

THE HOOSIER RESPONDER

OCTOBER 2020

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Now more than 200 days into the COVID-19 pandemic, IDHS and several partner agencies continue to support Hoosier public safety personnel through the State Emergency Operations Center.



This, by far, is the longest activation for the SEOC, which was activated at a Level 1 (the highest level) for a record 87 days earlier this year. With safeguards for social distancing, this extreme collaboration and planning was forced to be done virtually — a mighty challenge in its own right.

Despite this, more than 3.6 million pieces of personal protective equipment has been delivered to Indiana counties. IDHS staff has driven more than 15,000 miles to get resources in the hands of local emergency managers. The EMS Section produced a comprehensive COVID-19 EMS Manual and passed multiple waivers to allow EMS to adequately respond to the pandemic.

I recently shared some of this same information with members of the General Assembly examining the state's response to COVID-19. I was proud to have the opportunity to showcase our role amid the many agencies helping us fight back against this virus. It is important to share this broadly with you as well to highlight the important, collaborative work taking place at IDHS and across the state. Similar to how first responders and frontline health care workers have sacrificed themselves, Indiana state agencies also are putting the public first and not backing down from this unprecedented challenge.

Today, thankfully, the spread of the virus is much more under control. Our agency is returning to normal as much as possible, yet we remain intimately involved with many aspects of the response, including as liaison between Indiana and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Buildings still need to be inspected. Elevators and boilers still must be certified as safe. IDHS also must be ready for any other disaster, natural or man-made, that may come to Indiana. The work must go on to serve the public interest.

One positive outcome thus far has been the opportunity for IDHS to better understand its role and its purpose. The agency marked its 15-year anniversary this year (IDHS was formed in 2005), yet only now has the agency sought to define its core values: what it stand for; what its mission and vision should be. I look forward to sharing this information with you soon as a diverse group of staff from all departments and levels works to define these values.

Moving forward, this experience will make us stronger and more impactful across the state. Our working relationships with local, state and federal partners will be time-tested. We will improve where necessary and adapt where needed. The end result will be a more resilient Indiana for all of us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Cox". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Steve Cox
Executive Director



BUILDING A MORE RESILIENT COMMUNITY

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA) has been a much-cited organization through the COVID-19 response, providing vital guidance on essential workers and infrastructure. The agency, established November 2018, leads the national effort to understand and manage cyber and physical risk to America's critical infrastructure.

Now approaching the agency's second anniversary, CISA is gearing up for two important campaigns this fall, focused on cybersecurity and critical infrastructure.

NATIONAL CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH

Oct. 1 begins National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, sponsored nationally by CISA and the National Cybersecurity Alliance (NCSA). This year's theme, "Do Your Part. #BeCyberSmart," encourages individuals and organizations to own their role in protecting their part of cyberspace. Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb also issued

a proclamation identifying October as Cybersecurity Awareness Month.

This year, the national campaign stresses personal accountability and the importance of taking proactive steps to enhance cybersecurity. [Materials and toolkits for citizen outreach](#) will further emphasize "If You Connect It, Protect It."

For organizations in the process of developing more cyber resilience, CISA is in the process of releasing a six-part [Cyber Essentials Toolkit](#). Designed to break down the CISA Cyber Essentials into bite-sized actions, the toolkits help organization work toward full implementations of each topic. Each chapter focuses on recommended actions to build cyber readiness.

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE SECURITY AND RESILIENCE MONTH

Since March, Hoosiers have seen significant changes in their way of life and the infrastructure that keeps it all moving forward. Indiana understands even more clearly how essential services such as utilities, roads and transportation infrastructure, as well as schools, are just

a few of the vital pieces that maintain Hoosiers' standard of living and economy.

Beginning Nov. 1, CISA will celebrate Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience Month, focusing the vital role these 16 critical infrastructures play in the country. This year's theme

will be announced soon. More information and tools for citizen outreach [can be found online](#).

Agencies and organizations responsible for resilient communication networks also may be interested in CISA's [Communications and Cyber Resiliency Toolkit](#).

OTHER CISA RESOURCES

CISA performs a broad role in building national resilience and provides more than 50 services to stakeholders across the country. To learn more about ways CISA can assist local efforts, review the [CISA Services Catalog](#).



FLOOD RISK IN INDIANA

WATCH THE VIDEO!

According to the [NOAA National Severe Storms Laboratory \(NSSL\)](#), flooding is the most common weather-related natural disaster in the United States and kills more people each year than tornadoes, hurricanes or lightning. Despite Indiana experiencing more than [200 different flooding and heavy rain events during 2019](#), only [19,873 flood insurance policies](#) are in effect within the state. While purchasing flood insurance might seem costly, the [National Flood Insurance Program \(NFIP\)](#) is available to help Hoosier homeowners and renters mitigate losses caused by flood disasters.

The NFIP, offered through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), is designed to reduce the impact of flooding by providing affordable flood insurance policies to property owners, renters and businesses around the country. Only homeowners in high-risk flood areas (also known as “floodplains”) with mortgages from federally

regulated lenders are required to purchase flood insurance. Although it is not required for everyone, flood insurance is something every Hoosier can benefit from.

“Everyone lives in a floodplain. It is just a question of how much flood water it takes to impact their structures and property,” said Mary Moran, branch director of the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) Response & Recovery Division. “No home is completely safe from the risks of flooding.”

In 2019, Indiana received more than \$670,000 in flood damage claims paid out from FEMA. In 2018, however, severe flooding during February and March caused individual damage to exceed \$19 million.

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is the state agency responsible for reviewing, regulating and establishing floodplains in Indiana. According to Indiana

DNR’s [“Floodplain Management in Indiana Quick Guide,”](#) as of April 2018 two Indiana counties and 72 municipalities are flood-prone but do not participate in the NFIP or enforce floodplain management policies.

“The NFIP is a voluntary program, so communities have to agree to adopt and enforce a floodplain management ordinance,” explained Darren Pearson, Indiana DNR’s NFIP coordinator. “We have approximately 450 communities in Indiana that participate in the NFIP, but there are also many smaller communities located in minimal floodplains that currently do not participate.”

James Sink, regional flood insurance liaison with FEMA, said flood insurance claims in FEMA Region 5 low-floodplain areas have proportionally increased by more than 20 percent from 1978 to 2020.

Unfortunately, Indiana is not a part of that increase.

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“People in Indiana tend to purchase flood insurance only if their mortgage requires them to, so overall there has not been a lot of policy growth in that state,” Sink explained. “This is largely because Indiana does not have as many high visibility flooding events as its neighboring states.”

Despite the state’s low rate of high-visibility flooding events, however, Sink said heavy rainfall is more than enough of a reason for Hoosiers to consider purchasing flood insurance.

“In Indiana, people need to think about their flood risks differently,” he said. “It’s not necessarily the river flooding, but the high-impact rainfall events can lead to an inch of water that causes up to \$25,000 in damage.”

Hoosier communities interested in learning more about flood risks in their area should visit Indiana DNR’s [Indiana Floodplain Information Portal](#). This floodplain mapping application utilizes both FEMA and DNR approved floodplain data resources and provides the most available, comprehensive coverage of floodplain information for the state of Indiana.

Hoosiers interested in learning more about purchasing flood insurance through the NFIP can visit [floodsmart.gov](#).

