TNEC Training Helps Prepare Lowell Firefighters

Along with their protective helmets, gas masks, and heavy, flameproof coats, Lowell firefighters come armed with training experience beyond the prescribed regimen.

In the past two years, The New England Consortium (TNEC) has provided an eight-hour Emergency Response Refresher course to each Lowell firefighter.

"This training helps firefighters know more about what they may face outside their normal response area," says TNEC Training Manager Wayne Sanborn.

This year, the course focuses on transportation: rail and over-the-road trucks.

At the training session, firefighters are taught how to identify different trucks and rail cars, and determine which chemicals and hazards are likely to be inside. "Recognition and identification helps to classify hazardous chemicals, which is essential to the mitigation process," says Jimmy Smith, a Trainer with TNEC.

Recognizing and identifying played a crucial role in the rail tanker spill on May 31st in Lowell. The Lowell Fire Department responded to a rail car leaking hydrochloric acid near Lawrence Street. Trained fire department personnel responded immediately, and the situation was soon under control.

TNEC has planned 16 different training sessions, so that every one of Lowell's 160 firefighters can attend at a time when they are not scheduled to be the first or second responders. Only a few times has the training room emptied as the firefighters all raced off to a call.

The firefighter training was planned by Lieutenant John Dowling, hazardous materials coordinator for the Fire Prevention Bureau; retired firefighter Mark Boldrighini of Lowell's Local Emergency Planning Committee; Jimmy Smith and Paul Smith, both TNEC Trainers and seasoned firefighters, and TNEC Training Manager Wayne Sanborn.

After Sept. 11, Reassessing Safety and Security at Chemical Sites

The threat of terrorism has forced American institutions to reconsider their vulnerability, and facilities where chemicals are stored and processed must now determine how their own contents could be used against them. The accident prevention strategy of the pre-Sept. 11 world is no longer satisfactory.

To address new worries, the Safe Hometowns Initiative has published The Safe Hometowns Guide, a handbook that tells communities how to limit the danger posed by hazardous chemicals stored and used locally. The guide has a step-by-step checklist that will help communities identify vulnerable facilities, organize assessments of hazardous materials used at facilities and make recommendations on safer material and process alternatives.

The Safe Hometowns Initiative was launched in response to the continuing threat of a terrorist attack on chemical sites around the country. The goal of the Initiative is to make communities safer through public involvement in decisions about chemical site security. The Safe Hometowns Initiative encourages government and industry to protect American communities from the risk
Many lives in the community are at risk from accidental or intentional chemical releases.

of a catastrophic chemical release—whether accident or terrorist act—by putting prevention first. This means requiring facilities that use extremely hazardous chemicals to consider inherently safer technologies, those that use cleaner or fewer chemicals, safer pressures, temperatures, or other conditions without transferring risks between workers and communities. Each facility should also tighten security and design a formal accident response and mitigation system. Beyond these facilities, community residents should be informed what the hazards are, and should be encouraged to contribute to public safety decisions.

The Blue Plains Sewage Treatment Plant in Washington, DC—located across the Potomac River from the Pentagon—was one of the first places after the terrorist attacks to respond by reducing chemical hazards. The facility had ten rail cars full of liquid chlorine onsite before the attacks, only one of which could release enough toxic gas to kill thousands of people in the capital within minutes. Under cover of darkness, facility workers quietly removed the tank cars, and the facility shifted to safer materials. While the facility had plans to convert to safer materials over a three-year period, the changeover took just ten weeks with the new urgency posed by terrorism. The switch also raises a fundamental question that every community should now be asking: why are local facilities stockpiling chemicals of mass destruction if safer alternatives are readily available?

Ultimately, effective public policy and strict enforcement will be necessary using safer materials, reducing storage volumes, adding barriers and relocating nearest neighbors to eliminate major community vulnerability.

professional, and equipment losses in many Worker Education Training Program (WETTP) awardee organizations, and highlighted the important role that a number of the groups played at Ground Zero. He felt the topic was particularly relevant on the same day we commemorate Workers’ Memorial Day. Many workers and organizations made supreme sacrifices, and without their involvement losses there would have been far greater.

The scale of the September 11 events proved to be larger and more multi-faceted than almost any incident responders have faced anywhere. It involved multiple threats: plane crashes, terrorist activity, fire, and collapsing buildings. Coolant system chemicals, asbestos, particulate matter, and engine fuels were among the myriad toxic chemicals released and encountered by workers. Personal protective equipment often was inadequate in protecting workers from the hazards they faced in such long periods of continuous use. It’s clear that HAZMAT response requires an entirely new set of protective equipment and procedures. Many emergency response systems failed because of the loss of team leaders in the line of duty. Health and Safety advocates and practitioners must conduct a reassessment of emergency response. The high degree of crossover between the roles of responders and rescuers was an obvious problem, and many workers lacked sufficient training for their roles that day. Due to the massive levels of destruction and death, traumatic stress levels were very high. Organizations like TNEC must look at ways to address the crisis incident management implications for workers.

