

Commissioner Notes

By James M. Thomas

The focus of this month's DEMHS Advisor is on the five (5) regional Hazardous Material Teams commonly referred to as HAZMAT Teams. As you read the backgrounds from each of the five DEMHS Regional Teams, it is very clear that the communities came together sometime ago in effort to deal with this very difficult and complex issue.

The Region 1 team really got its start in the 1970's. Each one of the regional teams has demonstrated a high degree of commitment, from the top administrators down to each and every technician. You quickly get the true story as you read the descriptions of the five teams. The State of Connecticut also has HAZMAT capabilities in the Department of Environmental Protection, the Department of Public Safety and the Connecticut National Guard Civil Support Team. We hope to highlight the states capabilities in a future edition.

The bottom line is that it is very comforting that in today's difficult time, we as citizens in Connecticut, know that there several HAZMAT Teams at the local, regional and state level, that will respond to handle the situations that pose a great risk of injury to the general public.

We at DEMHS, are pleased to support all of the teams with the federal funding we are able to provide at this time, and hope that we will be able to continue this support for many years to come.

In addition, in this issue are pictures of the water rescue that recently occurred in the Town of Enfield on March 2nd. This incident happened in the Connecticut River, where a female motorist was rescued after her vehicle left the roadway and ended up in the very dangerous waters of the Connecticut River. As indicated in the various news outlets, this was a very lucky driver who was saved because of the training, expertise, and commitment of the Enfield Public Safety Team, who in addition to all of the above had the right equipment to facilitate the quick rescue. Hats off to all of the agencies and personnel involved!!!

Enjoy the April Issue, and Spring is finally here!!

**Vol. 5
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**April 10th
All State Offices
Closed**



Regional Hazardous Material Teams Overview

Region 1

Fairfield County Hazardous Materials Unit

In the early 1970's fire departments in the lower middle section of our county banded together to form the Mid-Fairfield County Foam Unit. Thirty years ago, applying concentrated firefighting foam was the best technique available to control petroleum-type fires and spills. The original charter municipalities of Westport, Wilton, Norwalk and Ridgefield wanted to have enough foam available to fight a major fire or control a major spill. However, the expenses involved in stockpiling significant quantities of foam proved to be an expense none of the municipalities were willing or capable of shouldering on their own. Organizing members from the original four member fire departments (Westport, Wilton, Ridgefield, and Norwalk) found that pooling their resources would allow them to create a foam response unit that would be big enough to handle potential problem incidents without wasteful replication of inventory.

By the early 1980's there were 8 towns working together as part of the foam unit, they were: Westport, Norwalk, Fairfield, Ridgefield, Wilton, Stratford, Weston, and Darien. In 1984 the City of Norwalk loaned the team its first Haz Mat vehicle which was a surplus rescue unit that replaced the original foam transport vehicle which was an old pumper that was donated to the unit by Wilton Fire. For the next five years the old rescue unit serving as a haz-mat unit responded the needs of the member towns. During this period in our history no funding from any of the towns were allocated to fund the unit. Equipment was fire department surplus equipment and personnel worked the unit as a labor of love. In the late 1980's, tightening federal regulations changed the way hazardous materials were handled. Both the end users and shippers were required to inform the public about hazardous materials within the community, and significant impetus was placed on emergency response planning, and on training and competency requirements for agencies responding to haz-mat incidents.

Due to the changes in the way hazardous materials was regulated, these newly promulgated regulations and standards forced a change in the fire service and specifically changed the direction of the eight member towns and their mission as the Mid-Fairfield County Foam Unit. The name was changed but the faces remained the same. In May of 1991 the Mid-Fairfield County Hazardous Materials Unit was formed and its new vehicle dedicated. This vehicle a renovated 1972 vintage soda delivery truck donated by the Pepsi-Cola Corporation was ushered into service. The "Unit" as the team was known by its members responded to the new challenges of haz-mat response. The "Unit" met numerous new OSHA and NFPA challenges in a fast changing industry. The "Unit" members had every one of its members become certified NFPA Haz-Mat Technicians attending training that exceeded OSHA haz-mat training by 75 contact hours. The "Unit" members also attended training throughout the country at specialty schools such as Texas AM, Safety Systems of Florida, and the American Association of Railroads in Colorado to learn cutting edge procedures and skills in the rapidly changing industry.