PRACTICE EARTHQUAKE SAFETY DURING THE GREAT U.S. SHAKEOUT

National Preparedness Month wrapped up at the end of September, that doesn’t mean it’s time to stop preparing for disasters. The Great Central U.S. ShakeOut on Oct. 15 presents an opportunity for Hoosiers to be more prepared for a less common natural disaster in Indiana: earthquakes.

Near two different seismic zones, Indiana is at a far greater risk of earthquake damage than many realize. Earthquakes can happen without any notice, whether you are at work, home, school or out in the community. Knowing what to do in advance when the ground starts to shake can help keep you safe.

The Great Central U.S. ShakeOut is an international drill that aims to teach people

to “Drop. Cover. Hold On.” when an earthquake occurs.

Here’s how it works: At 10:15 a.m. on Oct. 15, participants should drop to the ground, take cover under a sturdy table or desk and hold on as if a major earthquake were happening.

With many businesses and schools participating in remote work or remote learning due to COVID-19, organized drills on Oct. 15 may not be possible. However, all Hoosiers still can participate on their own or with their family whether they are at home, work or school.

Help IDHS encourage individuals to register for the Great Central U.S. ShakeOut by sharing the link below:

[REGISTER NOW](#)



Check out [this video](#) from IDHS Natural Hazards Planning Manager Allison Curry on steps you can take to prepare for an earthquake.



ANSWERING THE CALL: 911 DISPATCHERS

The first, First Responders.

The lifeline for the public safety community.

The first to be criticized; the last to be recognized.

For those public safety telecommunicators/dispatchers, titles are much less important than getting the job done right. They can't control the outcome of an emergency call, but they are critical to the success of police, fire and EMSs on the scene and could be the only thing standing between a caller and a tragic ending.

"Dispatchers constantly deal with events that have a high degree of emotion," said Ed Reuter, executive director of the Indiana 911 Board.

"Some people who call 911 are experiencing the worst moments of their lifetimes or maybe it will be the bravest moments of their lifetime. Dispatchers have to bring them to a level where they can understand the best way to help them."

The modern 911 system is much more advanced than it has ever been, yet one thing that has held steady for generations is the person on the other end of that phone ready to help. Millions of calls pour into dispatch centers each year (4 million in Indiana alone), and all are dependent on the skill, quick thinking and calm approach required of dispatchers to resolve unexpected situations.

Police and fire on the scene also could never do their jobs effectively without help from dispatchers. Yet, until 2020 dispatchers were never officially classified as among the first responders they serve. A law that went into effect July 1 now classifies them as such, which for many seasoned dispatchers is long overdue.

"This title legitimizes our positions and supports what we mean to the public safety world," said Jeana Mathies, director of Dubois County Communications, who has nearly 30 years on the job.

"This is such a huge step in the right direction now that dispatch/telecommunicators are getting recognized," said Terri Brooks, director of the White County Communications/E911 for the past 17 years. "This doesn't do much beyond give us a better title ... but it's past time that (dispatchers) are recognized, and we're telling them that we're proud of what they do."

CHANGING INDIANA LAW

Gov. Eric Holcomb signed HB 1198 into law in early 2020. Among other things, the law added 911 operators to the list of "Indiana first responders," alongside law enforcement, firefighters, corrections officers, EMTs and paramedics. The bill was introduced by State Rep. David Abbott and is considered the first step in better defining a "first responder."

"I think the most important thing to realize is that our 911 telecommunicators are truly the first of the first on the scene.

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Although they may not be in the line of fire or running in to a burning building, they are there just the same,” Abbott said.

In 2015, Abbott was flying a glider alone at about 8,000 feet above Utah when he lost altitude and crashed a mountainside. He was able to activate a locator beacon and reach 911 from his cell phone. Help would not arrive for the next 90 minutes, and a dispatcher stayed with him on the line the entire time.

“I cannot begin to explain how much this meant to me to have someone right there with me during the entire time I laid there on the ground in pain next to the aircraft. I don’t know how I would have handled the situation if I had not had a friend like her [the dispatcher] to give me such hope,” Abbott said.

Moving forward, the hope is to expand resources and benefits to this group now



available to other public safety personnel, especially mental health counseling for prevalent issues like PTSD. Financial assistance, retirement programs and support for surviving family members are key programs that future legislation may address concerning dispatchers.

The efforts to get dispatchers recognized as first responders has a long history. In years past, many people viewed them as clerical workers who sit around

and wait for the phone to ring, said Rob McMullen, interim director of Knox County Central Dispatch, who has more than 20 years behind the dispatch console. But enhanced training and better advocacy via the Indiana 911 Board has raised the profile of Hoosier dispatchers. People are understanding how challenging and emotionally draining the role can be.

“We go from one extreme to another, and sometimes people can’t handle that,” McMullen said. “Most people are not used to having someone’s life in their hands, if you have to have [callers] deliver CPR to someone, for example. They endure the stress and emotions but don’t get the praise and recognition that police and fire do.”

“Dispatchers have been pushed aside for so long that even now it’s hard for them to even take the accolades they deserve,” Mathies said.

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“Hopefully now dispatchers will begin to get the respect we deserve,” she added. “People always think of police and firemen as the heroes—and they are — I wouldn’t want their job. But, on the same token, the people in (dispatch centers) do a heck of a job.”



“We’ve gained by leaps and bounds in recent years in the way of training, and we will continue to push for minimum training standards,” Reuter said.

The Indiana Fire and Public Safety Academy, part of the Indiana Department of



To avoid that stress, new hires take a multitude of training courses and typically spend several months shadowing more experienced dispatchers before they are given free rein to take calls themselves. As an example, Dubois County waits four months before letting a



HIRING AND TRAINING

One issue facing the dispatcher industry is the lack of mandatory training in Indiana. Each county establishes its own requirements for new hires, although the state has local chapters of the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) and the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (APCO) and other organizations that deliver low-cost training to agencies. Since 2018, the Indiana 911 Board has delivered more than \$1.2 million to counties, covering about 90 percent of annual training.

Homeland Security, also is working to expand state offerings for telecommunicators training. The Academy recently partnered with the Health and Safety Institute to offer a [robust online training format for first responders](#).

“Things have changed so much since I first started,” said Brooks, who began working part-time as a dispatcher about 20 years ago while working in the accounting department of another business. “I remember the fear I had when I got my first big call. I don’t want people to be afraid of what they’re doing here.”

person work independently, while McMullen in Knox County said that could take up to six months. Even then, it is 12-15 months before a person feels comfortable on the job, he said.

And the uniqueness of the job brings two primary challenges: difficulty hiring the right person and a high turnover rate.

“If we picked 100 people, there might be three to five people who could do the job well,” Reuter said.

McMullen was a little more optimistic: “For every 10 you

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hire, maybe three make it. Most people are just not prepared to deal with the type of calls they receive. One minute you get a call about a dog barking or a locked vehicle and the next someone is getting shot at or grandma has not woken up and has died overnight.”

The dispatchers who succeed embrace the excitement and fast pace of the job, Mathies said. They work well under pressure, have a calm nature, balanced thinking and the ability to multi-task well. They also must learn to take care of themselves along the way.

SUPPORT FROM PEERS

In a small county like Dubois, it’s easier for dispatchers and frontline responders to work together regularly. Over the

years, they develop a rapport and now “the officers are usually very thankful you’re there,” Mathies said.

