplier. Drones allow the public safety entity to deploy an aircraft and observe the ground and you’re able to accomplish missions without using so many physical bodies,” said Woodings.

“Five years ago, I’m not sure I would have told you that we’d be doing what we’re doing now. Five years from now, I can’t imagine, because we’ve grown by leaps and bounds,” added Rowland.

GIVING EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCIES THEIR DUE



Emergency Management Agencies (EMAs) often work behind the scenes without gaining attention until events like snowy weather, floods, tornadoes, etc. Governor Eric J. Holcomb is honoring these critical personnel by celebrating **EMA Appreciation Week Feb. 19-25, 2023**.

EMAs are part of the first line of response to natural and man-made disasters. County emergency managers help

draft disaster response plans, organize trainings that include first responders and community partners, work with state and federal agencies to find the most effective disaster recovery methods and offer knowledge and expertise to local community leaders.

“Emergency managers play a pivotal role in their counties. Their decisions carry a heavy weight on how a community responds to and recovers from a significant incident or event,” said Joel Thacker, executive director of IDHS.

IDHS will spotlight some of the many faces during EMA Appreciation Week that work

year-long to mitigate and respond to disasters in Indiana.

Do you have a story to share about the difference your emergency manager has made in your county? [Share your story with IDHS](#). Emergency managers deserve recognition for their efforts to keep their communities safe.

Follow IDHS on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) to learn about the emergency managers serving your county. For more information about EMA Appreciation Week, visit the [IDHS](#) website.

To learn more about the EMA in your county, you also can visit the [IDHS State Contact dashboard](#).

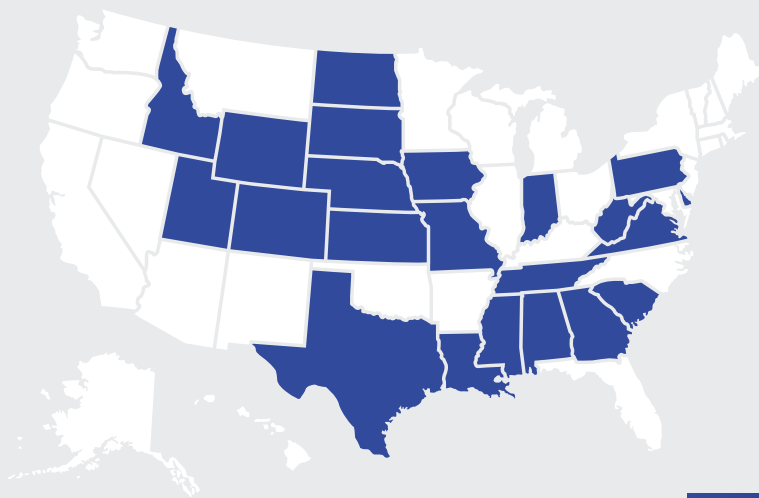
INDIANA EMS AND THE EMS COMPACT



The Indiana state legislature passed a bill setting the stage for Indiana EMS to join the EMS Compact. EMS personnel, including EMTs and Paramedics, licensed in a compact member state are granted a Privilege to Practice in the other member states. You will be able to practice in 21 other member states without having to be licensed or certified.

The EMS Compact benefits Indiana EMS and its member states by:

- Increasing access to patient care
- Reducing administrative burden for EMS personnel and states
- Standardizing state licensure requirements
- Enhancing the Emergency Medical Services system in the United States
- Protecting the public



- | | |
|-------------|----------------|
| Alabama | Nebraska |
| Colorado | North Dakota |
| Delaware | Pennsylvania |
| Georgia | South Carolina |
| Idaho | South Dakota |
| Indiana | Tennessee |
| Iowa | Texas |
| Kansas | Utah |
| Louisiana | Virginia |
| Mississippi | West Virginia |
| Missouri | Wyoming |

CURRENT MEMBER STATES

REQUIREMENTS OF THE EMS COMPACT

The EMS Compact requires that Indiana submit individual licensure information, including **Social Security numbers (SSN)**. To do this, Indiana EMS is collecting Social Security numbers from current license holders and any new applicants.



WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

IDHS is asking all EMS certified professionals to enter their SSN in their individual Acadis accounts. You can do this by logging into the Acadis Portal and clicking on “Manage Profile” in the upper right area of the screen. Select “Manage General Information” from the menu that appears. The “SSN” field should appear for you to add and submit your Social Security number.

RECOVERY RECKONINGS

- All COVID-19 disaster declaration incident periods will close May 11, 2023, according to FEMA. FEMA will arrange programmatic briefings and share webinars as well as make experts available for all stakeholders impacted by the closure. More information will be available in the coming weeks.
- The application period is closed for U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA)/ State Disaster Relief Fund (SDRF) Disaster #17505 (Allen County & Contiguous Counties).
- The application period is closed for U.S. SBA/SDRF Disaster #17583 (Daviess County & Contiguous Counties).
- U.S. SBA/SDRF Disaster #17505: Derecho Windstorm for Allen County & Contiguous Counties that occurred June 13, 2022, is closed out as of Jan. 25, 2023. The SBA approved 45 loan applications. The SDRF approved seven grant applications.
- U.S. SBA/SDRF Disaster #17583: Severe Storms and Flooding for Daviess County & Contiguous Counties that occurred July 23, 2022, is closed out as of Jan. 25, 2023. The SBA approved seven loan applications. The SDRF approved 12 grant applications.
- The IDHS Individual Assistance Section is accepting requests for damage assessment training classes for the 2023 calendar year. Contact ia@dhs.in.gov if you have questions.

HAZMAT HAPPENINGS

The IDHS Hazmat Section is currently in Tier II reporting season (Jan. 1-March 1). After the March deadline, IDHS will travel around the state to host more LEPC training sessions, focusing on the GIS features in Tier II Manager LEPC accounts:

DISTRICT 10

10 a.m. March 15 at TBD

DISTRICT 9

10 a.m. March 20 at 401 W. High St., Lawrenceburg, IN

DISTRICT 8

10 a.m. March 22 at 131 S. Cherry St., Columbus, IN

DISTRICT 7

10 a.m. March 27 at TBD

DISTRICT 6

10 a.m. March 29 at 224 W. Water St., Portland, IN

DISTRICT 5

10 a.m. April 5 at 18100 Cumberland Road, Noblesville, IN

DISTRICT 3

10 a.m. April 11 at 220 W. Van Buren St., Columbia City, IN

DISTRICT 2

10 a.m. April 14 at 1222 S. Michigan St., South Bend, IN

DISTRICT 4

10 a.m. April 27 at 1950 S. 18th St., Lafayette, IN

DISTRICT 1

10 a.m. May 3 at TBD

The next IERC meeting will be March 13 at 1:30 p.m. at the Elkhart County Health Department — 608 Oakland Ave., Elkhart, IN.

MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE MARSHAL

After nearly 40 years of firefighting and public service, it is remarkable to see the many passionate and committed people, both citizens and legislators, who are working hard to support you and this profession this time of year. It is refreshing to know some people really “get it.” It also is a good reminder that there are others who need to better understand the dangers of the job and the amount of time and effort that go into staying healthy and protecting lives and property. We have some challenges ahead.



Governor Holcomb supports the IDHS proposal to double the number of firefighting physical training locations across Indiana, from 14 primary, state-supported sites to 30 sites. His budget bill HB 1001 requests \$24.2 million proposal to: (1) expand firefighter physical training locations (2) provide \$10 million to replace outdated PPE gear for volunteer firefighters and (3) purchase new training props for the Fire and Public Safety Academy system.

This proposal offers a huge step forward and represents the first major investment in firefighting training in a generation. If approved by the General Assembly, the plan would supplement some existing training sites to standardize physical training and live burn equipment, adding some much-needed quality control and consistency to statewide fire training.

The 16 new sites proposed under the plan will be located strategically to help eliminate the need for firefighters to travel more than 45 minutes to attend a Firefighter I/II course. All would have live burn capabilities and be available to surrounding departments for use. All 30 sites would include towers and capabilities required for basic physical testing.

The question I hear all the time is, “Can I get a training location in my county?”

