

THE HOOSIER RESPONDER

AUGUST 2020

Drone's-Eye
View

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- Academy Awards Training Grants
- EMAs Share 'Best Practices' for Managing COVID-19
- New State Exercise Officer
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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

How an agency deals with a crisis can tell you a lot about its makeup. This pandemic certainly has displayed the various ways IDHS supports Indiana's public safety community and all Hoosiers.



The State Emergency Operations Center is approaching 140 operational periods completed since the pandemic began, and the level of coordination, participation and support for the State Department of Health in this response has been impressive. From shipments of protective equipment and medical supplies to food and storage facilities, the SEOC has worked hard to fulfill these missions and keep the response flowing. Many of these folks are taken away from their normal duties at the agency, yet we continue to provide the essential services expected from IDHS. It's been a fantastic effort all around, and we must continue to push forward.

The Recovery and Response Section staff has been hard at work helping counties prepare their reimbursement requests to FEMA's Public Assistance Grant Program. This program helps local, county and tribal entities recover costs associated with declared disasters, in this case the COVID-19 pandemic. So far more than 1,100 requests have been submitted by government entities and schools in Indiana, second only to Illinois among FEMA Region 5 states. All told, this could return millions of dollars to the local level. These funds will be essential to Hoosiers receiving the same services and support on which they rely. IDHS staff is well-versed in these processes and are extremely helpful in walking officials through the FEMA system. [The application deadline has been extended to Aug. 31](#), so government agencies, schools and other local entities still have time to apply for 75 percent reimbursement for qualifying COVID-19 expenses.

Predictive models are showing Indiana can expect a COVID-19 surge around November, right in the heart of flu season. Because first responders represent the core of the front-line force, it's imperative for fire, police, EMS and EMA staff to get vaccinated for the flu in the coming months. Indiana will need every advantage possible to avoid a bottleneck in our health care system and to be able to focus primarily on the pandemic. All the immense work and planning that took place in the early stages of this crisis now has us better prepared in our health facilities and hospitals, social services, schools and other focus areas. However, we can still gain ground by having the public safety community supporting mass vaccination efforts in their communities. Every little bit helps.

News of the pandemic in Indiana (and in other states where things are exponentially worse) can be distressing, but I'm confident in our state leadership to put public safety first as Indiana fights back. I'm also impressed by the personal responsibility being shown by Hoosiers across the state during the current mask mandate. IDHS and the public have a long history of supporting first responders and understanding their true value to our health and safety as a state. Now is not the time to waver; we're all in this together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Cox'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light gray decorative graphic that resembles a stylized feather or leaf.

Steve Cox
Executive Director



ACADEMY UPDATE

The Indiana Fire and Public Safety Academy has partnered with the Town of Plainfield on a capital project that will provide essential training and office space to allow the Academy to better serve the public safety community.

The Made@Plainfield project will provide 100,000 square feet of classroom, labs and flexible training spaces for the Plainfield Community School Corporation and a host of state partners, including the Indiana Department of Homeland Security. The mixed-use facility will be located just north of Plainfield High School on Reeves Road (near I-70 and the Indianapolis International Airport).

“The Town of Plainfield is already home to the Indiana Law Enforcement Academy, and partnering with the Indiana Department of Homeland Security to offer additional public safety training seemed like a natural

fit,” said Andrew Klinger, Plainfield town manager.

The project focuses on more than just classroom space. It is designed to be an incubator for job and career training and success. Partners include IDHS, Vincennes University, Ivy Tech Community College, WorkOne and Hendricks College Network. In addition to public safety, educational focuses include training for transportation, distribution, logistics, robotics and much more.

The Town of Plainfield successfully issued bonds in June to fund the project, which is expected to begin serving students and other partners by Fall 2021. Construction is well underway.

The project is “a rare partnership of the local community, the community school corporation, workforce development and a range of post-secondary education providers ... and offers a

clear pathway for individuals to advance their skills and education,” Klinger added.

As for IDHS, it intends to use the site as a centralized training location for firefighting and additional public safety training. The agency will maintain a large flexible training space as well as office space dedicated to Academy staff. The site will supplement other regional training facilities across Indiana.

“We envision this location as helping us to expand the offerings for specialized training available in Indiana,” said Wade Walling, Academy director. “The Academy system is designed to support the entire public safety community, not just firefighting, and we intend for this space to help maintain the high quality of Indiana’s first responder community.”

All future trainings will be available and posted for registration in the [Acadis Portal](#).



ACADEMY AWARDS REGIONAL PUBLIC SAFETY AND INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS

The Indiana Fire and Public Safety Academy announced more than \$650,000 in grants awarded toward training efforts and infrastructure for public safety services.

Supported by the public safety fee on fireworks sales, the Regional Public Safety Fund administers two public safety training grants focused on specialty training support and local training support. For FY2021, the Academy awarded 24 grants to departments, districts and schools around the state, with eight going to specialty training and 16 to local training for a combined total of about \$106,000. In addition, all 10 fire training districts received awards totaling more than \$370,000.

An additional \$178,500 was awarded from the Infrastructure Fund to 20 district training sites to be used on facility improvements and maintenance.

The process of implementing the grant programs is undergoing changes for the FY2021 period. In the past, much of the work to hire contractors or purchase materials was left to the district councils and local departments around the state. Starting this year, the Academy will handle the purchasing for some recipients to reduce the burden on locals and allow for bulk orders that can make the grant dollars go further.

