HYDRANT LOCATOR SIGNS INSTALLED ON I-84

Take a drive along Interstate 84 through West Hartford and you will notice new fire hydrant locator signs along the side of the highway. These signs were installed as part of a recent Connecticut Department of Transportation project to resurface the Interstate highway. The ConnDOT project engineer and the fire chief of West Hartford worked together to determine the most appropriate location for the signs. They were added to the highway project, which was funded by the Federal Highway Administration and ConnDOT. There was no cost to the town.

These signs direct firefighters responding to incidents on the highway to the nearest hydrant. The street address locating the hydrant is imprinted on the sign. In several cases where hydrants were located on the other side of a noise barrier, doors were cut in the barrier to allow firefighter access to the hydrant.

Three years ago, the Greater Hartford Incident Management Steering Committee transmitted proposals for hydrant locator signs, hydrant access doors in noise barriers and standpipes on the limited access highways in the Hartford area. These proposals were developed by local fire departments and are being used as a reference list for ConnDOT when funding opportunities become available. For the most part, these are items that can be considered for inclusion in an existing or future highway project.

Local fire departments who would like to update their proposals for standpipes, hydrant locator signs or hydrant access doors in noise barriers, or who would like to initiate a proposal can obtain additional information from Karen Olson, at CRCOG, 860-522-2217 or kolson@crcog.org.

RAFS EQUIPMENT OPERATIONAL

The project to upgrade the local police RAFS radio system is now installed and operational. This project, funded with State DOT and Federal Highway Administration monies, provides new antennas and related equipment on Jon Tom Hill in Glastonbury and on Talcott Mountain in Avon.

This state of the art equipment will improve RAFS transmissions both east and west of the Connecticut River. Police officers who abandoned use of their RAFS radios in the past because of poor coverage in their area can now use existing radio equipment to communicate with police from neighboring towns. They can also use this system to talk to State Police troopers, and through that line of communication, tie in to the TIM radio system.

The RAFS system allows direct officer-to-officer communication, without having to relay messages through a dispatch center. It is owned and maintained by the Capitol Region Chiefs of Police Association.
TIM RADIO SYSTEM UPDATE

The TIM radio system, which allows communication between emergency responders enroute and on the scene of an incident, has been expanded. State Police have joined local fire departments, the State DEP and the State DOT as participants in the system. And, the operating protocol has been revised to allow more responders to activate the system.

State Police Participation

With the installation of crosspatch control boxes in the State Police dispatch center, the first responding trooper now has immediate access to the TIM radio system. That trooper can activate the TIM system as soon as he or she knows that the incident will require a multi-agency response effort. Given the differing operating characteristics of the TIM radio system in the two Troops with responsibility for most of our Hartford area towns, however, two different operational procedures are in place.

Troop H. Troop H (based in Hartford) has access to the TIM radio system through the crosspatch control mechanism that allows each trooper to use the TIM system through his or her existing radio equipment. Communication on the TIM radio frequency, however, requires that the trooper actually switch to that frequency and temporarily blocks the trooper’s regular line of communication. Therefore, while the trooper will not be monitoring the TIM radio frequency during an incident, the dispatch center does monitor the TIM frequency. The dispatcher can at the request of other TIM users (fire, DOT or DEP): 1) relay messages to the trooper on scene, or 2) ask the trooper to switch to the TIM radio frequency for a short, direct communication with the other TIM users.

Troop H also has two handheld TIM radios that, in the event of a major incident, will be brought to the scene allowing for more extended direct communication with other TIM radios users.

Troop C. The TIM radio frequency does not reach the entire area served by Troop C (based in Tolland). This issue is resolved by responding agencies using the talk-around feature of their TIM handheld radios.

Troop C also has access to the TIM radio system through the crosspatch control mechanism that allows each trooper to use his or her existing radio equipment. Unfortunately, talk-around will not work with the trooper’s existing equipment. In areas where the TIM radio frequency does not work except through the talk-around feature, the State Police Trooper will be unable to directly participate in any communications made over the TIM system. However, Troop C does have two handheld radios and these radios can be brought to the scene of a major incident in the event that these communications are needed.