As the team evolved a satellite paging service was provided to members in order to secure their response to emergencies, while the on-duty technician members of the Westport Fire Department transported HM 1 to the incident scene. As the organization evolved, a stream of funding was put into place with each member agency budgeting \$1250.00 yearly to support the "Unit". Additionally each member department provided a minimum of two certified technicians whose salaries and overtime costs were covered by their respective departments.

Also during this period the "Unit" began billing for services rendered at an industry rate for vehicles, labor and materials expended. This billing provided a revenue stream to support the "Units" expenses, future equipment and vehicle acquisitions.

Jump ahead to the present day; the "Unit" has in excess of 75 certified Hazardous Materials Technicians from the 14 Town/Cities that comprise DEMHS Region 1 in addition to the Town of Ridgefield. We are an active organization whose commitment to public safety is widely acknowledged and which serves as a model for all other regions of the state. The technician members meet monthly dedicating many hours to ongoing training, and whose department Fire Chiefs meet every three months to oversee the organization's administration and its future endeavors.



Cost recovery and financing is a major focus of the Chief's along with the utilization of domestic preparedness funding and a \$3000.00 per year annual assessment to each participating municipality. What makes this all work is the regional approach, leveraging economies of scale to lessen the cost of operation, a concept that is generally foreign to Connecticut which is a home rule state.

Also the "Unit" has been very fortunate in the grant funding area. We have received our fair share of Federal funding through Connecticut DEMHS. This funding has contributed to the receipt of a Decontamination Trailer and its "Prime Mover" tow vehicle, in addition to a replacement response vehicle which retired the second generation HM 1 which was donated to the "Unit" by the Coca-Cola Bottling Company.

In late December of 2007 the "Unit" took delivery of a new Communications Command and Control vehicle which will serve the entire 15 town region. This vehicle will provide a mobile communications, command and control presence for emergencies and events of all types for the entire region. The vehicles cost was in excess of \$600,000 and was funded with both DEMHS grant monies and "Unit" funds. Again we hope that we will be setting the bar for all the other regions with this specialty vehicle.

For further information you may contact Chief Christopher G. Ackley Chairman, Fairfield County Hazardous Materials Unit c/o Westport Fire Department 515 Post Road East Westport, Ct. 06880 203-341-5000.

Or at: cackley@westportct.gov

Region 2

New Haven Area Special Hazards Team



In the summer of 2001 several area fire chiefs met in the New Haven Fire Department Chief's office and opened discussions on creating a special hazards team to address issues of hazardous materials and WMD. These discussions took on new urgency after 9/11 and it became clear that this was a necessity. Over the next several months the group looked at the best way to organize. The South Central Council of Governments (COG) voted in 2002 to authorize the fire chiefs from the 15 communities that made up the COG, to move forward with the concept and develop a plan.

The ultimate by-laws that were adapted organized the 15 communities into 4 geographic divisions. Each Division was organized around a fire department with an existing hazardous materials capability. The Divisions were "SOUTH" New Haven Fire, "NORTH" Wallingford and Cytex Fire, "EAST" Guilford Fire, and "WEST" Milford Fire. Other communities joined these core towns by providing personnel and assistance. This system slowly took shape and as equipment began to arrive in the region it was assigned to one of the Divisions. Each Division has a DECON Trailer assigned to a community in that Division and Level A capabilities.

This arrangement is a mutual aid system designed to bring assistance to any community in the event of a hazardous materials incident or terrorist event. Each Division can be deployed to help a community when the event exceeds that community's ability to handle the emergency with its own resources. The response is not intended to replace the routine request made to the Department of Environmental Protection for assistance in the cleanup of hazardous materials, but was intended to assist in those rare potentially catastrophic events that require immediate stabilization.

