

THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS RELEASES TWO NEW ALTERNATIVE FUELS TRAINING PACKAGES FOR FIRST RESPONDERS

Fairfax, Va., June 12, 2009... As the production and use of ethanol and biodiesel fuels accelerates, first responders need new training to prepare them to handle incidents involving these alternative fuels. To address this need, the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) is offering two new training packages.

The first training package, "Ethanol: Response Considerations," focuses on responding to ethanol incidents. It was created in partnership with the United States Fire Administration and the United States Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA). The training package has been updated and revised from the original version released last year. It now also contains a companion training video.

"With the increased production and use of ethanol as a renewable fuel, emergency responders need to understand the chemical characteristics of this flammable liquid and how best to fight any possible fire that results from a hazmat transportation accident or incident," said PHMSA Acting Deputy Administrator Cindy Douglass. "The ethanol video trains everyone to the current response standards."

The second training package, "Biodiesel: Response Considerations," focuses on general biodiesel information and details about biodiesel commercial manufacturing facilities. This package was created through a partnership between the IAFC, National Biodiesel Board, and the United States Department of Energy.

Joe Jobe, CEO of the National Biodiesel Board, praised the leadership and cooperation of the IAFC in developing these materials. "With a flash point of 200 degrees, biodiesel is a safe fuel to handle, store and use, and our industry prides itself on a good safety record," said NBB CEO Joe Jobe. "However, preparing for the worst case scenario is always wise and we applaud the IAFC for being proactive."

The challenge of responding to incidents involving alternative fuels has received national attention. In his testimony on May 14 on Capitol Hill, the IAFC's 1st Vice President, Jeff Johnson, chief of Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue, stated, "Due to federal policy, new breakthroughs in technology and the recent high petroleum prices, there has been a new focus on alternative fuels. In the past two years, ethanol production and use has skyrocketed, and fuel-grade ethanol is the number-one freight rail commodity, by volume, in the country," he said.

"Fire departments cannot use the same tactics and equipment that they used for petroleum-based fires," Chief Johnson noted. "Instead, they must be equipped with the right equipment -- including alcohol-resistant foams -- and tactics to respond to alternative fuels incidents."

The IAFC introduced the new training packages at the IAFC Hazmat Committee's International Hazardous Materials Response Conference, May 27-31, 2009. The materials include training tools, such as a PowerPoint presentation, instructor guide, participant manual, as well as a video about response considerations.

Both training programs are available on the National Hazardous Materials Fusion Center website at <http://www.hazmatfc.com/Pages/Resources.aspx> along with companion videos available on IAFC TV at www.iafctv.org under "Hazmat". For more information or to request a copy of the training materials, please email jrist@iafc.org.



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