Other State Police Troops. Several towns participating in the TIM radio system are served by other State Police Troops. The Incident Management Steering Committee will soon be taking steps to increase participation in the TIM radio system by those State Police troopers.

Expanded Operating Protocol

The TIM operating procedures protocol was revised last summer. This protocol now allows more participants, in particular respondents from the ConnDOT and CT DEP, to activate the TIM system. Local fire departments and CSP, acting as incident commanders, have always been allowed to activate the system. It was felt that widening this authority to activate the system could lead to greater usage by those directly benefiting from the need to communicate on their way to the scene with those agencies already on scene.
MORE TIM NEWS

North Central Connecticut Emergency Medical Service Council conducts a roll call of TIM users each Thursday morning at 9:00 a.m. This was preferred by the majority of the respondents to a survey of TIM participating agencies undertaken recently on that subject. The person responding to the roll call should not be the agency’s dispatcher, but should be the person who will use the TIM radio (either the handheld radio or the frequency programmed into your own radio). If more than one person is assigned the TIM radio, each agency should designate at least one person to be responsible for responding to the roll call. That assignment may be rotated among responsible personnel. This roll call is designed to remind participants that they have this “tool” in their incident management “toolbox,” so that the use of the TIM system will become more automatic over time.

Participants in the TIM system include the Connecticut State Police, the Connecticut Department of Transportation, the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, and local fire departments that respond to emergencies on limited access highways in the greater Hartford area. (See Incident Management News #7 for a map depicting towns participating the TIM radio system.)

The TIM radio system is operated on two pairs of radio frequencies licensed to the North Central Connecticut Emergency Medical Services Council.

As always, if you have any ideas for improving the functionality of the TIM radio system, please forward them to Karen Olson at CRCOG, 860-522-2217 or kolson@crcog.org.

SAVE THE DATE

Connecticut Transit and Federal Transit Administration’s Connecting Communities: Emergency Preparedness and Security Forum

January 8 and 9, 2003
Hartford Hilton

Register online: http://transit-safety.volpe.dot.gov/Training/EPSSeminarReg/default.asp

NCC-EMS COUNCIL

The North Central Connecticut Emergency Medical Services Council is a non-profit agency charged with the responsibility of developing an efficient emergency medical services system in north central Connecticut.

As part of its responsibilities, the NCC-EMS Council owns and operates Coordinated Medical Emergency Direction (C-MED), the regional emergency medical services communication center. This program allows a wide range of communication services for emergency responders and receiving hospitals. Additional information about the NCC-EMS Council, C-MED capabilities and the other services provided can be found on their website: www.northcentralctems.org.
INCIDENT MANAGEMENT STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS
Members of the Steering Committee are listed below.

Local Fire Departments
Chief David Dagon
East Hartford, 528-4171
Chief Edward Richards
Enfield, 745-1878

Local Police Departments
Capt. Michael Fallon
Hartford, 722-6150
Chief Daniel Coppinger
Plainville, 747-1616
Chief James Strillacci
West Hartford, 523-5203

Emergency Medical Services
North Central Connecticut
EMS Council, Inc.
Hugo S. Costa, Jr., 769-6055

Towing Services
Towing & Recovery
Professionals of CT
Roman Pryputniewicz, 667-1605
Tim Vibert, 677-9074

Regional Planning Agencies
CRCOG: Karen Olson, 522-2217
CCRPA: Margus Laan, 589-7820
MRPA: Robert Haramut, 347-7214

CT State Police
Lt. Robert Corona
Troop C, 896-3200
Lt. Lucian St. Germain
Troop H, 534-1018

CT Department of Transportation
Bill Stoeckert, 594-2630
Jim Mona, 594-345
Robert Mongello, 258-4501

CT Department of Environmental Protection
Mark DeCaprio, 424-3361

Incident Management:
• Coordination
• Cooperation
• Communication

Questions or Comments?
Karen Olson
Capitol Region Council of Governments
241 Main Street, Hartford, CT 06106
phone: 522-2217 ext. 15
e-mail: kolson@crcog.org

A highway incident management newsletter for the Hartford, New Britain, and Middletown areas. Prepared by:
Capitol Region Council of Governments
Connecticut Department of Transportation

CRCOG
241 Main Street
Hartford, CT 06106