
**Speech as Written for Delivery by
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**International Association of Fire Chiefs
2010 International Hazardous Materials Response Teams
Conference**

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**REMARKS FOR CYNTHIA L. QUARTERMAN
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IAFC 2010 INTERNATIONAL HAZMAT RESPONSE TEAMS CONFERENCE
BALTIMORE, MD
-- MAY 21, 2010 --**

[Introduction]

Good morning.

Thank you Chief Butters, [Chief Timothy Butters – Chairman, IAFC Hazardous Materials Committee] for inviting me here today, and giving me the opportunity to speak to so large a group of emergency response professionals.

Let me say how delighted I am to be here. Baltimore is so close to D.C., yet exists in a vortex outside of the pressure cooker. I'm sorry I will have to miss this afternoon's session on Survival in the Hot Zone.

On behalf of the Obama Administration, Secretary LaHood, and our team at the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) let me say thank you for your

commitment to public safety through emergency response, especially related to the transportation of hazardous materials. If you did not already know it, this third week of May is “National Transportation Week.” Every day, Americans rely on roads, rails, ports, and airports to get to work and to transport goods and services. During National Transportation Week we underscore the importance of the transportation system to our Nation's economy and security. We also honor the dedicated professionals who build, maintain, operate and protect our transportation infrastructure. And, connected as you are as emergency first responders to transportation accidents and incidents, I also wish to honor your life-saving services to all Americans. Thank you! As well as your ability to start work at 7:30 in the morning.

I already had the opportunity to meet some of the members and staff of the IAFC Hazardous Materials Sub-Committee, and I look forward to having the opportunity to meet more of you. I have an open door policy and believe it is important to weigh the opinions, experiences and comments from all, including our emergency response partners. You are the front line of defense protecting our transportation infrastructure

and our nation's communities. Do feel free to contact me on any hazardous materials related issue.

Recently, PHMSA has been busy addressing some Hazmat Program deficiencies identified by Congress and the Inspector General. In order to respond more nimbly to those challenges, we had to make leadership changes not only at the highest levels but throughout the organization. I think that you will be impressed by the leadership of the new Associate Administrator for Hazardous Materials Safety, Dr. Magdy El-Sibaie. I encourage you to come to meet him the next time you are in Washington, if you haven't already done so.

I know that the IAFC has had a good working relationship with PHMSA over the years, and we intend to make sure it stays that way. I believe that we have a way to go to improve our internal processes but I hope at the end of the day those changes will make you say that PHMSA is better than ever.

I apologize in advance if these topics are dry. I missed yesterday's session on driving your point home with magic. I don't have many tricks up my sleeves – at least not before dawn.

[Hazmat Reauth]

One issue big on our radar screens is hazmat reauthorization. This year has been a busy Congressional year for PHMSA as the Hill takes action on hazardous materials reauthorization and the “Hazardous Materials Transportation Safety Act of 2009.”

We look forward to continuing to work closely with Congress to address the reauthorization of both our hazardous materials and pipeline safety programs.

We are working very hard with both the House and Senate committee staffs to address the need for more hazardous materials investigators in the field. And through prior Congressional authorization, just two weeks ago we added 12 new inspectors to our regional field offices.

[Regulations]

As we continue to reengineer our program, we cannot stop making ongoing improvements to our regulations. As you probably know, one hazardous materials issue with both

transportation and safety risk consequences is the movement of lithium batteries, especially by air. We are in the middle of a rulemaking on that issue right now and plan to move forward quickly later this year to issue a final rule.

That is not the only regulatory issue of importance that we plan to tackle this year. We are also looking closely at wetlines and, the loading and unloading of hazardous materials. As many of you may know, a majority of hazardous materials accidents and incidents are associated with these modal and intermodal transportation issues. We hope to have Notices of proposed rulemaking out about those two issues later this year. We also started, and will continue to look for, opportunities to incorporate as many hazardous materials special permits into regulations as appropriate.

[HMEP]

While we take our regulatory oversight responsibilities at the Department of Transportation very seriously, we also recognize that regulation alone is not enough to fulfill our safety mission. This is why it is important for us to continue to strengthen our relationships with YOU, the emergency

responder community. We want to avoid the tipping point – when incident demands exceed local resources.

With American businesses creating new technologies containing complex chemical compounds and products, we must all consider their implications on emergency responders. These new chemicals pose very unique emergency response challenges. Only by working together to understand them can we be ready to help communities prepare. Our concern is less “if” these new products can be moved safely, but “how” – and how can we contribute to making it happen easier and sooner.

PHMSA is refocusing its efforts to help build the capability of State and local government emergency response capabilities. Through the Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness (HMEP) Grants Program we are able to provide the resources needed to train local emergency responders to effectively respond to hazardous materials transportation emergencies.

I am proud to confirm that the National HMEP Grants Program will continue to be funded at approximately \$28 million annually.

And this funding will flow to the local emergency responders for hazmat training and Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs) for preparedness planning. DOT could not implement many of its transportation safety emergency and preparedness efforts at the State, Tribal or local level without the assistance of groups such as the IAFC. Emergency responders form the backbone of hazardous materials accident and incident response.

As the organization of emergency first responder professionals, the IAFC is in a position to positively influence hazardous materials community safety every day. YOU are the front line of public safety when transportation hazardous materials accidents and incidents occur. Thank you for the unique emergency and support services you provide. DOT could not ask for better safety partners.

[ERG]

As PHMSA's Administrator, I understand the critical role that the Emergency Response Guidebook (ERG) has in aiding the emergency response community to quickly identify the hazards of a hazardous materials incident, and to protect the public

during a response. It helps to identify the must knows and must dos for first responders.

