



## Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety

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### OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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DATE: April 21, 2016

TO: Fire Chiefs of the West Virginia Fire Service

Re: New Training Assessment Survey

Dear Fire Chiefs or Designee:

This letter and the information being provided is based on recommendations given by Governor Tomblin through a report issued by the West Virginia Commission on Oil and Natural Gas Safety dated January 13, 2016. Based on those recommendations the following are requests and information needed to determine the training needs of the fire service throughout the State pertaining to, oil, natural gas, and pipeline emergencies:

1. We've created a new *Training Survey Assessment* form (enclosed) and can be found and filled out on our website at: <http://www.firemarshal.wv.gov/Divisions/Fire%20Services/Pages/Fire-Department-Services.aspx>. This form will help to assess the equipment and training needs for each department. This form (fillable PDF) is being made accessible and available to all WV fire departments no later than April 25<sup>TH</sup>; we will request the completed form be returned to our office by May 23, 2016. Upon receipt, we will assess each survey and compile the results to determine the current training already obtained and the training needs of each department by regions; with emphasis on oil, natural gas, and pipeline emergencies.
2. Once the need is determined, we'll look at a few options for training and the mechanism of delivery (on-line, classroom, industry site specific, or the combination thereof) for such training. Currently, there is free on-line training available through support of the National Assoc. of State Fire Marshals and the International Assoc. of Fire Chiefs by going to: <https://nasfm-training.org/pipeline/>; where you'll find training from the introductory level (1 – 2 hr. course) to a comprehensive level (10-12 hr. course) which is all free of charge. Another available free resource to provide best practices and enhance public safety for emergency responders is the *Pipeline Emergency Response Guidelines* from Pipeline Association for Public Awareness. These guidelines can be found at: <http://pipelineawareness.org/> under the Government & Emergency Officials section.
  - a. Another option is to work with industry stakeholders and their leadership along with instructional service providers to create a classroom course curriculum which could include but not limited to: 4 to 16 hour courses ranging from, 911 Dispatcher module, Company Officer and Firefighter module, and a Train-the-Trainer module for Pipeline Emergencies. The *Train-the-Trainer* module upon completion, would allow local instructional service providers such as WVU Fire Extension Service and RESA to make

available and train emergency responder personnel for years to come. All training deliveries would be prioritized based communities and their level of risk to these types of emergencies. This would include but not be limited to counties with largest number/miles of pipelines, all potential exposures, and large planned pipeline projects.

3. We'll also meet with these same industry stakeholders, instructional service providers, and others to find mechanisms for funding the needed training. Please note that we understand the sacrifice many make to serve their communities and this non-mandatory training is and would only being provided to enhance your abilities to be more proficient and safe at such type incidents.
4. To assist fire departments in accessing the training survey, informational resources and current training opportunities we've placed a "Pipeline Emergency for First Responders" link on our website to streamline and provide easy access to the previously mentioned resources and training information. With this access and provided training it should improve the understanding of pipeline operation, products, and hazards through providing certain levels of training, which in effect improves responder safety.

I and this agency will continue to research, meet, and collaborate with the necessary stakeholders to help and provide access to resources and the best training possible to meet the goals as outlined by the governor. Through these collaborations, we'll build relationships and continue to establish the necessary relationships between first responders, stakeholders, and the public to improve the quality of life for all who live and visit our great State.

I hope that you'll immediately assist us with this assessment project by responding quickly to this request. Thank you for your willingness to serve and assistance.

Sincerely,



Kenneth E. Tyree Jr.  
State Fire Marshal

Enc. Training Assessment Survey or access on line at:

<http://www.firemarshal.wv.gov/Divisions/Fire%20Services/Pages/Fire-Department-Services.aspx>