“The Academy is committed to supporting high-quality, innovative training to Hoosier communities,” said Academy Director Wade Walling. “The further we can stretch our grant dollars and streamline the process for locals, the better.”

The Specialty Training Support Grant goes to support continuing education training for fire and EMS. Potential uses for the grants include paying for attendees to the National Fire Academy (NFA) courses,

specialty training programs not offered by the NFA and speaker fees for continuing education classes. Some of the recipients this year will use the money for online content to improve proctoring and evaluating, incident command control training, diversity training and countywide instructor in-service.

District 10 will use the grant to host a squads course in Vincennes taught by Task Force 1 Inc. The hands-on course covers squad company functions like search and rescue, ventilation, laddering and forcible entry.

“In a lot of the areas, most departments are experiencing issues with staffing, whether it is a career or volunteer department,” said Vincennes Township Fire District Deputy Chief Eddie King. “This course will help train firefighters in multiple areas on the fire ground. Even though a firefighter may not be on an actual squad, their apparatus may be assigned to function as one on the incident scene.”

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The Local Training Support Grant goes to administer fire and EMS training and frequently pays for aspects of training such as consumables, books, props, equipment, instructors and evaluators. Of the 16 recipients, two are schools. One will be receiving forcible entry door and window simulators, and the other will get equipment including entanglement prop wire, a hazmat decontamination shower and chainsaws.

Zionsville Fire Department will be using the grant to train its firefighters in rope rescue operations. Heavy rains often swell a creek that flows through the town, and the localized flooding creates significant areas of swift water conditions. The department wants to certify its personnel in swift water rescue and the grant will help make that happen.

“Rope rescue technician certification is a necessity in certifying personnel in swift water rescue and enhancing the safety of personnel while performing these types of specialized rescues,” said Jeff Beam, Zionsville deputy chief of administration. “Receipt of this funding allows the department to readily seek outside instructors who are knowledgeable in this field and who are able to provide exemplary training rather than relying solely on internal instructors.”

HAZMAT HAPPENINGS

In response to COVID-19, the Indiana Emergency Response Commission (IERC) has updated the 2020 compliance requirements for Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs). Compliance is the key to ensuring continued funding through the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act Program.



Changes include a modification to meeting requirement criteria. LEPCs may continue to hold virtual meetings while the governor’s executive orders are active. If the current executive orders expire and an LEPC holds a meeting, the meeting must follow the Open Door Law and be an in-person, public meeting. LEPCs that are unable to meet in person four times will not be penalized.

Additionally, the exercise proposal and exercise requirement for 2020 has been suspended. No penalty will be applied to any LEPC that does not complete an exercise proposal or exercise for this year. LEPCs that have already submitted their exercise proposal may choose from the following options:

- If an LEPC WILL NOT be conducting the planned exercise, the committee should contact Amanda Horner (ahorner@dhs.in.gov) to have the submitted proposal retained on file for the year 2021.
- If an LEPC WILL be conducting the planned exercise, the committee should contact Amanda Horner (ahorner@dhs.in.gov) so she can update Tier II with the required information and steps.

Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

- Aug. 2020: Compliant LEPCs should receive their funding electronically by August.
- Oct. 17, 2020: Hazardous materials response plans are due.



DRONE'S-EYE VIEW

On an overcast Wednesday in late May, Michael White, hazmat specialist with the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS), drives his vehicle down a gravel road to a small airfield outside Indianapolis. It serves as the local training center for unmanned aerial systems (UASs), more commonly referred to as drones. Once parked, he steps out of his vehicle and is greeted by Indiana Metropolitan Police Department officers, Lawrence

firefighters and an employee of the Indiana Department of Transportation. After sharing a few laughs, White opens the back of his truck and begins the process of unpacking and assembling his Matrice 210 drone for some routine training flights. The whole gang is on hand to participate.

“We all meet out here and collaborate on training,” White said. “Having different departments like police, fire and state agencies come together

creates a comradery and makes practice more like how it will happen in real-world scenarios.”

More agencies across Indiana are learning about the drone resources now available at IDHS. The UAS Program was established in November 2019 by the Hazmat Section to provide real-time recognition and identification of hazardous materials released accidentally into the environment. The drone can assess the scene for safe staging of personnel and equipment, define safe entry/escape corridors for responders and victims, view placards/signs to determine what chemicals are involved and identify any releases of hazardous materials with optical or thermal cameras.

IDHS currently has four certified Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Part 107 pilots with several (mission/training) flight hours. Over time, the program has expanded its scope beyond hazardous materials recognition.

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“Drone reconnaissance of unfolding incidents keeps command and research informed,” explained IDHS Hazmat Section Chief Ian Ewusi. “Our hazardous materials and radiation specialists are trained and equipped to assist local jurisdictions in training and during a response to major incidents. They respond to a wide range of emergencies, often working side by side with other state agencies.”

Since its inception, the UAS Program has been used in mapping for mitigation purposes along the Lake Michigan shoreline and most recently assisted the IDHS Fire Investigations Section in examining a scene. A recent fire in Hancock County called for White to capture some aerial photography of the scene.

“Responding to a fire is never enjoyable, but having drones available for our fire investigators is great,” said Clayton Kinder, chief fire investigator for IDHS. “It was especially helpful for this event



Drone’s-eye view of a barn fire in Hancock County.

having a drone to take photos from above. It offers a unique perspective when trying to determine the cause of the fire.”