DID YOU KNOW?

Indiana is one of the leading states in Text-to-911 calls, with more than 13,000 annually.

Brooks sees her team bond closely and depend on one another to get through tough shifts. They post inspirational sayings through the center, decorate lockers for birthdays and take annual Christmas photos. As a group, however,

they also feel support from those they send to scenes.

“They realize how important dispatchers are,” Brooks said. “They know we’re their lifeline. If they need something, they know that these folks are jumping to quickly get them whatever they need.”

Reuter, who has spent 33 years in the industry as a dispatcher, a county dispatch director and now head of the Indiana 911 Board, said the connection between dispatchers and frontline responders is undeniable.

“A dispatcher can have no greater compliment than hearing from someone on the scene say, ‘I was glad you were on the radio that day.’”

2020 INDIANA FALLEN FIREFIGHTER MEMORIAL

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the annual Fallen Firefighter Remembrance Ceremony was held without a live audience. Instead, the ceremony was captured on video and can be [viewed here](#).

Every year we honor our Hoosier heroes who lost their lives while keeping their communities safe. These firefighters’ dedication and sacrifice will always be remembered.





NEW FIRE/EMS HANDS-ON TRAINING AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

On a crisp morning the first day of fall, the City of Greensburg Fire Department began training with the new Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) Firefighter Confidence Trainer.

“It’s great for us, because it’s in the back of our station,” said Chuck Gunter, firefighter for the Greensburg Fire Department. “We’re all on duty today, so we can utilize it without having to leave the grounds.”

One by one, Gunter’s fellow firefighters take a turn climbing through the trainer in full gear, working their way through a series of mazes designed to assist firefighters new and old with maintaining their composure while searching for their exit point. They make their way past obstacles such as reduced clearances, entanglements, ramps and wall breaches. This is compounded by the addition of smoke for reduced visibility and low lighting to simulate actual

conditions that may be found in a real-life situation.

Training has always been a core component of IDHS, and this year the Indiana Fire and Public Safety Academy acquired three new tools that will allow public safety personnel across Indiana to get hands-on training brought to them. These are the new Firefighter Confidence Trainer, a Hazmat Trainer and an Air Compressor Trailer, which houses the Lion Fire Attack Training System.



Chuck Gunter helps a fellow Greensburg Fire Department firefighter stay calm after getting stuck in a tricky section of the Confidence Trainer.

The new Hazmat Trainer is replacing an older model. The new resource provides props and equipment for persons training and or maintaining skills to the technician level. It carries portable props for patching and plugging skills along with associated patch kits. It also has four props built into the front gooseneck of the trainer to provide additional patching and plugging skills.

The Lion Fire Attack Training

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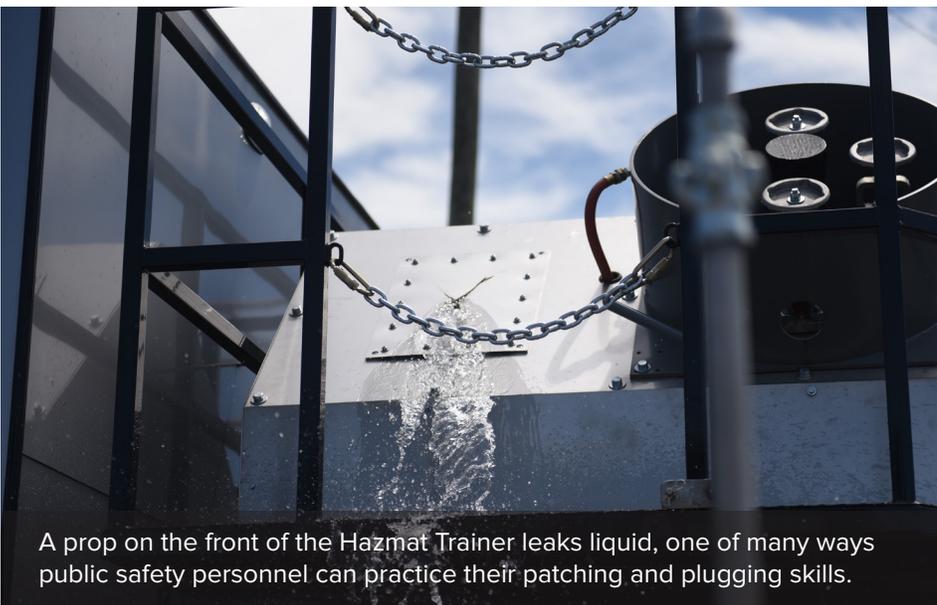


System creates realistic fire scenarios without the danger of real fire. Fire growth and smoke conditions are displayed through digital panels. Smoke output is tied to the size of the fire and the time since ignition. Once a fire is started, it will grow and extend to additional panels while producing realistic volumes of smoke.

“By utilizing these trainers, local agencies can train their public safety personnel to

survive in real-world situations in a controlled environment without the cost of constructing a facility,” said Bill Huffer, logistics manager for the Academy. “The Academy staff will transport the trainers to the requested locations.”

The trainers can be scheduled through [Acadis](#) by searching for available props. To find what days trainers are available, use “Planning an Event” to see availability and schedule one for use.



A prop on the front of the Hazmat Trainer leaks liquid, one of many ways public safety personnel can practice their patching and plugging skills.

HAZMAT HAPPENINGS

LEPC UPDATES

The Indiana Department of Homeland Security Hazmat Section staff reminds Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs) that all LEPC hazmat plan updates are **due on Oct. 17, 2020**. LEPCs also should work to complete all required reports and documents in the next few weeks. Compliance reviews will be occurring in November and December.

With the Emergency Management Alliance of Indiana (EMAI) conference cancellation this year, the Indiana Emergency Response Commission (IERC) has decided to postpone LEPC awards for the year. LEPC awards for both 2019 and 2020 will be presented at the 2021 EMAI/IERC conference.



NEW 'HOME SWEET HOME' FOR JEFFERSON COUNTY EMA AND 911

After spending significant time working in borrowed office spaces, both the Jefferson County 911 and Emergency Management Agency (EMA) recently moved into a newly renovated facility of their own in Madison, Ind.

“Three years ago, Jefferson County EMA was operating out of an office space in the Madison Township Volunteer Fire Department,” said Troy Morgan, Jefferson County EMA director. “When I became EMA director, I wasn’t a member of Madison Township like my predecessor, so we had to relocate to a different borrowed office space in the Jefferson County Health Department.”

Jefferson County 911 shared similar sentiments.

“Our 911 dispatch was previously located in a master bedroom at the Jefferson County Sheriff’s Department, which at one time was the former sheriff’s home,” said Susie Lawrence, director of the

Jefferson County 911 dispatch. “We somehow converted it into an office space, but it definitely wasn’t comfortable by any means.”