I also understand that the ERG is considered the gold standard and “go-to” resource for initial information when faced with a hazardous materials accident or incident.

Our goal is to make sure that the ERG provides the best possible information to YOU, the emergency responder.

The development cycle for the 2012 edition has begun. A significant component of this process is collecting and addressing feedback from YOU.

During this review period, we want to open the door to our partners, members of the emergency response community, Federal agencies, and other users of the ERG together to help explore:

- **Challenges facing the emergency response community in the 21st century and how those challenges impact the use and distribution of the ERG;**

- **Recommendations on ways the ERG may be enhanced to better support the emergency response community, and pros and cons of those recommendations;**
- **How the ERG is currently meeting the needs of emergency response community; and**
- **In what formats the emergency response community uses and receives the ERG by hard copy, electronic, or other format.**

In March, PHMSA held an Emergency Response Guidebook 2010 Roundtable for Responders. We thank the IAFC for its active participation in this meeting.

A Federal Register notice to solicit public comment will be published by June 11th. Your comments and inputs are vital to ensure the ERG continues to meet your needs. We look forward to hearing your perspectives.

[Cargo Tank Rollover Video]

In another hazardous materials safety effort, PHMSA and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) are working jointly to address the problem of cargo tank rollovers.

In 2005, the FMCSA commissioned the Battelle Corporation to develop a “Cargo Tank Rollover Study.” The purpose of this study was to evaluate complementary approaches to reducing the incidence of cargo tank truck rollovers. While this study looked at a broad array of issues, one key outcome was the confirmation that driver error is the leading cause of cargo tank rollovers.

And in September 2008, PHMSA, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, and National Tank Truck Carriers joined forces to create a comprehensive rollover prevention awareness video. The purpose of the video is to make drivers, and their managers, aware of situations that could lead to rollovers by focusing on three key topics: how rollovers happen, the key factors that contribute to rollovers, and what drivers can do to avoid rollovers.

The publication of this video is expected sometime this summer.

[National Hazmat Fusion Center]

Another joint effort for PHMSA is the National Hazardous Materials Fusion Center. Since 2007, our partnership with the IAFC has grown stronger in linking the Nation's emergency responders to the most current hazardous materials information, training, and technology.

Demonstrations of the portal are being conducted at conferences throughout the country, to include this conference. Regional Incident Survey Teams are operational throughout the country and are currently surveying hazardous materials incidents where lessons learned and best practices from those incidents are being shared.

The Fusion Center is the first web-based data center for the emergency responders' community. It provides crucial knowledge for decision makers at the Federal, State and local level on the transportation and delivery of hazardous

materials. With the Fusion Center, we are building a safety and information bridge useful to all hazardous materials emergency responders.

The National Hazmat Fusion Center provides key information on lessons learned from many of the serious hazmat incidents that all of you are forced to deal with in your local communities. It will also provide information about new available technologies to improve emergency responder safety and hazmat transportation.

It provides a resource for responders to communicate their personal experiences with equipment and in what works well and what does not. In many regards, the Fusion Center saves money and time for local firefighters and most importantly, lives.

Training material is being developed based from actual hazmat incidents. Through the portal this training is available free to all responders. This training can be used as on-the-spot training to enhance existing courses or as stand-alone training.

[HM-ACCESS]

In a separate effort, PHMSA is currently in the process of collaborating with modal administrations, industry and emergency response organizations to evaluate the feasibility and potential benefits in allowing the use of electronic shipping papers in lieu of paper documents.

The HM-ACCESS initiative aims to identify and eliminate barriers to the use of paperless tracking and hazard communications technologies, thereby:

(1) Improving the availability and accuracy of hazard and response information for electronically tracked shipments and packages;

(2) Improving the speed by which information is available to emergency responders when accidents occur;

(3) Improving the security of imported containers through better knowledge of shipments and reduced potential for diversion; and

(4) Allowing U.S. companies to compete more effectively in the global economy by using the best tools available.

PHMSA is moving forward with a Proof-of-Concept Study on this initiative. Specific dates and more information will be coming soon.

[Safety Culture]

Finally, I would like to discuss what I think is a most important topic – Safety Culture.

None of the efforts at DOT and our hazmat stakeholders can succeed unless we all foster an overall Culture of Safety. All of us in this room can attest to the fact that our primary mission is in one way or another tied to safety. And, it is not a job that we can do alone or take lightly.

A true Safety Culture begins with the leaders and managers of an organization who focus the attention and needed resources to meet the safety goals and mission of that organization.

There has to be encouragement and open communication by and between supervisors and employees to bring up and address safety issues.

That Safety Culture then grows and spreads to those outside organizations we work with or come in contact with on a

regular basis. Nothing great happens in a vacuum, it requires interaction and cooperation.

Safety culture change is not simple: it involves people's values and beliefs, guiding their behavior, and developing and maintaining robust, effective safety management systems. As such, it takes a great deal of time and hard work from everyone involved.

To achieve a world-class safety culture, we are developing a safety partnership between the leadership, senior management, and employees. This relies on input from the staff to harness their ownership of, and commitment to, the execution of the new cultural change strategy.

The only way we can truly improve on public and environmental safety is to work together on our common safety goals.

We at PHMSA are here to extend our hand to anyone willing to join us in improving hazmat transportation safety.

[Conclusion]

With the insight and input of the IAFC and its members, we can continue to ensure that key transportation safety

programs, and the issues surrounding them, get the attention they deserve.

Together, we can improve local emergency response capabilities and keep the nation's hazardous materials moving safely.

I would like to thank you again for having me here today.

All of us at PHMSA, and across the Department of Transportation, stand ready and willing to work with you.

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