Looking forward, the UAS Program will be utilized with a variety of search and rescue efforts.

“Basically, the drone is a flying camera,” White described. “The Matrice 210 drone has two cameras. The Z30 can zoom up to 180 times, so from 400 feet in the air we can zoom in on a license plate. The other camera is an XD2 thermal-

imaging camera, which can be extremely helpful for finding missing persons.”

Another advantage of using UAS drone technology: cost.

“A lot of times they request helicopters in search and rescue,” White said. “Drones are a lot cheaper than a helicopter. They’re also quicker, easier to deploy and can run continuous operations by simply switching out a battery.”

In addition to locating missing persons, drones can be critical in coordinating search efforts. By transmitting real-time images back to the command center, boots on the ground can be strategically directed. Searchers will know there is a stream ahead, a fence in their way or if they need to carry in special equipment to get to a location. This information also protects the safety of first responders.

Other uses include the ability of some drones to drop equipment for crews or simply illuminate an area to help in the search.

The UAS Program may still be in its infancy, but the future looks promising. The support and training services IDHS provides are free and are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Reach out to the [State Emergency Operations Center](#) to request training or assistance.

MEET THE IDHS FLEET OF DRONES

The IDHS UAS Program supports a fleet of eight (8) drones:

- Four Mavic Enterprise Duals (indoor/outdoor)
- Four Matrice 210s (outdoor)
- An additional four Mavic Minis will be added to the fleet by the end of this quarter





SOUTHERN INDIANA EMAs SHARE ‘BEST PRACTICES’ FOR MANAGING COVID-19

Floyd County Emergency Operations Center

As Indiana slowly inches closer toward Stage 5 of Gov. Holcomb’s [“Back on Track Indiana”](#) plan, first responder and emergency management agencies across the state anxiously watch for signs of a possible “second wave” of large-scale COVID-19 infections. After successfully managing the first wave of COVID-19 in their respective counties, the best practices shared by the Clark and Floyd County emergency management agencies represent how to efficiently respond to and actively prepare for potential COVID-19 surges.

the emergencies we normally train for, their education and experience led to both counties being able to effectively coordinate their county emergency response during the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak.”

Clark and Floyd counties both received their first confirmed COVID-19 case in mid-March, according to the Indiana State Department of Health’s (ISDH) [COVID-19 dashboard](#). Shortly thereafter, both county EMAs made the decision to activate

their emergency operations center (EOC).

Gavan Hebner, emergency management director for the Clark County Emergency Management Agency, explained how the decision to activate the county’s EOC was integral during the beginning of the outbreak.

“We activated our EOC on March 19, and we are still in an informal activation mode right now,” Hebner said. “It gave us a better opportunity to coordinate

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“Prior to COVID-19, both the Clark and Floyd County EMA directors were proactive in attending as much training in southern Indiana as they could, thus expanding their preparedness for disasters,” said Doug Cooke, the Indiana Department of Homeland Security’s liaison for the two counties. “While this pandemic is more health-related than



Clark County Emergency Operations Center

with our county agencies and figure out the best way to handle PPE shortages.”

Kent Barrow, emergency management director for the Floyd County Emergency Management Agency, also said the early activation of the Floyd County EOC made communication and coordination among county stakeholders considerably easier.

“Right after Floyd County received its first positive case, we activated our EOC,” Barrow said. “We immediately began to plan things out and hold daily conference calls with everyone to discuss things like PPE and health department issues.”

Throughout the entire COVID-19 outbreak, both EMAs and their EOCs coordinated closely with Indiana’s State Emergency Operations Center in acquiring and distributing pandemic resources for their respective



Gavan Hebner, emergency management director for the Clark County Emergency Management Agency



counties. When PPE became scarce across the nation, both EMAs resorted to alternative methods of managing their PPE supply.

Clark County EMA chose to communicate to its community through social media regarding its desperate need for PPE.

“We set up PPE donation drop boxes at all the police departments in the county,” Hebner said. “We had a wonderful response from the community. Through the whole COVID-19 response, we probably received upwards of \$100,000 in PPE donations.”

Floyd County EMA chose to use its 911 dispatch system to determine if first responders would need PPE for their safety during responses.

“Our first responders worked with dispatch to create questions for 911 callers that were designed to identify whether the caller could potentially be infected with COVID-19,” Barrow explained.

“If a caller was determined to be a COVID-19 risk, the fire department would go on standby and EMS would respond with the necessary protective gear.”

Among all the decisions made during the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, taking the initiative to prioritize public assistance and CARES Act funding opportunities proved to be the most important to both EMAs.

“We sent emails and used follow-up phone calls with our public safety partners, public utilities and township trustees to stress the importance of filling out RPA forms,” Hebner said. “We knew we were the integral part of the chain for everyone to get that public assistance.”

Floyd County EMA utilized a similar approach to managing expenses used during its COVID-19 response.

“We started tracking expenses from day one,” Barrow said. “We asked everyone involved in the

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Floyd County Emergency Operations Center

response for invoices on all of their expenses, whether it was for PPE or types of necessary supplies,” Barrow explained. “Everything was closely tracked, including the hours of work everyone put in.”

While it is uncertain how many COVID-19 surges are in Indiana’s future, the Clark and Floyd County EMAs

recommend developing close communication and active preparation with Indiana EMAs who might have struggled in dealing with the first wave of COVID-19.