Many advisory board members felt that TNEC needs to do more education at the community level. One recommendation was that we take a broader approach, such as a “model communities” strategy. A recent proposal is the “Safe Hometowns” initiative: the challenge of looking at community chemical targets and the political response to reducing them and better protecting them. How can TNEC raise more public awareness?

A proactive model for dealing with all of these issues is critical.

TNEC Advisory Board Discusses Post-Sept. 11 Role

On May 1, 2002, the TNEC Advisory Board held its spring meeting, which included a special discussion of what TNEC’s role could or should be in the aftermath of September 11, and how those terrible events impact the ways we view worker and community health and safety training and advocacy.

Project manager Paul Morse, training manager Wayne Sanborn, and principal investigator Dr. Craig Slatin had just returned from the NIEHS Business Meeting and Technical Workshop held in Nashville, Tennessee, a conference on disaster preparedness and weapons of mass destruction. Mr. Morse reported some of the statistics on the personal,
Chip Hughes Receives DHHS Secretary’s Award for Heroism

Chip Hughes, director of the Worker Education and Training Program in DERT, received the Department of Health and Human Services Secretary's Recognition Award for Heroism, Exceptional/Volunteer Service on Nov. 14 in New York City. He was the only representative of NIH to receive the honor.

Hughes said he was “blown away” when he was notified he would receive the award for what he described as “just doing my job.”

The award cites Hughes’ dedicated support of the health and safety of emergency responders and remediation workers at the site of the World Trade Center disaster. Immediately after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks that destroyed World Trade Center buildings, Hughes began mobilizing program resources to provide whatever assistance was necessary to make sure the safety and health of the workforce remained a high priority, according to the written justification for the award.

Like millions of Americans across the country, Hughes watched on television as rescuers and other emergency responders entered the site wearing only paper dust masks. Hughes said he knew he had to act quickly to provide the proper protective gear. He managed to get 300 respirators to the scene very quickly and initiated action to begin monitoring air quality in the area. He quickly diverted $440,000 to support NIEHS-funded programs at the site. Hughes also arranged to have an environmental health expert on site to coordinate occupational issues, and has arranged to have the program web site enhanced to disseminate information about environmental health consequences.

“In summary, Mr. Hughes has worked tirelessly with dedication and perseverance to make sure the workers at the WTC site receive such attention to their health and safety as possible during a time of national crisis,” the written justification for the award said.

New York City lost 54 of its 87 hazmat technicians in the tragedy. It takes about 10 years to reach that level of certification and training, Hughes said. The chief of the New York City Fire Department hazardous materials section - killed when the buildings began collapsing - was instrumental in the formation of the worker training program at NIEHS, he said.

But don’t expect Hughes to slow down anytime soon. Three thousand people just started a month-long training course for people who will be assigned to work in shifts around the clock at the World Trade Center site.

Dianne McAllister joined TNEC in July as the new Project Administrator. Prior to coming to TNEC, McAllister worked for several years at the Peabody Council on Aging, the U.S. Army Research & Development Center, and at North Shore Elder Services in Danvers. She is currently working on a degree in Graphic Design at Middlesex Community College. She lives in Wilmington, Massachusetts and enjoys photography, traveling and bowling.
Networking, beaches, World Cup soccer fever, and Bahian culture. That's what 15 UMass Lowell researchers and health educators, including a TNEC representative, were treated to at a conference held in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, June 17-20. Entitled "The Second Conference on Occupational and Environmental Health: Integration of the Americas," the meeting was held at the Bahian Medical Association, and organized by several UMass Lowell researchers and their Brazilian counterparts at the Federal University of Bahia and other institutions. (The first conference in the series took place in Morelia, Mexico in 2000.) 200 public health advocates from across the Americas participated. The purpose of the conference was to share ideas and experiences while building a network of health professionals, union activists, and non-governmental organizations—an "Observatory of the Americas." This group will help reorient the neo-liberal policies that have exacerbated economic inequality and compromised work environments, public health, and the ecology in the Americas. Workshop topics included: the banning of asbestos; catastrophic industrial accidents; benzene exposures; child and adolescent labor; agricultural work, agrarian reform and worker health; privatization of workers' compensation; and clean production.

UMass trainer and special projects coordinator Tom Estabrook was one of the lucky conference participants. Estabrook gave a presentation on hazardous waste policy in the U.S. at a well-attended session entitled "From Hazardous Waste to Clean Production."