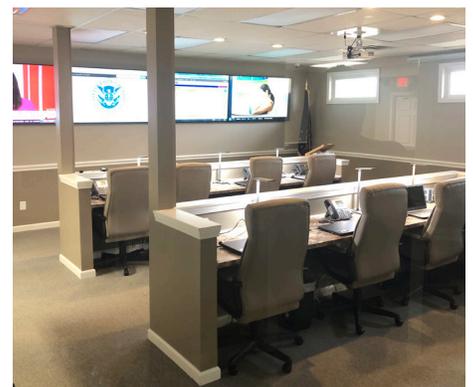


Recognizing the importance to improve working conditions, the Jefferson County Commissioners refurbished a former state unemployment building into an expansive facility, enhancing the crucial public safety services provided by the two agencies. For Jefferson County EMA, the facility comes equipped with capabilities they never had before, such as a multi-purpose conference room, a ham radio communications room and a fully dedicated

emergency operations center (EOC). Jefferson County 911 now benefits from a brand new computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system and [mapping](#) services.

“This large location and its new equipment will enable us to increase our staff size, which will ultimately let us serve the public more efficiently,” Lawrence said. “Most of all, this new location has boosted the morale of my staff by 300 percent.”

“My grandfather used to say that no job is too big when you have the proper tools,” Morgan explained. “This facility and its technology are the proper tools our EMA needs to do its job of protecting the people and property of Jefferson County.”



CRAWFORDSVILLE FD RECEIVES INTERNATIONAL AWARD

The Crawfordsville Fire Department's Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) Program and EMS Division Chief Paul Miller were honored in August with the 2020 Leadership in Integrated Healthcare Distinguished Service Award.

The award, presented by the Academy of International Mobile Healthcare Integration (AIMHI), celebrates and promotes high-performance, high-value EMS, its partners and leaders.

"The winners represent the very best in mobile integrated health care," said AIMHI President Chip Decker. "We are proud to honor

these exceptional programs and individuals."

The department's MIH program is a collaborative and innovative approach at patient-centered out-of-hospital health care delivery and is designed to help reduce health care costs. This community paramedicine program is in its fourth year, is free for clients and uses no tax dollars due to an ongoing partnership with the Indiana State Department of Health and Franciscan Health.

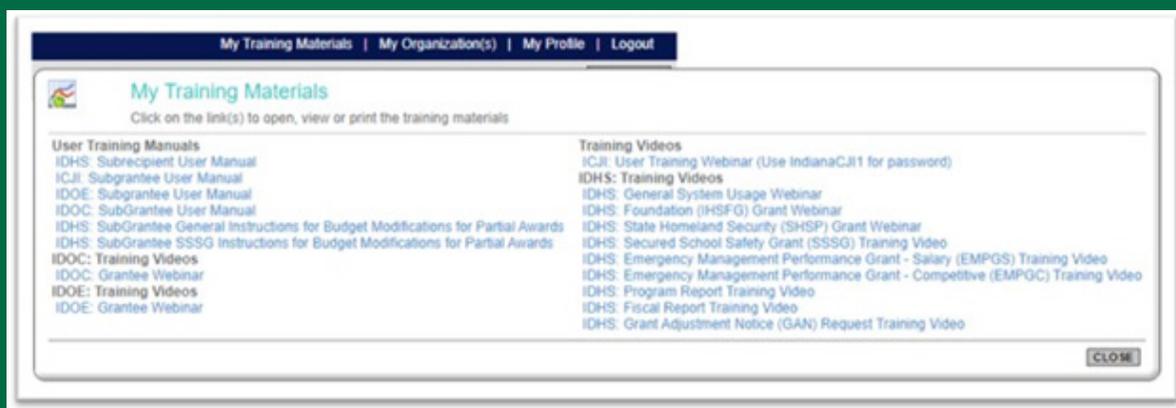
"We are proud to have our department's efforts recognized on the national level," said Fire

Chief Scott Busenbark. "Miller's leadership and passion for the program have directly led to its success."

Viewed by the state as a best practice model, fire department personnel were recently asked to serve on the Mobile Integrated Healthcare Advisory Committee, a subcommittee of the Indiana EMS Commission, to assist in replicating the Crawfordsville model throughout the state. Learn more about Crawfordsville Fire Department's program and the other winners on the [AIMHI page](#).

GRANT RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR RECIPIENTS

The Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) has developed resources for organizations to access when working with grants managed by IDHS. Several resources have been developed to assist with the implementation of the new grants management system, IntelliGrants. The following resources can be found in the system under "My Training Materials" after logging in.



The [IDHS Grants Management webpage](#) also features additional information:

[GovDelivery grant updates subscription](#): Where individuals can find announcements for grants, action needed, application windows and other general announcements.

[Grants support ticket](#): Are there questions or issues that are not addressed? Submit a grants support ticket, and a Grants Management staff member will respond within 72 hours.

REVIVED!

RESPONDERS SAVE TWO OF THEIR OWN IN CARDIAC ARREST INCIDENTS

On April 24, Ed Scheele was working a fire in Morris, Ind., with colleagues from the Morris Volunteer Fire Department. He and his grandson pulled line until it was determined that, while there was a lot of smoke coming from the home's stove, there was not a fire. The focus turned to unloading the smoke extractor, and Scheele began to feel dizzy. Before he was able to sit down, he collapsed, undergoing a cardiac event.

On Nov. 11, 2019, Keith Kuester had undergone and passed a full physical. Two days later, he responded to a fire with the Perry Township Fire Department, located near Evansville. He was the first on-scene and was able to determine that the structure was abandoned. While working the handline, he began to feel dizzy, and decided to get off the line. He checked the "C side" of the

structure, noticing there was a problem with the electrical meter. He called dispatch to request the utility company to the scene and decided to sit down on a nearby dirt pile. That is where other firefighters found him, unresponsive.

This autumn, two sets of first responders were honored for saving these men's lives.

Scheele's department has a close mutual aid relationship with the Batesville, Oldenberg and Sunman volunteer fire departments, and that day the Batesville Rescue Unit was on scene for the structure fire. "I'm very fortunate they were right there in the yard with me," said Scheele. "I can't stress enough the importance of having rescue units on scene."

Chris Baker, Ryan Everman and Elizabeth Kruthaupt, all with

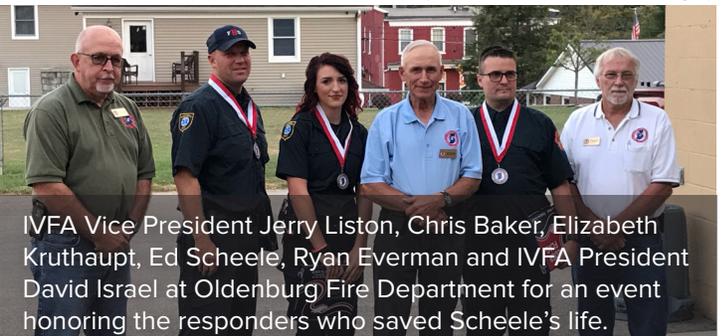
Batesville Fire, immediately began CPR, deployed an AED and initiated oxygen. "When they got me back and were telling me what they had done to bring me back, I could tell that they were relieved and happy," said Scheele. "All of that training, and all of that work had done them good and made the difference."

When Kuester went down, he was fortunate Chief Steve Anderson saw him collapse. A mayday was called immediately, and firefighters Jason Craig, Chris Gibson and Perry Gostley responded, beginning CPR and bringing the necessary equipment to the scene. Division Chief Heather Henry, of German Township Volunteer Fire Department, attached a defibrillator. After 4 minutes and 20 seconds of CPR, Henry declared a stop; Kuester's pulse had been restored.