“Definitely start building relationships with all of your county agencies,” Hebner said. “Just being able to pick up the phone and call them without

having to introduce ourselves has been a great asset in our response to COVID-19.”

“Start planning for it now,” Barrow said. “You learn from your mistakes. We’re already working on our after-action report and lessons learned to see what we can do better next time.”

DID YOU KNOW IDHS HAS A NEW VIDEO HIGHLIGHTING EVERYTHING THE AGENCY DOES?



WATCH IT NOW!

NEW STATE EXERCISE OFFICER

Ashley Baldwin became the state exercise officer for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) in early May, rejoining the Exercise Section, where she had been an exercise program manager for three years before spending the past year as an emergency services planning manager.

The state exercise officer oversees the IDHS Exercise Section and works with local, state and federal partners and stakeholders to build and develop an exercise program that orients participants to (or validates) plans, policies and procedures as part of the ongoing cycle of planning, training and exercise. Baldwin will oversee and work on the development of the multiyear training and exercise plan as well as its implementation.

“We are always looking for ways to improve communication with our local, state and federal partners, and it is very important that we continue to strengthen these relationships as we practice for emergencies,” she said. “Our preparation will help us serve Hoosiers well in their times of need.”

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Baldwin also has been working in the State Emergency Operations Center



(SEOC) in different positions within operations and planning. Although exercises at the state level and the South Regional Exercise planned for August were canceled due to the pandemic, and despite her ongoing role in the SEOC, Baldwin and her team already are evaluating programming for when exercises resume,

including work with counties and state officials on a COVID-19 After Action Report (template available at the [IDHS website](#)).

Baldwin said she hopes to soon start planning exercises again and said the Exercise Section will begin offering virtual exercise planning meetings.

Baldwin has been with IDHS since 2014 and earned the certifications of Master Exercise Practitioner and Professional Emergency Manager (PEM). She also is a member of the State Incident Management Assistance Team (IMAT) and is an alumna of the Indiana Department of Correction Experienced and Emerging Leadership Program.

OTHER NEW INITIATIVES FOR THE EXERCISE SECTION:

- Developing a three-year rotation schedule to focus on planning and seminars/workshops the first year, training and tabletop exercises the second year and operations-based exercises the third year to improve capabilities based upon preidentified priorities and areas of improvement.
- Implementing data from THIRA and HIRA assessments, which show the internal gaps in emergency management the state has, to help focus the state’s efforts.
- Introducing the state to the Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop (IPPW), which will help the state follow along with the direction the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is headed.



DEPLOYED: EMS DURING CORONAVIRUS

Unprecedented.

This single word has been regularly used over the last five months to describe the scope of change that Americans, and the world, have been forced into as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Medical infrastructure in pockets across the country have seen overwhelming numbers of patients, leading to calls for assistance from around the nation.

Indiana emergency medical responders immediately answered that call in other states, in some cases with less than 45 minutes to prepare. Paramedics, EMTs and dispatch staff were sent to perform tasks in various states, spending weeks and, in some cases, months away from

their families. Brice McCarty, Thomas Randolph and Stephanie Sizemore were just three of the numerous Hoosiers who deployed to assist communities in need.

When asked about why deploying was so important, these three all spoke of similar concepts: the desire to help Americans and to help their colleagues across the country. Randolph summed it up, saying, “As much heartache and tragedy is going on today, this world is still full of good and decent people. We are in the business of helping people. We leave our families, and we go where we are needed. Do we put ourselves in harm’s way? Yes, we do. But that’s part of what our job is.”

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PLANNING TO DEPLOY

These now-seasoned pros had the following suggestions for those that may deploy in the future:

- Pack extra clothes. Sizemore wished she had known that laundry wouldn’t always be available when she needed it.
- Pack for a variety of situations. McCarty packed for April and regretted all those sweatshirts while still deployed in July.
- Be ready for the food. Sizemore joked that she would have liked to have known how many lunchmeat sandwiches she would be eating.
- Take your vitamins and stay hydrated. Randolph said keeping yourself healthy is the key to helping others.
- Prepare to be gone a while. Many deployments only last a few weeks, but McCarty and Randolph recommended having plans in place for at least 30 days.
- Don’t expect top-level accommodations. These deployments allowed for a real bed for those involved, but that is not always the case, said McCarty. “This is almost the Disneyland of disaster deployment. I’m not used to having a hotel room. I’m used to sleeping in the back of an ambulance on an army cot.”

SPOTLIGHTS ON DEPLOYMENT



BRICE MCCARTY

Physicians Ambulance Service, ambulance strike team leader and disaster response team leader

Frontier Medicine Consulting

Deployed to Chicago O'Hare Airport; Anderson, Ind.; Pennsylvania

Deployments are a regular occurrence for McCarty, having been sent to support hurricanes and other events across the country. He said responding to COVID-19 has been a different animal.

McCarty has filled numerous roles since deploying in April, from screening returning international travelers at Chicago's O'Hare Airport, to acting as an Anderson hospital cardiac arrest response team. He has assisted in an Anderson intensive care unit and performed health screening for a private company in Pennsylvania.

The time in O'Hare was a joint venture between state and federal resources and occurred when there was concern that the new strain of coronavirus was a bioweapon. Initial screening took place on the planes, much like the customs declaration process.