Early in 2006 the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security adapted new regions dividing the State into 5 regions. The Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security also indicated that it wished to recognize 5 regional hazardous materials teams including NHASH in Region 2. In January of 2006 the South Central Council of Government Board of Directors was advised of this change. The NHASH Board of directors voted in February 2006 to include all the communities located in DEMHS Region 2 as part of NHASH if they choose to participate. The Derby Fire Department has recently join NHASH as the "Valley" Division.



Additional information can be obtained from Chief Peter Struble, Wallingford Fire Department 203-294-2730 or peter.struble@snet.net

Region 3**Capitol Region Hazardous Materials Response Team**

The Capitol Region Hazardous Materials Response Team (CRHMRT) was established November 19, 2001 as Emergency Support Function 10 (ESF-10) of the Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee (CREPC). The Capitol Region Council (CROG) of Governments formed CREPC to address the planning and preparedness needs of the member communities as a result to the tragedy of September 11, 2001. The CRHMRT covers all 41 communities that comprise DEMHS Region 3. The team is made up of 5 response units that cover 960 square miles with a population of approximately 1.3 million people. The response units are located at the West Hartford Fire Department, Simsbury Fire Department and Harford Police Department in the west side of the Connecticut River and at the East Hartford Fire Department and Ellington Fire Department on the east side of the river. Personnel on the team number 60 and represent the Fire Service, Law Enforcement, Emergency Medical Services and private industry from within Region 3. The CRHMRT has a FEMA Type I capability with an Explosive Ordinance Disposal component provided by the Hartford Police Department Bomb Squad. Dispatch of the team is provided by the Regional Integrated Coordination System through Central Connecticut State University Public Safety.

**Upcoming Training & Exercise**

- Apr 1-2 Public Information in a WMD/Terrorism Incident—Bridgeport
- Apr 6-8 Identity Theft Investigations (IDTI) - POSTC
- Apr 7-9 Instructor Development Workshop—Brainard
- Apr 14-16 Public Works Planning For & Responding: WMD Incidents— New Haven
- Apr 17-18 Shelter Full Scale Exercise—Middletown
- Apr 20-24 Digital Photography for Law Enforcement—POSTC
- Apr 20 UCONN/DHD Collaborative Leadership Training—Middletown (thru UCONN only)
- Apr 21 Special Legal Issues—POSTC
- Apr 30 WebEOC Training—Brainard, Hartford
- Jun 2 EMD Conference—SCSU

For training & exercise questions contact the Training Unit at 860-256-0840.
 Fax: 860-706-5539 or email: Training.demhs@ct.gov

You may register for these courses as listed at: www.ct.gov/demhs; or through POSTC at www.ct.gov/post; or through the CT Fire Academy (CFA) at www.ct.gov/cfa.

Region 4

Connecticut Eastern Regional Response Integrated Team

The Connecticut Eastern Regional Response Integrated Team or CERRIT is the ESF-10 Hazardous Materials / WMD Response team for CT-DEMHS Region 4 which encompasses most of Eastern Connecticut. The initial discussions regarding the formation of the present team was initiated by Chief Walsh (Ret.) of the Norwich Fire Department in 2001 in discussion with other Fire Chiefs in the New London County Area. Until the formation of the CERRIT Team our area relied primarily on the U.S. Submarine Base Fire Department and the CT-DEP for technician level response in Southeastern Connecticut. There were concerns as how we may assist the technician level response from the SUB-ASE Fire Department and how we would respond if those resources were not available at a time of an incident, whether accidental or deliberate.

As discussions with interested participants were engaged by Chief Walsh's ad-hoc committee it became apparent that a need for assistance to ensure proper preparation for incidents involving WMD / Hazardous materials was necessary and welcomed by the areas responders. A multi-jurisdictional, multi-agency team was proposed. After a series of SWOT's analysis's by the parties involved and with the endorsement of CT-DEMHS and the New London County Fire Chief's Association the CERRIT was formed and stood up in mid 2002. The team consists of public, private and tribal fire departments, law enforcement agencies, state agencies and resources, local and regional health departments and private industry representatives.



