



TRANSCRIPT FROM WEBCAST 3/22/2011

DESCRIPTION: County of LA Fire Department

WHO: Captain Randy Alva

HAZMAT Coordinator, Homeland Security Division

With me now is Captain Randy Alva who we saw a little while ago on the video from hazmat city which is what they call the hazmat training simulation facility here. Captain, we really appreciate your time to come back out and chat with us live as well as the time you gave us on the video, greatly appreciate that. And of course we've got Teresa Lustig who is our program manager with Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology director on this project. Well, captain, we know that interoperability is one of your key issues and so I wanna ask you, what is your experience with this ICBRNE system and how has it been helping in the interoperability area?

>> Well, first of all, thanks for asking me down here for this interview. I appreciate that. This is a very important thing to me. I'm passionate about interoperability. And David has brought this common platform to its full scope and what we've done is inherently, my job is very dangerous. When you get into a scenario where you have some sort of unknown substance and you have to go in there where everybody else is running out, it's not a good day. So when we can information share we could support the team that's going in there. Not only support them with information of what they're going into but also note if something happens in there and one of those guys go down, who we can send in at what time. What kind of PPD is it? What I mean by PPDE is a personal protective devices. So we may need a paramedic in there. We may need to affect a rescue. We may need to send other guys with expertise such as USAR or other hazmat specialist that have weapons of mass destruction training. So, the interoperability part is a key, key part of what we need to start training on not only L.A. County Fire Department but as well L.A. City Fire Department which already embraced that and started preparing for the bad day. So what we're looking at is training together using David's common platform of information sharing, preparing our guys and preparing for that bad day as if it could happen today.

>> Well, this is a really important issue because there's been so much money that's been invested in creating the communications infrastructure that police forces and fire departments and all these entities already have out there. And we can't just go and replace everything. So this interoperability issue is really critical being able to have everything talk to each other.



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>> Well, not only, I'm glad you brought that up because not only does it help supporting our own guys but we could information share with our executive staff on why it is we're doing what were--is it getting better or is it getting worse? If it's getting worse, they could pre-plan and get some sort of support going to help us down the incident. It could be days, weeks, months from now. And also as you all know it's not only for that bad day where we've been hit by another bad people as they say. But also a natural disaster such as Katrina, Haiti, recently Japan. We could use this interoperability in those venues.

>> That's excellent.

>> Can you tell me a little bit more about how the ICBRNE program has been utilized in your training center and give us an idea of what you're doing at the training center?

>> That was quite an impressive center too.

>> Thank you very much. Again, that's another passion of my mine is the training center. You know, we all practice as if we're getting date. You have to be prepared for that bad date. So what we established up in Del Valle Training Center is a 200 acre hazmat city USAR city, swift water, all the special operations that we don't do everyday. By having the center what it does is it raises the bar not only of training but of interoperability and be able to information share as well as other agencies incorporating with our training and learning. They may do something just a little bit better than we do. We may do something just a little bit better than they do and we could all grasp that information and take it back with us. Also, for that bad day, we'll know what they're doing and why they're doing it if we practice together. So it's crossing those boundaries that--those brick walls that were up 20 to 30 years ago, knocking those walls down and shaking hands across that border in practicing as if that bad day is here. So, part of the beautiful prop that we have in the property is we have a 4-lane freeway which you saw on the video and you have an overturned tanker. It's leaking. We have about eight different leaks that we could put from the tanker itself to the subtle tanks that actually are for the truck. So that tractor is able to go up about 10 feet hydraulically and we could place a car underneath it, lower back down. We have--what you don't get out of that



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video is the audio portion of it. We've got four major speakers all around that freeway and you can't talk to each other without shouting. So we have radio traffic. We have screams from the car underneath the truck. We have screams from inside the truck as well as the fire venues that you saw. That is all hazardous materials that we could portray as weapons of mass destruction. We could have any sort of terrorist event. We could have an IED, an explosive device underneath that truck or trailer. We could have-- we could scenario play just about anything we want. Just getting to the venue we have cars all around. If the fellows just park their vehicle in the wrong position we could stop right then and there, go back into the classroom and explain how their lives could have been taken just by the way they came to the scene or up--went uphill type of thing. So the learning curve is just fantastic up there as well as the freeway prop.

>> We also have a warehouse. The inside of the warehouse has unknown chemicals, exotic chemicals, hydrazine tanks, dip tanks, acid tanks, everything, leaks. We have piping all above us. The pipes all leak. I'm able to color, of course we're just using water because we don't want to hurt anyone but I'm able to color and dye that water any color I want. The steam that comes off of all those props I can change those colors to any color I want. We could develop scenarios with flammable liquids. And I've got electrical prop where if the guys don't just simple shut off the electricity, they're going into a flammable environment, they could die. So that kind of scenario is just throughout the training center. And on the outside of that warehouse we have what's called a loading dock. The loading dock also has the sound. The--And we hit all the senses except for taste. You can hear it, you can see it, you can feel the heat from the fires and the explosions.

>> You simulated that with me one day and I certainly remembered jumping about 3 feet back.

>> Absolutely. So, and it's progressive. We've devised the training center so that the same person can go up there 40 or 50 times and not have the same scenario. So we have injects throughout that center and it's been just a fantastic training for everyone. And as I said when we're bringing every--all the other agencies together that in itself is gold.



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>> I think that's great too. I just think it's great that they're able to train with the same equipment for this more everyday event such as a truck or a trailer returning as well as you know, something that's rather unusual and unexpected like you know, some type of terrorist event. And that they don't have to pull out different equipment for something that, you know, might happen versus something that they're using everyday. I think it's just great that they can have that dual training.

>> Everyday application.

>> And these are low frequency events but if you don't train and get very, very professional at these events.

>> One of the things you mentioned, captain. And you hit on it like in a couple of different scenarios in the training center is the high noise volume. That high noise factor as we know is very difficult for verbal communications to go back and forth. So, if you've got a first responder out there who's got a sensor, who's got a meter on in some way, shape or form and he's trying to relay it back to the command post or somewhere else what that meter is saying and you can't hear him on that, you know, with all that high noise. So, this data protocol that we set up seems to help to overcome that.

>> And that's why this has been just a critical part of our training, the ability to information share with each other. If somebody goes into this warehouse where you know a bad person has released some sort of, you know, chemical. Well, even if they were to fall down we have the information that we--to effect a rescue. Whether it's rapid extraction and being able to run in there and grab, pull him out or actually suiting up for whatever that chemical he's exposed to. And with these meters and how we're able to kinda tether our information from these people inside we're able to expel these to all the subject matter experts in the field and get data back. As well as actual emergencies, the same scenario.