

THE MAGAZINE FOR BEST SAFETY, HEALTH AND LOSS CONTROL PRACTICES

compliancemag.com

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2004

Compliance Magazine™

2005

Safety

Equipment

Buyers'

Guide

Safety Industry Forecasts,
Page 8
Reader Operations Survey Results,
Page 18

EXCLUSIVE! Two Ways to Gain CE Credits

CIH Continuing
Education
Article.
See page 12.

CSP Continuing
Education
Quiz.
See page 50.

Beefing Up Your Emergency Response Training

By Betty Hintch

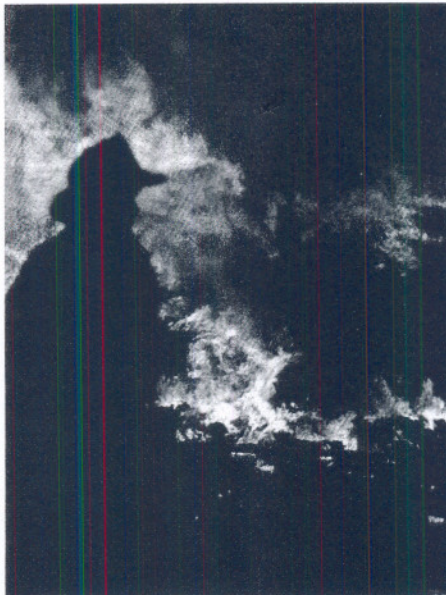
Replicating your current safety training programs won't do for emergency responder training.

More organizations are investing in emergency response programs, whether they are intended to protect employees and the facility from a terrorist attack, accident or natural disaster. The annual "Compliance Magazine Reader Operations Survey" (see page 18 of this issue for a full report) found that almost two-thirds of respondents work for companies that have increased activity in homeland protection programs. Eighty percent plan to increase emergency response planning, while 47 percent are paying more attention to their hazardous materials security and storage. In addition, almost 70 percent of respondents said that their additional budget dollars would be spent on training programs and resources. All factors point to more organizations looking to beef up homeland protection programs and the training to go along with them.

Jess Kraus, founder, 3E Co., and president, 3E Solutions, Carlsbad, Calif., reminds employers that there are different types of first responders at the public and private levels. "Training for first responders should be thought of in terms of two communities: local agencies and the private sector. Most of the federal money has flowed to state agencies. We work with 7,000 customers, and those in the private sector are responding to those emergencies themselves. In many cases, the government sector comes in when the disaster is already a done deal, so the private sector needs to take the lead on their own prevention efforts."

A Different Animal

The demands of the emergency responder's responsibilities are different than other safety operations. "Emergency responders encounter risks that are radically different from that of a lineman or machinist," says Blair Maury, manager, government and key account sales, Coastal Training Technologies Corp., Virginia Beach, Va. "Much of their work is some-



All facilities must assess their risk for adverse incidents and then train emergency responders accordingly.

what sedentary, because they spend a lot of time waiting for something to happen, but when they are called upon the response must be quick and decisive. For example, a police officer may be driving a beat, and then suddenly has to engage in a high-speed chase." This type of irregular intense physical activity places significant strain on the back and other areas of the body.

The stress levels are also different, Maury explains. "Emergency responders go from almost no stress level while waiting for an incident to occur to extremely high stress levels, which can take its toll."

Scott Wallace, production manager, Summit Training Source Inc., Grand Rapids, Mich., says, "Emergency response training does require a slightly different approach. With traditional employee training you are creating hazard awareness and promoting a positive safety culture. First responders have a critical set of responsibilities and procedures that differ from preventive responsibilities and procedures. The actions taken by the first responder have a significant impact on the outcome of the accident or incident. Responders need to recognize and understand various potential hazards, regulations, reporting responsibilities, and know how to respond to a variety of scenarios."

Training Formats

"Training should be both instructional and situational," Wallace says. "Hands-on training should correspond with classroom or individual learning. Emergency responders should be able to apply what they learn in the classroom to a variety of circumstances that can be practiced in the field. The first time emergency personnel respond to an incident should not be the first time they actually perform the required tasks, but should be an extension of their training."

Jeffrey Starr, VP of marketing for 3E Co., agrees, saying, "First responder training should use a combination of delivery methods, one of which is actually going through the facility with employees and reviewing hazards and responses. Although hands-on training is critical, it can be combined with online training and classroom training."

Starr also points out that a one-size-fits-all approach will not work with first responder training. "One of the challenges is that training for emergency responders must be customized, and organizational needs vary widely based on what chemicals are being stored. The way to get your arms around customizing training is to have a good grasp of chemical and other hazardous material inventory and to perform a hazard assessment. Then, a highly customized training program can be created."

Three Key Components

3E recommends that emergency responder training include three components:

1. **Assessment.** All risks and processes should be reviewed.
2. **Integration.** Training must be integrated with other systems, and it must emphasize the elements that are unique to the particular site.
3. **Prevention.** Ideally, a first responder will never have to respond to an emergency. To accomplish this goal, hazardous materials must be monitored, tracked and under lock and key. **CM**

Betty Hintch is the editor of Compliance Magazine.

© Photodisc