IDHS has general geographic locations in mind for these new training locations, but nothing has been finalized pending the approval of the funding. For now, [we are gathering information on our website](#) to help guide these decisions. Visit dhs.in.gov and look for “NextLevel Firefighter Training.”

It is no secret volunteer departments across the state struggle to get funding and equipment. By Indiana law, each township is responsible for maintaining fire service for the community, but some volunteers still are hosting fish fries, fundraisers and raffles to purchase equipment, maybe even for fuel for the engine. It is a tough existence for some volunteer departments, and there is a big gap between the haves and the have-nots. All of us (taxpayers) owe a debt of gratitude to the men and women who volunteer to save lives and property.

Turnout gear and SCBA directly impact the safety of firefighters and their ability to serve citizens. This proposal will help many, but it is a fraction of what is needed to properly equip volunteers in Indiana. Please reach out to your local legislator to show support for these important initiatives.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Stephen Jones
Indiana State Fire Marshal



UPCOMING TRAININGS

MARCH

MAR 1-10	Fire - Fire Instructor I - INST1-210327	CROWN POINT
MAR 2-4	Active Threat Integrated Response Course (PER 340) - 20230302	PLAINFIELD
MAR 2-4	Fire - Driver/Operator General - DOG220281	PENDLETON
Registration closes 02/28/2023.		
MAR 2-30	Fire Officer Strategy and Tactics - FOST220322	VERSAILLES
Registration closes 02/23/2023.		
MAR 4-5	K9330 Int. Disaster Search Techniques for K9s - 20230304	BRAZIL
MAR 7-9	Fire - Public Safety Leadership Development 100	VALPARAISO
MAR 7	International Code Council - 2021 IBC Essentials	EVANSVILLE
Registration closes 02/28/2023.		
MAR 18-19	K9420 Advanced Tracking/Trailing Tech for K9s - 20230318	BRAZIL
MAR 20-24	Fire - Driver/Operator Pumper - DOP220178	BROWNSBURG
Registration closes 03/13/2023.		
MAR 21-23	SAR 530: Lost Person Behavior	VALPARAISO
Registration closes 03/16/2023.		

UPCOMING EVENTS

EMA APPRECIATION WEEK

FEBRUARY 19-25

Emergency Management Agencies (EMAs) often work behind the scenes without gaining attention until significant natural and man-made events. Governor Eric J. Holcomb is honoring this group of critical personnel by celebrating [EMA Appreciation Week](#) Feb. 19-25, 2023.



BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS MONTH

MARCH

Brain Injury Awareness Month, recognized in March, provides an important opportunity to bring attention to the prevention of traumatic brain injury (TBI) and to promote strategies to improve the quality of life for persons living with TBI and their families.

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

MARCH 12

Daylight Saving Time 2023 begins Sunday, March 12, at 2 a.m. Plan on changing your clocks forward an hour on the night of Saturday, March 11. You will “lose” an extra hour of sleep, so be sure to prepare for that.





SEVERE WEATHER PREPAREDNESS WEEK MARCH 12-18

Each year, IDHS collaborates with the National Weather Service during Severe Weather Preparedness Week to remind and educate Hoosiers about seasonal severe weather threats and how to effectively prepare for them.

Throughout the week, IDHS will share severe weather safety tips on social media. Follow IDHS and use the hashtags #SevereWx and #SWPW!

NATIONAL POISON PREVENTION WEEK MARCH 19-25

National Poison Prevention Week raises awareness of poison prevention nationwide during the third full week of March every year. The week is an opportunity to highlight the dangers of poisonings for people of all ages and promote community involvement in poisoning prevention.



NATIONAL PUPPY DAY MARCH 23

Dogs have a very important role in public safety, including aiding arson investigations, detecting explosives and searching for missing persons. They also are our friends and companions. Honor a dog in your life on this day!

*The Indiana Department of Homeland Security works 24/7
to protect the people, property and prosperity of Indiana.*



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*The Hoosier Responder is a publication of The Indiana Department of Homeland Security.
Please direct any questions or comments to the IDHS Office of Public Affairs at 317.234.6713 or pio@dhs.in.gov*