In Anderson, the team held two roles while assisting in a local hospital. The team responded to all cardiac arrests, treating all patients as if they had COVID-19 to enhance safety. They also supported the emergency and intensive care teams. "We're

very accustomed to 'as you need it, you get it,' when it comes to treatment, but with COVID you're now clustering care, doing it at regular intervals unless absolutely necessary," said McCarty. What struck him was the visitation restrictions that have been necessary.

"With patients not being able to have visitors, you think about the electronic component, but you don't think about the elderly individuals who don't know how to use the technology, or the intubated patients that can't communicate, but their families still want to 'visit.'"



STEPHANIE SIZEMORE

Dispatch Associate

AMR Evansville

Deployed to New York, N.Y.

Dispatchers are often the primary contact for those needing assistance, providing the calm and direction necessary to carry through until response teams can arrive. For Sizemore, being sent to a massive operation in New York for her first deployment was eye-opening. Her day-to-day in New

York was significantly different, spent in a trailer in direct contact with the deployment units, assigning locations and runs. She also coordinated logistics and operational needs for 150 transfer units, which helped to move patients to locations where they could best be assisted.

"It takes a special person to do what we do every day. It's stressful and emotional, but we process it differently than most people. We can't process it then, because we have people to help. The safety of our crews is highly important, so we process on our own time," said Sizemore.

SPOTLIGHTS ON DEPLOYMENT



THOMAS RANDOLPH

Paramedic Supervisor

AMR Evansville

Deployed to Hackensack, N.J.; New York, N.Y.

Randolph's team saw overrun hospitals, temporary morgues and long waits to report out to triage nurses while operating in New Jersey and New York. "The residents of New Jersey ... you could look and tell that they were worried, scared and very appreciative of us being there," said Randolph. "Almost all of them knew someone or had a family member who had died of COVID. But sitting on post, you realize that Evansville and New

York are dealing with the same types of problems, and that helps you go with the flow."

During his deployment, he found the medicine was the same, but navigating an unfamiliar city presented challenges only mapping apps could solve. He also dealt with many individuals who would refuse transport, scared of traveling to a hospital and contracting COVID-19

or becoming even more sick. He also saw additional complications, such as an individual who had developed sudden onset dementia as the person recovered.

"The family was distraught. The doctor had told them that COVID more than likely had something to do with it, but they didn't know. To deal with patients like that was just heartbreaking," said Randolph.

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE COVID-19 UPDATE

Since COVID-19 made its Indiana appearance in March, the IDHS Public Assistance (PA) Program has been working with communities across the state to recover from the effects of COVID-19. During this time, the state has received a presidential disaster declaration and has seen more than 1,075 separate organizations register for assistance.

More than 1,100 projects have been submitted by applicants and are currently in process. As the recovery continues, more projects will be processed and more obligated funding is expected.

"We are incredibly optimistic with the progress that's been made so far, especially considering how complex this response and recovery has been," said Mary Moran, Recovery Section director with IDHS. "We are always happy to help get assistance to communities who need it. There is still plenty of work to be done, and we will continue pushing forward."

The deadline for the submission of a Request for Public Assistance (RPA) has been extended to Aug. 31, 2020. RPAs can be submitted directly in the [FEMA Grants](#)

[Portal](#), both by governmental entities and private non-profits. Organizations that have an approved RPA on file in the FEMA Grants Portal are encouraged to begin the process of entering expenditures that are directly related to COVID-19 through the grants portal. Applicants who have questions can contact the IDHS Public Assistance staff at pa@dhs.in.gov. For more information on the COVID-19 declaration and other PA program updates, visit the [IDHS PA webpage](#).

OFFICE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: NEWS YOU CAN USE

As response coordination moved forward at all levels throughout the state, the IDHS Information Technology (IT) team also found the last few months quite hectic.

With a majority of the IDHS staff working remotely, IT had an initial rush to make sure employees had the equipment necessary to perform essential functions. In addition, since Microsoft Teams had recently been “rolled out” to IDHS, IT members were also involved with initial training so that staff could effectively utilize the product.

When the State Emergency Operations Center activated to its highest level, new boards were created “on the fly” to capture useful data for various emergency support functions. This included a board to capture staffing levels for law enforcement, EMS and fire across the state (Fig. 1).

County / District	Total EMS Staff	Current Available for Duty	# Unavailable Due to Illness	% Understaffed	Suspected or Positive COVID	Date Updated	Time Updated	Actions
TOTALS	3496	3439	36	1.63	22			
Adams / 3	0	0	0	0	0	03/20/2020	13:10:39	
Allen / 3	355	352	0	0.85	0	03/20/2020	13:10:51	
Bartholomew / 8	95	93	2	2.11	1	03/20/2020	13:25:27	
Benton / 4	12	12	0	0.00	0	03/20/2020	13:13:42	
Blackford / 6				0		03/20/2020	13:20:13	
Boone / 5	133	133	0	0.00	0	06/19/2020	13:16:44	
Brown / 8	27	27	0	0.00	0	03/20/2020	13:25:37	
Carroll / 4	42	42	0	0.00	0	07/08/2020		
Cass / 4	16	16	0	0.00	0	03/20/2020	13:14:06	
Clark / 9	41	35	6	14.63	6	04/27/2020	10:31:00	

Fig. 1

LOOKING FORWARD IN WEBEOC

With things opening back up, the U.S. DHS is requiring each state to enter details of scheduled events being held between Dec. 1, 2020, and Nov. 30, 2021. After receiving feedback in previous years, IDHS has worked to make the input and editing of this data a much easier process. There is now a “Duplicate” feature which allows the copying of data from previous events. Each record must have date-related data and National Weather Service support request data (Fig. 2) input, as this information will not pre-populate.

