



**IAFC Hazardous Materials Committee  
Meeting Agenda  
Orange County Convention Center – W308C  
Orlando, FL  
Tuesday, August 12, 2025**



**Chairman's Opening Remarks**

- Chief Jensen, newly appointed chairman, opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and expressing his appreciation for the opportunity to serve in this role.

**Attendance and Introductions**

- John Woulfe started the introductions, including both in-person and online participants.
- Notable attendees: Butch Hayes (Harris County Hazmat), Jay Womack (Euclid Fire Dept/Chagrin Southeast Regional Hazmat), Kevin Johnson (Pleasure Ridge Park Fire District, Louisville, KY), Mark V. Sicuso (Electrical Boat Fire Dept, CT), Christina Baxter (Douglas County, GA Fire Dept/Emergency Response Tips), James Wilson (Southern Maine Community College), Kevin Krotzer (Lehigh County Special Operations), Tim Butters (IAFC Orlando Command Center), and others from various regions and organizations.

❖ FirstNet Authority Update

- Mike Varney gave an overview of FirstNet Authority's ongoing network expansion, including coverage enhancement workshops in each state.
- Live testing continues for satellite-to-device technology, expected to be operational by early 2027, which will allow direct public safety communications in remote areas.
- FirstNet Central's Advanced Network Status Tool was highlighted, offering real-time tower status updates, planned maintenance notifications, and localized alerts.
- The network is being upgraded from 4G to 5G, with early 2027 as the projected completion date. Currently, the network supports 7.5 million connections across 30,000 organizations.

❖ Hazmat Threats and Response: Presentation by Dr. Christina Baxter

- Dr. Baxter discussed the evolving landscape of hazardous materials threats, focusing on international and domestic developments.
- Discussed the 'axis of upheaval'—China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea—and the impact on global and domestic hazmat resource allocation, with Taiwan as a case study highlighting semiconductor supply chain vulnerabilities.
- Highlighted concerns about chemical storage vulnerabilities, the rise in corrosive attacks, homemade irritants, binary devices, explosives, and biosecurity issues.
- Discussed emerging DIY drug trends (e.g., "Feel Free" and Captagon), increased illicit drug production, and the evolving risks with batteries and energy storage, especially in the aftermath of disasters.

- Updates on technology: new detection instruments, advances in PCR for field response, and considerations around AI in biosecurity.
- Emphasized the need for SCBA use during decontamination and the importance of validating best practices shared online.

#### ❖ Legislative and Government Relations Updates – Steve Alanzo

- Overview of Senate and House budget proposals for pipeline and hazmat safety, highlighting expected funding levels and continued support for local emergency response training grants.
- Update on the Consumer Standards for Lithium-ion Batteries Act—awaiting Senate consideration.
- Ongoing advocacy for nonprofit eligibility for pipeline emergency response grants.

#### ❖ NIOSH Program Status

- Brief report on the status of NIOSH programs following staff layoffs and reinstatements.
- Most firefighter-oriented programs have resumed; travel remains limited.
- Concerns raised regarding the proposed elimination or reduction of certain NIOSH programs, including the Firefighter Fatality Investigation Program and the National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory (NPPTL).
- Discussion on the critical role of NPPTL during the COVID-19 pandemic and its ongoing importance for first responder safety standards.

#### ❖ Major Rail Incident Response Project

- Summary of progress on compiling ‘never fail’ steps for major rail incidents, distilled into five key response actions based on survey data from fire, police, rail, and emergency management professionals.
- The next project summit is scheduled for December 8–10, bringing together decision-makers from all stakeholder groups to finalize best practices for rail emergencies.

#### ❖ Committee Reports and Working Groups

- Updates on NFPA 470 and 475 standards revision and efforts to increase battery topic representation.
- New working group formed to address battery technology developments and incident response.
- PHMSA change reviews ongoing; committee members tasked with monitoring and providing feedback.
- Involved with federal discussions on FEMA reorganization and the importance of maintaining fire service programs and grants.

#### ❖ Additional Updates and Open Discussion

- Reminders to maintain strong relationships with WMD coordinators and stay informed about emerging threats.
- Updates from the U.S. Fire Administration and National Fire Academy, including program adaptations, retirements, and new instructor recruitment.
- Information shared on preparations for FIFA World Cup 2026 public safety planning.

- Emphasis on communication, participation, partnership-building, and actionable outputs for the committee's ongoing work.
- Recognition of members experiencing health challenges and encouragement to utilize VA resources.

#### ❖ Action Items and Next Steps

- Distribute slide presentations and survey results to all committee members.
- Continue gathering and analyzing field data for rail incident response.
- Recruit an additional member for the battery technology working group.
- Enhance communication through more regular virtual meetings and integration with other committees.
- Support ongoing standards revisions and NFPA collaborations.
- Monitor legislative changes and advocate for crucial funding programs.

### **Chairman's Closing Remarks**

- Chief Jensen outlined three guiding concepts to shape our committee's future direction
  - Enhancing Information Sharing
    - ✓ To improve communication and collaboration, I proposed a schedule of quarterly meetings—two held in person and two conducted virtually via Zoom or Teams.
    - ✓ Additional meetings may be convened as needed to address emerging priorities or opportunities.
  - Strengthening Strategic Partnerships
    - ✓ We will actively engage with key IAFC sections and committees, including:
      - ❖ Lithium-Ion Committee
      - ❖ Homeland Security and Terrorism Committee
      - ❖ Company Officer Section
      - ❖ Industrial Section
      - ❖ Others as appropriate

The approach involves embedding committee members into these groups as observers or participants, depending on the context. We also aim to nurture and expand our relationships with federal and international agencies to support broader collaboration and knowledge exchange.
  - Fostering Active Participation
    - ✓ Every member is expected to contribute meaningfully by joining task groups and fulfilling responsibilities that advance the committee's mission.
    - ✓ Active engagement will be essential to our collective success.

Meeting concluded with expressions of gratitude, invitations to continue networking, and encouragement for ongoing collaboration among members, both in-person and online.