UMass representatives went on field trips to a flour plant, a marketplace, an oil refinery and a pigment production facility. As a bonus, a chemical and oil workers union representative gave a personal drive-around tour of the massive Camacari petrochemical complex, made up of 45 transnational and Brazilian production facilities, located one hour north of Salvador. During their off-hours, participants took in the sights of the 350-year-old city of Salvador, its beaches, music and dance, as well as the World Cup soccer mania cheering the Brazilian team toward another world championship. All in all, the conference and visit were a great success for learning and networking. Participants enthusiastically endorsed the proposal to hold a third conference, in 2004, in Venezuela.
Mazzocchi Honored at Workers’ Memorial Day

At the Workers’ Memorial Day awards ceremony on May 1, the most powerful presence in the room was the person not there—Anthony Mazzocchi, union leader, political organizer and crusader for the health and safety of workers.

Mazzocchi was unable to attend the event because of ill health, but many friends and former associates came to honor him and reminisce about his 50 years of activism and achievement.

Assoc. Prof. Raphael Moure-Eraso of the Work Environment Department was visibly moved as he read the citation, having worked closely with Mazzocchi when he was an officer of the Oil Chemical and Atomic Workers union and Moure-Eraso was the union’s industrial hygienist.

This is the 14th year in which the University has presented awards to mark Workers’ Memorial Day, which was instituted nationally in 1989 by the AFL-CIO to remember the toll in life and health taken by work.

UMass Lowell ordinarily presents two awards on this occasion, but this year the selection committee, headed by Moure-Eraso and Asst. Prof. Craig Slatin of Health and Clinical Sciences, decided to present the Award for Public Health in the Work Environment only to Mazzocchi.

Mazzocchi was an architect of the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970. He helped get the act passed and then filed the first complaint under the new law. He also formed alliances with scientists to expose the unrecognized dangers of chemicals on the shop floor, and recruited occupational medicine students to work as interns at his union—an effort that helped influence union practices in support of workers.

One of Mazzocchi’s more innovative strategies has been to promote a “Just Transition” for workers displaced by the changeover to a less toxic economy. His latest commitment is to building the Labor Party because, he believes, “movement building is the most important thing,” and the existing dominant political parties “are too responsive, mostly, to the corporate agenda.”

This year 122 Massachusetts workers died as a result of a workplace injury or illness in 2001. Among them are 15 flight attendants, four pilots and 45 workers on job assignments who were traveling on American Airlines flight 11 and United Airlines flight 175. Those planes left Boston on September 11 and crashed into the World Trade Center.

The September 11th terrorist attacks claimed the lives of more than 3,000 people nationwide, most of whom were on the job when the attacks occurred, including those who died trying to rescue the original victims. Several weeks later, workers were victims of deadly anthrax sent through the mail. These circumstances have placed a new set of health and safety issues front and center at the same time that long recognized hazards continue to take their toll.

Catherine Callahan

Catherine Callahan, TNEC’s Project Administrator, passed away in late April after a brief illness. She was 62. Cathy was an essential part of the TNEC team. She was a great co-worker and friend and all of us at The New England Consortium will miss her greatly.
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enforcement, management, and emergency response services.

8-Hour Emergency Response: Awareness Training

CEU=8

The purpose of this course is to discuss the training requirements for the handling, storage, and transportation of hazardous materials. The course is designed to provide a comprehensive overview for workers who may be exposed to hazardous materials.

8-Hour Hazardous Waste Site Supervisor Training (Pre-requisite required)

CEU=8

- The course covers the hazards and controls associated with hazardous waste management.
- It includes an overview of the legal requirements for hazardous waste handling.
- The course is designed for supervisors who have the responsibility to manage hazardous waste.

8-Hour Hazardous Waste Site Worker Refresher Training (Pre-requisite required)

CEU=2.4

- The course focuses on recognizing and responding to hazardous waste incidents.
- It includes hands-on training in waste handling and disposal.
- The course is designed for workers who have the responsibility to manage hazardous waste.

40-Hour Hazardous Waste Site Worker Basic Health and Safety Training

CEU=4

- The course covers basic health and safety guidelines for hazardous waste sites.
- It includes training in personal protective equipment and emergency response procedures.
- The course is designed for workers who have the responsibility to manage hazardous waste.

Register for a course.

Courses are delivered at NEC Training Center at UMMS Lowell or at a company's site anywhere in New England. Contact NEC at 978.324.3257 for more information.
### TNEC 2003 Open Enrollment Training Calendar

University of Massachusetts Lowell, One University Avenue, Falmouth 202, Lowell, MA 01854


www.uml.edu/tnecc email: tnecc@uml.edu

All TNEC trainings are held at the TNEC Training Center, Wannalancit Mills, 600 Suffolk Street, 5th floor, Lowell, MA, unless otherwise stated.

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* This course will be offered in Manchester, NH.
** This course focuses on Emergency Medical Technicians.