

Responding to Oilfield Emergencies in Ohio

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Ohio Oil and Gas Energy Education Program

The Ohio Oil and Gas Energy Education Program (OOGEEP) held its first official Responding to Oilfield Emergencies firefighter training program in July 2001. It was the first program of its kind in the nation, and one that continues to serve an increasingly important role in emergency response training today.

In April 2013, OOGEEP will have trained its 1,000th Ohio firefighter along with firefighters from 7 other states. Ohio's natural gas and crude oil producers have now voluntarily funded more than \$2,000,000 to provide this free training program to the Ohio fire service over the years.

Upon completion of the 2-day training, each participant can receive up to 12 CEU contact credit hours with approval by their fire chief, an optional college credit through Hocking College, OOGEEP's Emergency Response Training Guide, a supplemental training video and Class B Foam.

History

The concept to create a program to train Ohio's firefighters about the exploration, drilling and production of natural gas and crude oil, and the potential associated emergent and non-emergent situations was discussed by Ohio's natural gas and crude oil producers and fire fighters in late 1999.

The OOGEEP Board of Directors authorized funding and organized a special committee consisting of industry representatives, Ohio's Fire Service, Ohio Emergency Management Agency and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. This Committee became known as the Ohio Oilfield Emergency Response Committee.

Over the next two years, the Committee created a field guide titled: *Responding to Oilfield Emergencies*. OOGEEP also partnered with the Wayne County Regional Fire Training Facility to construct a permanent training facility that could facilitate hands-on training props to simulate both crude oil and natural gas emergencies. This location was selected so that the training could be easily accessible to fire departments in the natural gas and crude oil producing counties in Ohio.

In addition to Ohio's natural gas and crude oil industry's support, the 2-day training program is also endorsed by the Ohio Fire Chief's Association, Ohio Society of Fire Service Instructors and the Ohio Fire & Emergency Services Foundation. The training program has also received numerous state and national awards, and similar training programs are now being set up in several other oil and gas producing states using Ohio's program as a model.



Firefighters participate in 2-day training program

Training

Like any training program, education starts first in the classroom.

Firefighters are provided with a brief background on Ohio's industry; a basic "Oil and Gas 101: exploring, drilling and producing natural gas and crude oil; overview of typical crude oil and natural gas equipment and processes; potential oilfield emergencies; and recognition of non-emergency situations. Other resources addressed in the classroom include utilizing ODNR's emergency oil and gas well locator website. This website provides well location, well owner identification, and a "birds eye/topographical map" of potential water resources, nearby wells, roads, hospitals and other valuable information. These classroom materials are vital in pre-planning, during and for post incident review, and also as each fire department develop their standard operating guidelines (SOG).

Outside the classroom, there is opportunity for firefighters to enhance their knowledge and skills using Class B Foam for flammable liquids. The hands-on training allows firefighters to use the newest technology of AR - AFFF Alcohol Resistant - Aqueous Film-Forming Foam with less concentrations of 1% to 3% versus concentrations as high as 6%. Carrying AR- AFFF simplifies the need for typical responses to flammable liquid fires that may contain ethanol, hydrocarbons or both.

In 2012, reconstruction of the tank battery prop was completed and truly provides a flammable liquid "fire behavior lab" where firefighters can better understand the properties of flammable liquids when burning and boil-over conditions exist.



Firefighters get "hands-on" training opportunities

Ohio currently has 64,000 active wells producing out of 30 different geological formations. Therefore, this training also provides a networking opportunity for firefighters in those 49 counties that produce natural gas and crude oil.

Moving Forward

This year, OOGEEP will conduct a minimum of four additional training programs on April 13-14, May 4-5, September 7-8 and October 12-13, 2013. The natural gas and crude industry remains dedicated to providing Ohio's fire service with the most up-to-date training and information.

OOGEEP has also committed to further support the Ohio Fire Chief's Emergency Response Plan, and recognizes that Ohio Fire Chiefs need to be given the necessary resources to activate such a Plan if needed. ♦

For more information about OOGEEP, the Responding to Oilfield Emergency Training program, please be contact OOGEEP at (740) 587-0410, www.oogEEP.org, or visit our exhibit at the Ohio Fire Chiefs' Annual Conference.