District	County	Event Name	Event Start	Event End	Venue Type	Venue Address	Status	Cancelled?	Actions
10	Possey	Possey County 4-H Fair	07/09/2018	07/21/2018	Open Air	111 HARMONY TOWNSHIP ROAD, New Harmony 47631	Incomplete/Unverified	NO	Edit, Cancel Event, Duplicate, Archive
10	Possey	Possey County 4-H Fair	07/12/2020	07/19/2020	Open Air	111 HARMONY TOWNSHIP ROAD, New Harmony 47631	Incomplete/Unverified	NO	Edit, Cancel Event, Duplicate, Archive
10	Possey	Possey County 4-H Fair	07/14/2019	07/21/2019	Open Air	111 HARMONY TOWNSHIP ROAD, New Harmony 47631	Incomplete/Unverified	NO	Edit, Cancel Event, Duplicate, Archive
10	Possey	Bierstube Festival	07/18/2020	07/17/2020	Building	11714 WINERY RD., Wadesville 47638	Incomplete/Unverified	NO	Edit, Cancel Event, Duplicate, Archive
10	Possey	Bierstube Festival	07/19/2019	07/22/2019	Building	11714 WINERY RD., Wadesville 47638	Incomplete/Unverified	NO	Edit, Cancel Event, Duplicate, Archive

Fig. 2

As development of the Public Safety Portal (PSP) progresses, information will be garnered from the Code Enforcement Section (which will include organized firework displays and events requiring amusement and entertainment permits) to help provide robust situational awareness and ensure events happening in local jurisdictions are adequately captured.

IDHS is working with Chief Brian Lott of the Greenfield Fire Department and the Indiana Fire Chiefs Association (IFCA) to figure out a way to update and improve the handling of mutual aid requests. With the support and participation from both full-time and volunteer first responders, the IDHS IT team will create a viable process that will work for everyone. Stay tuned for future updates!

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS DURING COVID-19

ACTIVATION OF THE STATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

During disasters or emergencies, the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) manages the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) to orchestrate a multi-agency response system. The SEOC is the Indiana coordination center that allows subject matter experts and key organization personnel from different disciplines to facilitate a synchronized response to disasters, emergencies or other significant events. To do so, the SEOC works with local, state and federal officials to support the state’s needs in times of distress.

The SEOC can be activated at four different levels of response, depending on the severity of the event. For SEOC operating levels beyond Level IV (daily operations), staff from various state agencies can be brought in to assist with emergency management by filling emergency support function (ESF) roles. Each ESF represents a functional grouping of state agencies that are experts in activities often required in emergency management, such as transportation, mass care and logistics. ESFs provide specialized assistance required by the overwhelming impact or specialized nature of a disaster — beyond what local units can sustain alone.

To respond to the public health emergency, the SEOC was activated at the following operational levels:

- 02/27/20 – Level IV, Enhanced Staff
- 03/09/20 – Level III
- 03/16/20 – Level I
- 06/12/20 – Level III

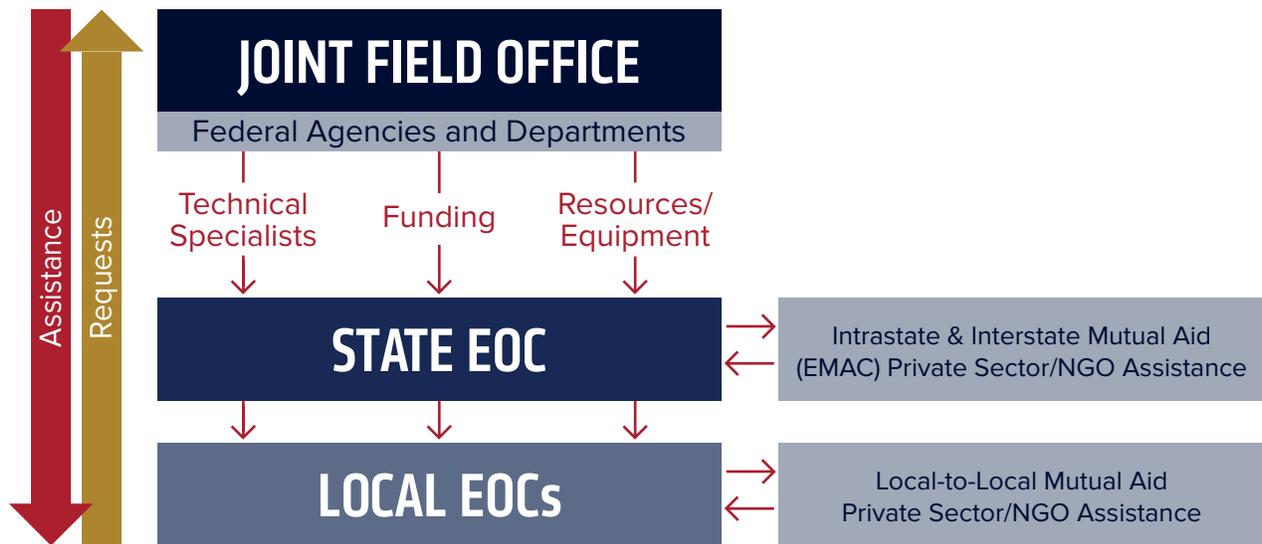
STATE RESPONSE ACTIVATION LEVELS		
IV	Daily Ops/Limited Emergency Conditions	Normal daily operations. Watch Desk is monitoring activities within and around the state.
III	Emergency Conditions	A situation has or may occur which requires an activation increase: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section Chiefs • Joint Information Center (JIC) may be set up • Limited ESF staffing • May have a federal presence
II	Significant Emergency Conditions	A situation has or may occur which requires an activation increase: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section Chiefs • JIC will be set up • Policy Group activated • Full ESF staffing • Federal presence
I	Full Emergency Conditions	A situation has or may occur which requires an activation increase: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section Chiefs • JIC will be set up • Policy Group activated • Full ESF staffing • Federal presence • Governor or designee in Policy Group