Response to incidents involving Hazardous Materials or WMD are initiated by the on-scene commander or by other responding agencies request. The activation of the team is through the local Incident Commander and may involve a tiered response to assemble the necessary resources to assist with the mitigation of the hazard. The primary responding technician level agencies in Region 4 include The SUBASE Fire Department, the Mashantucket and Mohegan Tribal Fire Departments, Norwich, Mystic, New London, Muddy Brook, Willimantic and UCONN-Storrs Fire Departments. Additionally Private agencies such as Pfizer and Electric Boat Fire Departments are responders in the tiered response. Other supporting agencies include Mohegan Tribal Health Department, Uncas Health Department and CONN-OSHA. Many other fire department based and public/private industry resources are available for additional technician and operational level support and assistance. The CERRIT Team has become a well equipped, well trained response team largely through the efforts of the individual departments and with funding for training and equipment by CT-DEMHS and Region 4. The team now deploys multiple trailers with towing vehicles, and several self-contained Hazardous Material response units throughout the region, all funded and equipped by CT-DEMHS, to provide a fully functioning Performance Class 3-4 Response Team. To date the combined team members have trained and can deploy in excess of 100, 40 Hour EPA and/or NFPA 472 technicians if the need is present. The CERRIT team conducts monthly in-service training and conducts quarterly training exercises to enhance team effectiveness and skills. The CERRIT has participated in numerous regional exercises and was very heavily involved in TOPOFF3, an international exercise which was hosted in New London in 2005.



The CERRIT meets monthly on the 3rd Tuesday, 10:00 am @ Mohegan Tribal Public Safety and is Chaired by Chief Frank 'Fritz' Hilbert of the Mystic Fire Department and Co-Chair by Chief Kenneth Scandariato of the Norwich Fire Department.

Region 5

Northwest Regional Hazardous Material Response Team



Approximately six years ago the Fire Chiefs from Danbury, Naugatuck, Torrington, and Waterbury began to discuss the joining of resources to formulate a regional response to hazardous material incident. Numerous discussions and meetings were held to extend the idea to other fire chiefs within the area covered by the four departments.

In 2003 a discussion of regionalization initiated the formulation of a Regional Response Team for Hazardous Material Incidents. It was decided that the four Regional Planning Organizations within Region #5, representing 43 communities, would appoint two people to an Advisory Board to oversee the development of a Hazardous Material Response Team. Complying with organizational by-laws the Advisory Board is responsible for Administration duties for the Team.

Region #5 has been divided into three (3) operational divisions. Each operational division is identified in collation with the three (3) largest cities within the Region; Danbury, Torrington, and Waterbury. Each of these cities had existing hazardous material response capabilities and resources providing a base for the regional response. With the assistance of Homeland Security funding the Regional Team has supplied each of these divisions with response equipment providing two Type II caches and one Type I cache. Danbury currently maintains a beverage style vehicle with a full compliment of Type I equipment. Torrington and Waterbury currently maintain a large pick-up truck and trailer containing a full compliment of Type II equipment. Each division is prepared to respond immediately with full-time staff to initiate a response.