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Indiana State Fire Marshal Joel Thacker, Steve Anderson, Heather Henry, Keith Kuester, Jason Craig, Perry Gostley and Chris Gibson at an event honoring responders who saved Kuester's life.



IVFA Vice President Jerry Liston, Chris Baker, Elizabeth Kruthaupt, Ed Scheele, Ryan Everman and IVFA President David Israel at Oldenburg Fire Department for an event honoring the responders who saved Scheele's life.

Once they got him back, Kuester was incredibly combative. “It was like the worst nightmare you’ve ever been in,” he said. “I never saw any bright light or anything. The only thing that I remember is that it was I was like I was under a weighted blanket, and I was trying to fight my way out.”

Both gentlemen continue to recover and are back to their day-to-day activities, grateful for the support from family, friends and their colleagues in the fire and EMS service. And, both are incredibly thankful to the individuals who put in the effort to bring them back, an all- too-rare outcome.

The knowledge of how many individuals succumb to a cardiac event was something Kuester had to work to overcome. “The mental part was tough,” he said. “I’ve worked for years, and I kept thinking about all the CPR I’ve done, and why I lived but they didn’t... like survivor’s remorse. It’s what your mind does after something drastic happens, at least to me.” The support of his family and getting back to normal made all the difference.

For Scheele, he continues to emphasize the importance of rescue units responding with fire trucks. “It’s very important for rescue units to be there,” he said. “Without a doubt, it saved me.”

HEROIC LIFE SAVING AWARD

The seven individuals involved in resuscitating Scheele and Kuester were the first recipients of the new Heroic Life Saving Award from the Indiana State Fire Marshal. The award is given to honor a public safety worker for heroic acts and extraordinary skill and resourcefulness to save, or attempt to save, a person’s life.

“First responders are highly trained individuals who work under extreme circumstances,” said Indiana State Fire Marshal Joel Thacker. “The ability these individuals showed, quickly adjusting from fire suppression to medical treatment on one of their own shows just how versatile Indiana firefighters are. I look forward to the continued opportunity to highlight the exceptional work of first responders throughout Indiana.”



CARDIAC EVENTS IN FIREFIGHTERS

The International Fire Chiefs Association launched a program in February 2020 called “If You Don’t Feel Well, Don’t Make It Your Farewell,” which focuses on cardiac arrest and the fatal risks to firefighters. According to the National Fire Protection Agency, 41 percent of firefighter deaths in 2018 were attributed to sudden cardiac death.

“Firefighters are known for always responding to the call, no matter what,” said Thacker. “However, if a firefighter is experiencing extreme fatigue or other troubling symptoms, it’s important to seek assistance right away. We’d rather our colleagues live to fight another day.”

Sudden cardiac arrests often happen without warning, but occasionally some warning symptoms do occur. See a doctor immediately if any of the following episodes occur: chest pain or discomfort, heart palpitations, rapid or irregular heartbeats, unexplained wheezing, shortness of breath, fainting or near fainting, lightheadedness or dizziness.



NEW ONLINE TRAINING PORTAL

The Indiana Fire and Public Safety Academy announced a new partnership with the Health and Safety Institute to host an online training platform offering more than 200 continuing education and re-certification courses for firefighters, EMS personnel and EMT/paramedics.

The platform offers convenient and diverse training courses through an unlimited use membership or a tailor-made, on-demand platform that can be purchased individually. All 24-7 EMS or 24-7 FIRE courses are approved by the Academy to meet continuing education and professional development requirements in Indiana.

“This online platform greatly expands the impact of the Academy and helps to meet the needs of public safety personnel in the most convenient way possible,” said Wade Walling, director of the Academy. “These high-caliber, accredited courses will ensure first responders stay current on training and ready to respond to the growing needs of Indiana.”

The online and hybrid course catalog continues the Academy’s commitment to expanding the training and resources available to Indiana’s public safety community.

Individuals can purchase specific courses of interest, or departments can purchase an unlimited membership that offers the entire catalog on- demand. **Working with the Academy, 24-7 EMS/FIRE is offering a reduced rate for those who sign up from now until Dec. 1, 2020.**

To register, visit Indiana’s private portal at <https://infpsa.hsi.com>. Indiana has a dedicated customer service representative who can help guide individuals and departments through the registration process.

OTHER BENEFITS OF THE SERVICE:

- 100+ continuing education (CE) courses and re-certification training for groups and agencies as well as individual EMRs, EMTs, Advanced EMTs and paramedics. All courses are approved by the Health and Safety Institute, a CAPCE-accredited organization.
- 70+ quality firefighter development courses in real-life scenario training situations.
- **Virtual-instructor-led training (VILT)** packages, including 24- or 48-Hour Refresher, Critical Care, BLS and ALS.

Visit the Academy webpage for more information.

SEARCH & RESCUE TRAINING CONTINUES AMID PANDEMIC

The IDHS Search and Rescue Training Program continues to offer several different search and rescue courses through this fall and winter.

Although the schedule for the remainder of 2020 and early 2021 is not finalized yet, a few expected trainings include: basic and intermediate K9 cadaver search in November, K9 first aid in December and a basic and intermediate K9 air scent course in January.

AVAILABLE IN ACADIS NOW:

- SAR400 Ground Search I (Technician): Oct. 24-25
- K9330 Int. Disaster Search Techniques for K9s: Oct. 17-18

Individuals interested in taking any of the upcoming search and rescue courses should log in to the Acadis Portal and search “K9” or “SAR” regularly for updated course offerings.

The Search and Rescue Training Program is working hard to offer as many courses as possible to make up for cancelled courses earlier in the year.

Due to COVID-19, students are required to wear masks during the classroom portions and are asked to try to maintain proper social distancing during all other activities. If you have questions, please contact training@dhs.in.gov.

IDHS OFFICE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: NEWS YOU CAN USE

PUBLIC SAFETY PORTAL

Development is underway to bring the IDHS Boiler and Pressure Vessel Section permits process, along with state licensing of inspectors, into the Public Safety Portal (PSP). Section staff are being trained to use the system, and their feedback is being used to test and improve the functionality.

INTRA-STATE MUTUAL AID

IDHS is working with representatives from the fire and EMS communities to develop a method to aid the mutual aid request process between departments and organizations within Indiana. This initiative is being spearheaded by Chief Brian Lott of the Indiana Fire Chiefs Association.

COUNTY READINESS ASSESSMENTS

A new online tool has been developed to allow county EMAs to self-report their readiness prior to a county readiness assessment visit by the IDHS Regional Liaison staff.

SCHEDULED EVENTS AND SEAR

IDHS would like to acknowledge the many county EMAs and IDHS support staff who, even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, have helped the state submit 870 events for SEAR adjudication, up from 750 last year. The changes made to the WebEOC input process appeared to make data entry easier, but IDHS IT staff welcomes feedback on additional improvements to consider. It is envisioned that, instead of a once-per-year “big bang” approach, the board will remain available year-round. Additionally, IDHS is collaborating with the new IT staff at National Weather Service (NWS) Indianapolis to provide a means for local emergency management staff to request weather support from the NWS, with notification of the request occurring automatically. More news to follow as this process is worked out in more detail.



CARING FOR FIRST RESPONDER MENTAL HEALTH

First responders deal with emergencies on a daily basis, but sometimes a response to a scene or event can be particularly stressful or traumatic. That is where the support of a Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) team can come in.

