NFPA Receives Grant to Develop Electric Vehicle Training Program for Emergency Responders

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The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has received a grant to develop a safety training program to help emergency first responders prepare for the growing number of electric vehicles on the road in the United States. The Obama Administration has established a goal of one million electric vehicles in the U.S. by 2015. The NFPA initiative, funded by a $4.4 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy, will include a series of electric vehicle emergency response safety programs available to emergency first responders. The training programs will provide emergency first responders with information they need to most effectively deal with emergency situations involving these alternative-fuel vehicles.

"Alternative-fuel vehicles bring new challenges for emergency first responders," said Andrew Klock, NFPA’s senior project manager for this initiative. "We are building on NFPA’s long history as a leader in fire safety to provide critical information about the unique characteristics of these vehicles. Our goal is to make sure that first responders have all the information they need to deal with emergency situations involving these vehicles."

The training program will include NFPA-developed classroom training courses, handbooks, simulations, webinars, videos, and other computer-based training tools.

“We want to make this training accessible for any emergency first responder,” says Klock.

Already, the Fire Protection Research Foundation, on behalf of NFPA, has begun to study some of the safety issues raised by electric vehicles. Last year, NFPA was awarded a grant from the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency to identify and help facilitate best practices and guidelines for first responders related to electric- and hybrid-electric vehicles. Issues examined in the report include the potential for electric shock, vehicle movement, and fire extinguishment and overhaul as key areas of concern for emergency responders. The report is available at www.nfpa.org/foundation.

“Every auto accident has a different scenario and factors involved. It is crucial for all emergency responders to be equipped with firsthand knowledge of each vehicle on the road,” indicates Ken Willette, manager of NFPA’s Public Fire Protection Division. “Being prepared for every possible circumstance keeps everyone safer.”

For more information and resources about NFPA’s U.S. Emergency Responder Safety Training Program for Advanced Electric Drive Vehicles, visit www.nfpa.org/electricvehicles.

NFPA has been a worldwide leader in providing fire, electrical, building, and life safety to the public since 1896. The mission of the international nonprofit organization is to reduce the worldwide burden of fire and other hazards on the quality of life by providing and advocating consensus codes and standards, research, training, and education. Visit NFPA’s website at www.nfpa.org.