

2018 Annual Report of the Southeastern New Hampshire Hazardous Materials Mutual Aid District

**Bruce Breton
Selectman, Windham
Chairman, Board of Directors**



**Chief Thomas McPherson, Jr.
Windham Fire Department
Chairman, Operations Committee**

About the District:

The Southeastern New Hampshire Hazardous Materials Mutual Aid District's membership is comprised of 14 communities, covering approximately 350 square miles with a population of over 175,000 people. The District was formed in 1993 to develop a regional approach for dealing with the increasing amounts of hazardous materials being used and transported within these communities.

The District draws its funding from an annual assessment from each community as well as from grants and donations. The FY 2019 operating budget for the District was \$128,880. Additionally, in 2018 the District applied for and received federal grants for equipment, training, and operational expenses totaling \$45,076. The Fire Chiefs from each member community make-up the Operations Committee of the District. The Operations Committee is overseen by a Board of Directors consisting of elected representatives from each community. It is the Board of Directors who approves the budget and any changes to the bylaws of the District. The Executive Board of the Operations Committee, which consists of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, Technician Team Liaison, and one Member at Large, manages the operations of the District within the approved budget. The District employs a part-time REPC Director to manage the administrative functions of the District, including but not limited to, grants management, financial management, and emergency planning.

District Facility

The District maintains a facility in Windham that provides space to house several of its response vehicles and trailers, as well as provide office and meeting space for the REPC Director. In addition, the District is able to utilize the facility for monthly training for the Emergency Response Team.

The Emergency Response Team:

The District operates a Technical Emergency Response Team. This Response Team is overseen by one of the member community's Chief Fire Officer who serves in the Technical Team Liaison position. The Team maintains a three level readiness response posture to permit it to immediately deploy an appropriate response to a District community's request for help involving an unplanned release of potentially dangerous chemicals within their jurisdiction. While the Team primarily prepares for response to unplanned accidental chemical releases it is also equipped and trained to deal with a variety of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) scenarios. The team maintains a host of specialized response equipment to deal with chemical and environmental emergencies.

The Emergency Response Team is made up of 27 members drawn from the ranks of the fire departments within the District. The Team consists of 5 Technician Team Leaders, 17 Hazardous Materials Technicians, 2 Communication Specialists, 1 Information Technology Specialist and 2 Support Specialists. In addition to these personnel, the team also includes an industrial chemist from a local industry.

District Resources

The Team maintains a fleet of vehicles and specialized equipment with a value of approximately \$1,000,000. The vehicles consist of a Mobile Command Support Unit, two Response Trucks, three Spill Trailers, a Technician Trailer, an Operations/Spill Trailer and a Firefighting Foam Trailer. In 2018 the District added an Air Supply Trailer that was acquired at no cost through the federal surplus equipment program. This trailer provides the capability of on scene refilling of breathing air tanks for both the hazardous materials team and member fire departments. This trailer is housed at Chester Fire Department.

These mobile apparatus carry the team's equipment which includes chemical detection and identification instruments, containment supplies, plugging, patching and intervention supplies, communication equipment, computer based and other chemical reference guides as well as chemical protective equipment. The Command Support Unit and one Response Truck along with the Technician Trailer are housed in our Windham facility, while spill trailers are located in Derry, Sandown and Plaistow, allowing for rapid deployment. The Foam Trailer is housed by Salem Fire. Activation of the team is made at the request of the local Incident Commander through the Derry Fire Department Dispatch Center.

The second Response Truck, which serves as a firefighter rehabilitation unit is also housed at our Windham facility. This unit is available to our member departments and is equipped with refrigerated cases of water and sports drinks and has the ability to serve hot beverages. The truck is also equipped with a heated inflatable shelter to provide first responders with a place to get out of the weather. In order to remove carcinogens from firefighters as soon as possible this truck is also equipped with garden hoses, soap and brushes to assist with the decontamination of fire fighters at the scene. Staffing of this vehicle is done by a team of dedicated volunteers recruited from some of the District's fire departments.

Response Team Training

In 2018 the Emergency Response Team completed 742 hours of training consisting of monthly training drills and specialized classes attended by team members. These specialized classes included Propane Gas Emergencies, FBI WMD briefing and Compressed Natural Gas Tankers. Several Team members attended the New Hampshire Hazardous Materials Training Conference. Funding provided through a Hazardous Materials Preparedness Grant allowed for four Team Leaders to attend the International Association of Fire Chiefs Hazardous Materials Teams Conference.

Emergency Responses

In 2018 the Hazardous Materials Team responded to 17 incidents. These included spill trailer responses for hydrocarbon fuel spills from motor vehicle crashes involving tanker trucks and fuel spills in lakes. Other responses included identifying unknown substances and suspicious packages, as well as requests for technical assistance for member departments where a Response Team Leader provided consultation to the fire department on the handling of an incident.

The REHAB team responded to 20 incidents including fire scenes and large scale training events.

For further information about the Southeastern New Hampshire Hazardous Materials District please visit our website at www.senhazmat.org