There are more than 40 CISM teams throughout Indiana, made up of trained peer volunteers who can arrive on scene to offer care for fellow first responders before they leave an incident, or may give one-on-one attention or group help in the days after.

Considered a form of psychological first aid, CISM teams practice a method of helping first responders who have experienced incidents that can leave emotional or physical harm. CISM helps public safety personnel cope with these experiences so they can continue to stay on the job serving their communities and do so without developing long-term negative consequences such as post-traumatic stress disorder or substance abuse.

“Thirty days is the golden window of crisis stabilization. We all have post-traumatic stress and it’s normal. But the longer you go without addressing it, the easier it is to bury or mask it or become desensitized to it. Or it can eventually negatively affect you so much that you can see it daily,” said David Berman, vice president of harm reduction and crisis stabilization programs for Mental Health America of Indiana. “CISM tries to keep you from getting to the point where it’s impacting everything.”

Indiana State Police department staff chaplain Daniel Coffey leads his agency’s CISM team and also helps coordinate the dozens of CISM teams statewide. He likens CISM teams to “paramedics for emotions.” They respond to frontline workers who are involved in incidents that are out of the normal or are particularly difficult, often for line-of-duty-deaths and the deaths of children. In addition to one-on-one support, CISM volunteers often conduct small group debriefings in the days

after incidents to teach crews how to mitigate the effects of the incident and to help them process their thoughts.

“First responders sometimes feel a sense of false guilt of ‘if something could have been done better, it could’ve gone better,’ but in group debriefs, others can help explain why that wasn’t possible,” Coffey said. “CISM allows people to confidentially share their thoughts and discover healthy and beneficial coping techniques.”

CISM volunteers are often firefighters, EMS personnel, police officers, dispatchers or chaplains. In responding to incidents, they try to match up with those with similar backgrounds needing help; for instance, they seek to connect firefighters with CISM volunteers from the fire service. CISM teams are like some peer support programs but differentiate themselves with more of a mental health and wellness approach, involving clinicians as necessary.

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The Kosciusko-Warsaw CISM Team serves first responders in the southern part of District 2 and consists of firefighters, a police officer, a chaplain, a paramedic, an EMS coordinator and even a therapy canine that helps closed-off first responders relax and open up during group sessions.

The team typically responds to incidents a few times a month after receiving notification from central dispatch of situations such as car accidents, shootings or bad CPR runs where first responders may need to talk. The team will send as many of its members as needed to be there to help.

“We’re a caring team that helps first responders understand they did everything they could to help people in their times of need,” said Warsaw-Wayne Fire Territory Chief Michael Wilson, adding that the team has seen 911 dispatchers and police officers on the verge of giving up decide to stick with it after receiving peer support. “We’re not counselors, but we’re brothers and sisters who are involved in the same things as they are.”

Individual first responders or agencies can request help from a CISM team. As a statewide network of CISM teams formalizes, Coffey serves as the point of contact and can be reached at dcoffey@isp.in.gov.

BE WELL INDIANA

Be Well Indiana is an initiative by the Indiana Division of Mental Health and Addiction to help connect Hoosiers with support resources in the areas of stress and anxiety, suicide prevention, addiction, domestic violence and more. Integrated with the Indiana 211 crisis hotline, Be Well Indiana’s representatives are counselors trained to serve people across demographics, including first responders.

“It’s Hoosiers. The benefits of 211 are that it’s local, it’s 24/7 and it’s an easy number to remember,” said David Berman,

vice president of harm reduction and crisis stabilization programs for Mental Health America of Indiana. “211 is anonymous and there is a short wait time of about 15 seconds before someone picks up to take your call.”

Berman added that 211 can also be a resource for public safety agencies to refer the people they serve to for help. He said many first responders, including police and 911 dispatchers, have started dialing 211 for real-time assistance or for connecting callers to the hotline for crisis help.

IDHS SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING

The Indiana Department of Homeland Security’s EMS Section offers a mental health course on Acadis Portal titled “Online LMS Training – Suicide Prevention Training.” The course is available to any Acadis user and is narrated by State EMS Medical Director Dr. Michael Kaufmann. It stresses the signs and symptoms to look for, risk factors and questions to ask first responders who are stressed or may be suicidal. A nine-question survey at the end helps measure Indiana-specific first responder mental health data.

“If someone selects yes to the question about whether they would like a call to discuss a specific mental health concern, we do call them,” said Mikel Fort,

the IDHS EMS district manager who helped develop the course. He said that there was a case where a first responder whose daughter was suicidal marked yes and Fort was able to connect the family to help.

First responders can also call EMS district managers directly to talk about what they are experiencing; district managers have the ability to connect people to the Indiana Division of Mental Health and Addiction too.

“Situation stress and vicarious trauma is real,” said Dr. Kaufmann. “Emergency responders are not immune and need to take care of themselves both physically and mentally.”



IMPROVING SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS: FIRSTNET BUILD-OUT PROGRESS, DEPLOYABLE ASSETS

More than a dozen communications towers went into service in southwestern Indiana in July as FirstNet, the dedicated broadband network for first responders, continues upgrading in the third year of a five-year build-out throughout Indiana.

The towers at new cellular service sites in Greene, Martin and Owen counties enhance the network’s coverage and capacity. By the first quarter of 2021, 23 more sites are expected to come online, including many in southern Indiana.

As new towers and sites are constructed, FirstNet continues to increase coverage and subscribers in all 92 counties of the state.

Owen County has been using FirstNet for six months and EMA Director Jack White says the new towers already have improved service throughout

the county and may lead to expanded use by EMS teams in the area.

“This will solve the problem of waiting, sometimes several minutes, until they are in a spot with coverage to send critical medical data for the attending physician to be able to make decisions concerning medical care,” White said.

IDHS District Liaison Tonda Dixon said FirstNet is providing a great service, as feedback

from public safety agencies in District 10 counties has been positive and they look forward to more towers to ensure complete coverage for some areas. A new tower in southwest Posey County was installed in an area that previously had little or no cellular coverage, and the area now has great coverage, according to the county EMA.

FirstNet is different from other first responder network services in that it is a new and entirely separate network, with its own

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dedicated infrastructure. Other services occupy space on providers' existing commercial networks.

"All investments into the network, because it is a public-private partnership, are public safety driven. Other networks are commercially driven," said Sally Fay, statewide interoperability coordinator for the Integrated Public Safety Commission (IPSC).

IPSC serves as the state's point of contact for FirstNet, and it meets weekly with the FirstNet contractor AT&T and FirstNet Authority, the federal entity establishing the nationwide network, to advocate for Indiana in any network issues.

"If there is an area without good coverage, IPSC will hold FirstNet's feet to the fire to get it done," Fay said.

Additionally, IPSC maintains a cache of FirstNet communications equipment that is regularly deployed for planned events or emergency responses. Public safety agencies can request these resources, and some that have requested to use the equipment in the past have found FirstNet so helpful that they became FirstNet subscribers afterward, according to IPSC emergency response supervisor Tyler Clements.

FirstNet itself is amassing deployable assets nationwide

IPSC COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT CACHE

The Integrated Public Safety Commission has made these communication tools available for planned event and emergency response situations. To request equipment, call 317-234-1540 (monitored at all times).