It is important to highlight that from March 2, to August 3, 2020, IDHS managed 135 SEOC operational periods, including 87 at Level I. This is the longest SEOC activation period in the history of the SEOC. During the Level I activation period, the SEOC brought in several ESF roles, such as the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), the Integrated Public Safety Commission (IPSC), Indiana State Police (ISP), Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH), fire and emergency medical services representatives, the American Red Cross and certain private sector representatives.

(continued on next page)

REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT

Another function of the SEOC is the coordination and fulfillment of requests for resources across the state. As local resource capabilities become overwhelmed, county emergency management agencies (EMA) request support from the SEOC. The resource request process flow is illustrated in the following figure:



From March 1 to August 3, 2020, the SEOC received more than 780 requests for resource support from county EMAs on behalf of law enforcement agencies, fire departments, emergency medical service (EMS) providers and other local government entities. IDHS procured the requested items from various sources, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), pre-existing quantity purchase agreements and donations.

Additionally, IDHS employees drove more than 15,000 miles across Indiana delivering personal protective equipment, commodities and additional resources in support of local, state and federal partners.

SUPPLIES DISTRIBUTED BY THE SEOC*

235,800	N95 Masks	2,152	Infrared Thermometers
25,650	Face Shields	115,680	Cloth Masks
394,520	KN90/Surgical Masks	970	Body Bags
113,500	Gloves	546,000	Ear Loop Masks
97,022	Gowns	932	Bottled Water (cases)
43,800	Gaylord Gowns	2,089	Cots
8,184	Hand Sanitizer (gallons)	1,309	Blankets



*As of July 1, 2020



FIRST RESPONDER CONFERENCE UPDATE

Due to the impact of COVID-19, several Indiana conferences geared toward first responders have made the difficult decision to cancel their 2020 events.

CANCELED

Indiana Emergency Response Conference (IERC)

“We feel that this decision is in the best interest of our attendees, partners, exhibitors, customers and staff,” said Indiana Fire Chiefs Association President Pascal Arnes in a statement released in June. “This decision was difficult and solely based on the safety and health of everyone involved.”

The **2021 IERC** has been scheduled for September 15-18, 2021, so make sure you save the date!

CANCELED

Fire Department Instructors Conference (FDIC) International

“It is with great sadness that we share that FDIC International, originally scheduled to take place on April 20-25, 2020, at the Indiana Convention Center, Indianapolis will be cancelled.

We have been putting the health, safety and wellbeing of our team, customers, partners, family and friends above all other priorities and those values remain most important to us. In light of both governmental direction and general public health advisories a face-to-face event is not possible at this time with the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the government issued Public Health Emergency throughout the State of Indiana.

We look forward to coming together for **FDIC International 2021**, April 19-24 at the Indiana Convention Center & Lucas Oil Stadium, in Indianapolis, Indiana stronger than ever, holding steadfast to the same commitment. We thank everyone for their ongoing support and understanding.”

CANCELED

Emergency Management Alliance of Indiana (EMAI)

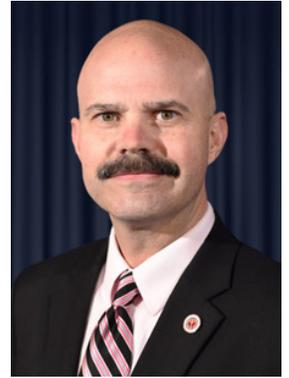
“Due to circumstances beyond our control, the EMAI – IERC Conference for 2020 has been cancelled.

On behalf of the EMAI Board, we look forward to seeing you next year, October 2021.”

MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE MARSHAL

As you can see in this edition of *The Hoosier Responder*, the IDHS Division of Fire and Building Safety remains busy and active across the state.

This is peak season for our Elevators and Amusement Rides Section, as they continue to help those communities hosting county fairs ensure rides are safe and ready for passengers. Every ride featured in Indiana must pass inspection and be certified annually by IDHS. Although the Indiana State Fair will not be held this year, large events such as the Marion County Fair and the reopening of Indiana Beach and Holiday World have required comprehensive inspections by staff. This is expected to continue through Labor Day at other community fairs and carnivals.



Indiana’s “new normal” has required some substantial shifts in how IDHS offers training to fire and public safety personnel. The efforts of the Indiana Fire and Public Safety Academy are focused on expanding web-based training; however, in-person training continues with additional safeguards and distancing requirements in place. All current offerings can be found on the [Acadis Portal](#). Training staff also have used this time to update the firefighter training curriculum to solidify Hoosier firefighters as among the best trained in the country.