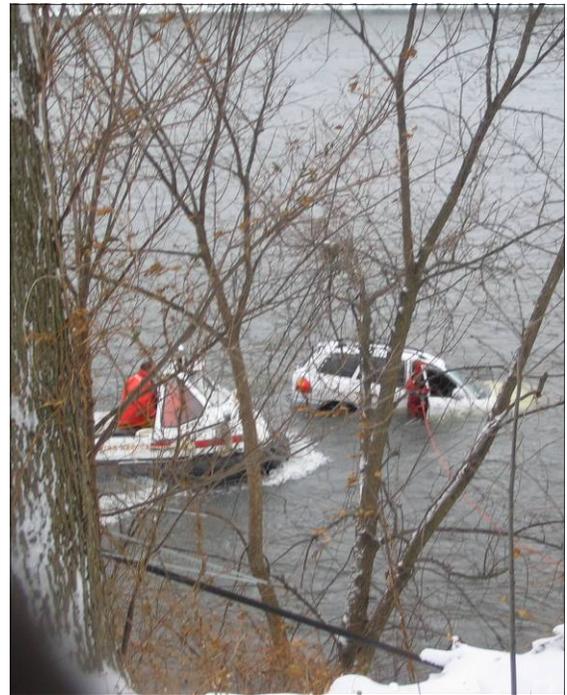
The Northwest Regional Hazardous Material Response Team is dispatched by notification to anyone of the three (3) division dispatch centers. As the membership increases it will be necessary to identify a central dispatch point for the Team. Upon activation of the Team a "Front Team" will be dispatched immediately to assess the situation and then activate additional resources from the other divisions if necessary.

Within the last month the Advisory Board, with the assistance of Homeland Security, has hired a consultant to assist with future progress. The main goal will be to market the Response Team and recruit additional members from other communities. The marketing effort will also include recruiting the involvement of additional communities who would like to request our response.

The Northwest Regional Hazardous Material Response Team continues to grow and looks forward to working with all 43 communities within their Region to provide an effective and adequate response to hazardous material releases.



Enfield River Rescue—March 2, 2009



Pictures courtesy of
Chief Ed Richards

Integrated Emergency Management Course

The Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) and the Emergency Management Institute hosted an Integrated Emergency Management Course (IEMC) on March 17, 18, and 19, which focused on response to a major event involving the State of Connecticut and improving our state's ability to manage the incident and successfully coordinate an all-hazards response.

The IEMC used existing resources, communications, and information technology within the State Emergency Operations Center. State emergency management disciplines as well as other partner agencies benefited from instruction given by national experts coupled with a reinforcing table top and functional exercise. The tailored exercise was designed in coordination with our State and attempted to replicate the realistic challenges that stimulate our State and Federal decision-making process and introduce long term solutions to resolve those challenges to benefit a more effective, integrated and collaborative response.

Class instruction addressed the latest updates to the National Response Framework (NRF), the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and emergency planning guidance. Other instruction addressed the key topical areas such as State Hazards, Situational Analysis, Common Operating Picture, the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) and the procedures and protocols for supplying and acquiring NIMS-typed resources.



The Campus CERT Train-the-Trainer course was held from March 24-27, 2009 at Western Connecticut State University located in Danbury Connecticut. The Campus Community Emergency Response Team Train the Trainer Program (C-CERT) was developed



specifically for college campuses for all hazards including natural disasters and terrorist attacks involving Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). Citizen preparedness for the college community was also discussed.

Participants of the three day course included personnel from Western Connecticut State University, Eastern University, Central Connecticut State University, Sacred Heart University, Wesleyan University, and Goodwin College as well as out of state participants from Pace University, SUNY- Stony brook, Mount Wachusett Community College, University of Rhode Island, University of New Hampshire, Radford College of Virginia, University of Wisconsin, Simmons College, and Howard University. Representatives of the police departments from Haverhill MA, Greenburg NY, Danbury CT, Southbury State Police and the New York National Guard also attended. The participants shared their emergency management and preparedness experiences with their peers and expanded their knowledge of C-CERT.

Michigan State University has the grant for the program and provided instructors and materials for the Campus CERT TtT course. The instructors travel throughout the country and present to only six universities per year, thus it was an honor to have the course in Connecticut.

ARCHDIOCESE OF HARTFORD

INAUGURAL BLUE MASS

Cathedral of Saint Joseph
Hartford

Sunday, May 17, 2009

11 A.M. Mass

The Most Reverend Henry J. Mansell
Archbishop of Hartford
Main Celebrant

Staging 10 A.M.
Formation/Procession 10:30 A.M.
Celebration of Mass 11:00 A.M.

All police, fire, and
safety personnel are invited.
Dress uniform preferred.

Please note: No apparatus