- Portable radios complete with multi-bay or single charging capability
- Portable base station mobile radio units
- Two cell phone drop kits (SONIM XP8 devices using FirstNet Band 14)
- Cradlepoint units powered by FirstNet
- A cell-fi booster for Band 14 (could be used for a mobile EOC to boost FirstNet signal)
- Tactical suitcase repeaters
- Mobile intelli-repeater communications trailers complete with 8TAC conventional repeaters
- Deployable data response kits (mobile CAD stations)

and continues to develop an app catalog. Its deployable assets have been used for large events such as the Indianapolis 500, Red for Ed rally and Thunder Over Louisville. Clements said users of non-FirstNet networks have said they cannot make calls whereas FirstNet subscribers can in some instances of high call traffic.

Recently, FirstNet sent out a "cell on wheels" for cellular service to help agencies coordinate a visit to Spencer County by Vice President Mike Pence, and other FirstNet assets were deployed for more than two months as the Indiana State Department of Health conducted strategic national stockpile PPE distributions for the state's COVID-19 response.

"Overall, FirstNet has been very useful and fast during special events and incidents, including

COVID response when it was just beginning and for our severe windstorm back in April," said Knox County EMA Director John Streeter. "We will be using it even more with the addition of a new 30-foot mobile EOC vehicle which will serve as a mobile dispatch center and communications unit in one."

While FirstNet service is available throughout the state, public safety agencies must choose to subscribe. With the number of new subscribers joining, IPSC has secured rates for Indiana agencies that are much lower than national rates, so Hoosier agencies should be sure to receive the state plan rates when signing up.

For more information about FirstNet, contact IPSC at icc@ipsc.in.gov or 317-234-1540. To subscribe to FirstNet, contact Angie Helminiak at ah670m@att.com or 317-294-0363.



PUBLIC ASSISTANCE NEXT STEPS: YOUR RPA IS APPROVED... NOW WHAT?

More than 1,150 organizations across the state have submitted their Request for Public Assistance (RPA) as a part of the COVID-19 public assistance declaration. *So where do those organizations go from here?*

Organizations with approved RPAs on file should now go into the [FEMA Grants Portal](#) and begin submitting their expenses for possible reimbursement. This is done by filling out and submitting what is called a Project Application, which is also done in the Grants Portal.

To start a project application, go to the Applicant Event Profile page within the Grants Portal. This can be accessed both on the Organization Profile page (midway down the page) or through the left-side navigation bar. Once on the Applicant Event Profile page, look for the blue button near the top of the page labeled “Submit Project Application.” Clicking this button will allow for a new project application to be started.

From there, users will be directed to create an Applicant-Assigned Project Number. This

number is not assigned to the user, as the user will create the number and then assign it to the project. This will help applicants track projects in the event multiple project applications are submitted. Users also will be directed to choose a work category, which will be Category B: Emergency Protective Measures.

The Portal then will ask the applicant some questions before directing the applicant to each appropriate section of the application, based on the types of expenses being submitted. The user also will be able to submit supporting documentation, such as time sheets, materials invoices or contracts.

The Portal allows for users to save their progress, meaning that a project application does not need to be completed in one sitting. To ensure no progress is lost, save after each completed section of the application. Do not forget to click on the submit button when the project is completed and ready for submission. Simply clicking “save” will not submit

the completed project to FEMA.

New guidance, “COVID-19 Pandemic: Work Eligible for Public Assistance,” went into effect on Sept. 15. Find more information about the guidance [here](#).

I HAVE ALREADY SUBMITTED EXPENSES

FEMA currently is evaluating previously submitted expenses. Please continue to check the [FEMA Grants Portal](#) daily for any FEMA comments or requests for additional information.

ABOUT THE FEMA PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The mission of Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) Public Assistance (PA) Grant Program is to provide assistance to state, tribal and local governments, and private non-profit organizations, so that communities can quickly respond to and recover from man-made or natural disasters or emergencies declared by the president. Through the PA Program, FEMA provides supplemental federal disaster

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grant assistance to include debris removal, emergency protective measures and the repair, replacement or restoration of disaster-damaged, publicly owned/eligible private non-profit facilities.

LEVERAGING CARES ACT FUNDING

Currently, there is no deadline set for Public Assistance project applications. Organizations are encouraged to submit their applications early in the process. Entering an initial project application means a more rapid reimbursement for up to 75 percent of eligible expenses. Once the Public Assistance process is complete, organizations can apply for reimbursement for the remaining 25 percent through the CARES Act. For more information on the CARES Act process, visit the [Indiana Finance Authority website](#).

For questions related to the CARES Act in Indiana, email covid-19@ifa.in.gov.

RPA SUBMISSION REMINDER

For organizations that have not submitted an RPA, the deadline for submission has been extended to Oct. 31, 2020. An approved RPA is the first step to access FEMA reimbursement for eligible costs related to the COVID-19 pandemic. More information is available on the [IDHS Public Assistance Program website](#).



MOBILE EMS SIMULATION LAB AVAILABLE FOR HANDS-ON TRAINING

The IDHS Mobile Simulation Lab is back in action and available to request for training after a brief break in operations due to COVID-19.

The Mobile Simulation Lab is a free educational resource available to EMS and fire personnel across Indiana and is considered one of the most immersive EMS training tools in the state. The repurposed ambulance can simulate high-fidelity EMS simulations that expose students to real-world situations in a safe, learning environment.

The lab has three human patient simulators, with

“HAL” being the main patient simulator. HAL can be used for common EMS invasive procedures and can be customized to fit specific training needs requested. Two other manikins, “Trauma HAL” and “Noelle,” are also available upon request.

If you’re interested in seeing more about what the program offers, check out [this video](#) or visit the [IDHS website](#).

Any department who would like to take advantage of this free training should email esimlab@dhs.in.gov for more information.



↓ ↓

PLEASE **DO NOT** ENTER THIS FACILITY IF YOU SELF-SCREEN POSITIVE FOR ANY OF THESE



FEVER



COUGH



**SHORTNESS
OF BREATH**



**SORE
THROAT**



**HEADACHE/
BODY ACHES**

**OR CONTACT WITH A CONFIRMED OR SUSPECTED
COVID-19 POSITIVE PATIENT WITHIN THE LAST 14 DAYS**

Self-screening means a person should monitor themselves for fever by taking their temperature and remaining alert for respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, body aches, etc). Anyone self-monitoring should be provided a plan for whom to contact if they develop fever or respiratory symptoms during the self-monitoring period to determine whether medical evaluation is needed. They should also consider if they have any close recent contact with anyone who tested positive for COVID-19 in the previous 14 days. If someone screens themselves positive they should not report to work and definitely not enter this facility.



MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE MARSHAL

Hoosier firefighters are extremely busy this time of year with public outreach as heating season is just around the corner and more families are learning more about fire safety.

This week is National Fire Prevention Week, a national recognition of the importance of being fire safe. The theme this year is “Serve Up Fire Safety in the Kitchen,” which is extremely timely given that cooking fires remain the most prevalent cause of all residence fires. Unattended cooking is the leading cause of fires in the kitchen, and scald burns are the second-leading cause of all burns at home.

This holds true in Indiana as well. Among the data submitted to the Indiana State Fire Marshal via the ImageTrend database, 611 cooking fires were reported in Indiana in 2019. The included [data report](#) provides more details about cooking fires across the state.