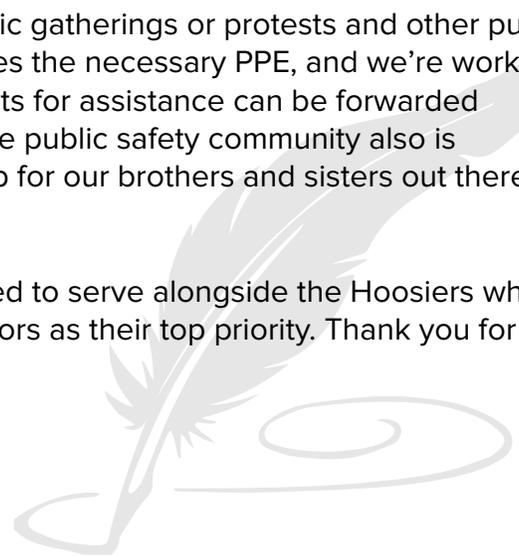
Work also has not slowed for the Fire Investigations Section, which is on pace to again help determine the cause and origin of more than 500 fires across Indiana. These investigators and their expertise remain in high demand when departments need some additional eyes on a suspicious fire or simply do not have a local fire investigations unit. Unfortunately, Indiana also [continues on pace](#) to match record numbers of fire fatalities this year. Working with local fire departments, public outreach and education programs like the [IDHS Get Alarmed Program](#) are more important than ever with more people staying home amid the pandemic. In addition to providing free fire alarms, the Get Alarmed program provides helpful preparedness tips to keep families fire safe. Working smoke alarms and a practiced fire escape plan are critical in saving lives.

Indiana State Fire Marshal staff also continues to reach out and monitor the status of local fire departments as they are stretched to limits on EMS runs, public gatherings or protests and other public safety requirements. Responding during the pandemic requires the necessary PPE, and we’re working to support Indiana departments with these resources. Requests for assistance can be forwarded through your local EMA. The mental health and wellness of the public safety community also is paramount today, and we are committed to providing this help for our brothers and sisters out there on the front lines.

As marshal, I’m proud to be part of this community. I’m honored to serve alongside the Hoosiers who selflessly place the safety of their families, friends and neighbors as their top priority. Thank you for all you do.

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

Joel Thacker
Indiana State Fire Marshal



UPCOMING EVENTS

BACK TO SCHOOL MONTH

OBSERVED: AUGUST 2020

Practicing and observing school safety should happen the entire school year. However, Back to School Month offers school staff, parents and local first responders the opportunity to emphasize the importance of all-around safety practices.

The Indiana School Safety Hub is a great resource for educators and first responders for all forms of school safety information: www.in.gov/schoolsafety.

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

OBSERVED: SEPTEMBER 2020

2020 theme: “Disasters Don’t Wait. Make Your Plan Today.”

GetPrepared.in.gov has an abundance of safety tips that Hoosiers can follow to prepare for any form of emergency.

SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH

OBSERVED: SEPTEMBER 2020

Every year, due to the trauma they regularly face, many first responders make the decision to take their own lives. The National Alliance on Mental Illness encourages everyone to use Suicide Prevention Awareness Month as an opportunity to share resources, learn and discuss suicide prevention and treatment options. IDHS encourages every first responder to complete the mental health awareness course available in Acadis.

For more information, visit www.nami.org.

PATRIOT DAY

OBSERVED: SEPTEMBER 11, 2020

2020 marks the 19th year since the terrorist attacks that claimed the lives of many individuals on Sept. 11, 2001. Remind Hoosiers if they plan to host or attend a celebration that honors the brave men and women who were injured or lost their lives, that safety should be their first priority.

IDHS’s “[Ready: Whenever. Wherever.](#)” public service campaign has provided safety tips on practicing awareness and developing a plan of action during emergencies at public gatherings.

UPCOMING EVENTS

“IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING” AWARENESS DAY

OBSERVED: SEPTEMBER 25, 2020

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security encourages citizens, private-owned and government organizations to help spread the message of reporting suspicious activity. Taking the time to learn and actively monitor for suspicious activity, will help keep communities safe. Sharing information about the importance of suspicious activity reporting on social media is one way to help keep communities safe.

For more information about what suspicious activity is, visit www.dhs.gov.

UPCOMING TRAININGS

AUGUST

08/23	Executive Leadership Development 100 (ELD10018)	VINCENNES UNIVERSITY ICAT
08/30	Basic Disaster Search (K9)	ATTERBURY

SEPTEMBER

09/13	SAR 300 – Ground Search Operations	BRAZIL
09/27	Advanced Tracking (K9)	BRAZIL
09/27	Executive Leadership Development 200 (ELD20011)	VINCENNES UNIVERSITY ICAT

OCTOBER

10/01-02	Intermediate Disaster Search (K9)	ATTERBURY
10/03-04	Advanced Disaster Search (K9)	ATTERBURY
10/17-18	Advanced Air Scent (K9)	BRAZIL
10/17-18	Executive Leadership Development 300 (ELD 30005)	VINCENNES UNIVERSITY ICAT
10/24-25	GSAR 400 – Ground Search Technician	BRAZIL

Register for classes on the [ACADIS Portal](#)

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



*The Hoosier Responder is a publication of
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