This is nothing new to firefighters on the truck, who see it all too often. A busy parent walks away from the stove while tending to something else or a child cooking ends with tragic consequences. Four good rules to remember and discuss with kids are:

- Stay focused on the food.
- Put a lid on it.
- Keep cooking areas clear.
- Prevent scalds and burns.

You can find everything you need at GetPrepared.in.gov, but have those discussions now so you're prepared later. If you work in a firehouse, please consider the importance of this Indiana fire data and submit your information to [ImageTrend](#). It is vital as we continue to identify areas of the state to continue public outreach and risk reduction.

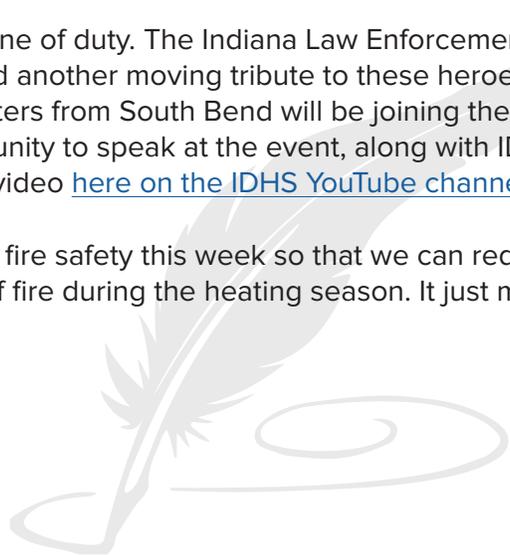
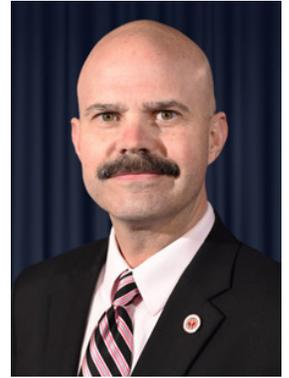
One of the most powerful outreach tools in protecting Hoosiers from home fires is the Indiana State Fire Marshal's [Get Alarmed Program](#), which provides free smoke alarms to needy homes. A working alarm should be placed on every level of a home. In the past year, more than 6,000 alarms have been distributed across Indiana, and installation blitzes are planned with departments in target areas of the state. The [IDHS Residential Fire Fatalities map](#) is critical in tracking those areas with a high need for fire safety education and alarms.

Also, this time of year we remember those firefighters lost in the line of duty. The Indiana Law Enforcement and Firefighters Memorial (at Bicentennial Plaza in Indianapolis) hosted another moving tribute to these heroes. Due to COVID-19, the event was filmed by IDHS staff. Two firefighters from South Bend will be joining the remembrance wall this year, and I was thankful to have an opportunity to speak at the event, along with IDHS Director Steve Cox and Governor Eric Holcomb. You can find the video [here on the IDHS YouTube channel](#).

I encourage all Hoosiers to educate themselves and others about fire safety this week so that we can reduce the number of cooking fires and understand the increased risks of fire during the heating season. It just might save a life one day.



Joel Thacker
Indiana State Fire Marshal



UPCOMING EVENTS

NATIONAL CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH

OBSERVED: OCTOBER 2020

The FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center reported more than 9,500 Hoosiers became victims of a cybersecurity attack during 2019, which resulted in more than \$24 million in total losses. This year's National Cybersecurity Awareness Month theme, "Do Your Part. #BeCyberSmart," encourages individuals and organizations to own their role in protecting their part of cyberspace, stressing personal accountability and the importance of taking proactive steps to enhance cybersecurity.

For more information, visit the [Indiana Cybersecurity Hub](#).

FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

OBSERVED: OCTOBER 4-10, 2020

The National Fire Protection Association sponsors Fire Prevention Week every year to emphasize the importance of fire safety. This year the organization is teaching everyone how to "Serve Up Fire Safety in the Kitchen" by educating everyone about the simple but important actions they can take to keep themselves, and those around them, safe in the kitchen.

Visit the [Fire Prevention Week website](#) for more information about Fire Prevention Week. For fire safety tips, visit [GetPrepared.in.gov](#).

GREAT CENTRAL U.S. SHAKEOUT

OBSERVED: OCTOBER 15, 2020

Indiana is located near two major seismic zones that have the potential to cause significant damage. The Great Central U.S. ShakeOut and Indiana Department of Homeland Security invites Hoosiers on Oct. 15 to Drop, Cover and Hold On in a worldwide earthquake drill. The drill emphasizes the importance of learning about and practicing for earthquake emergencies.

For more information about the Great Central U.S. ShakeOut, visit the [U.S. ShakeOut website](#).

AMERICA'S SAFE SCHOOLS WEEK

OBSERVED: OCTOBER 18-24, 2020

America's Safe Schools Week provides public officials, school organizations and professional organizations the ability to develop and discuss best methods to implement school safety policies. Successes and progress in increased school safety will also be recognized during the week.

Visit the [National School Safety Center's website](#) for more information about Safe Schools Week. For more information about Indiana's school safety measures, visit the [Indiana School Safety Hub](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS

HALLOWEEN

OBSERVED: OCTOBER 31, 2020

On Halloween, children are twice as likely to die from a vehicle accident than any other time of the year. Remind trick-or-treaters and their loved ones about safety precautions that should be followed before they go out for the night.

Visit [GetPrepared.in.gov](https://www.getprepared.in.gov) for more Halloween safety tips, and help raise awareness about a COVID-safe Halloween by sharing information from the [Indiana State Department of Health](https://www.in.gov/health) or the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov).

WINTER WEATHER PREPAREDNESS WEEK

OBSERVED: NOVEMBER 8–14, 2020

Winter weather will arrive soon, and it is important Hoosiers are prepared before the icy cold blasts and precipitation occurs. Encourage community members to check weather updates frequently and share information about the [IDHS County Travel Advisory Map](https://www.in.gov/idhs/county-travel-advisory-map), which can be viewed on the IDHS website or through the mobile app. **It is important for Indiana EMAs to regularly update the county's status to help ensure travel safety.**

Visit [GetPrepared.in.gov](https://www.getprepared.in.gov) to find more information about winter weather safety.

THANKSGIVING AND HOLIDAY DECORATIONS

OBSERVED: NOVEMBER 8–14, 2020

Thanksgiving is the leading day for cooking equipment-related home fires and one of the busiest holidays for traveling. Also, many residential fires occur due to placing holiday decorations too close to heat sources. Decorations are a festive way to celebrate winter holidays, but it is important to remember safety when the decorating begins.

For more Thanksgiving safety tips or holiday decorating safety tips, visit [GetPrepared.in.gov](https://www.getprepared.in.gov).

ALTERNATIVE HEATING

OBSERVED: ALL WINTER SEASON

Alternative heating equipment is responsible for approximately 19 percent of fire-related deaths in the country. Most fires related to these devices are reported during the winter months of December, January and February. Alternative heating sources should be the last option used by an individual, but if they cannot be avoided, caution should be practiced.

Learn more about alternative heating safety at [GetPrepared.in.gov](https://www.getprepared.in.gov).

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



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IDHS Office of Public Affairs at 317.234.6713 or pio@dhs.in.gov*

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