



Position Statement:

08-04, NFPA 472 / 473 Standards Update (2008 Edition)

The International Association of EMS Chiefs (IAEMSC) recognizes and fully appreciates the inherent dangers to our members and EMS responders associated with hazardous material emergencies. The safety of EMS responders is first and foremost the ultimate priority of this organization and our members. Additionally, the continuously evolving and growing threat of terrorism along with the use of hazardous material substances as weapons during illicit activities have significantly altered the traditional philosophies of hazardous materials emergency response and EMS operations thereat.

The refinement of emergency response tactical and operational procedures to meet the anticipated demands and challenges created by the potential threats and response scenarios of the new millennium has reinforced the need for an Emergency Medical Services response capability. The ability to have properly trained and equipped EMS professionals to render appropriate effective life saving intervention to responders and the public is paramount.

The role of EMS must be consistent with defensive response operations that are identified in both NFPA 472¹ / 473² and 29 CFR 1910.120 (q)³.

The IAEMSC supports the updated NFPA 472/473 standard addressing response concerns of non-fire service disciplines, specifically the refocus on operational philosophies and responder safety consistent with a multi-disciplinary, coordinated response to these incidents.

Emergency responders, regardless of disciplinary priorities, cannot safely and effectively respond to a hazardous material scene, a terrorism event or criminal incident involving hazardous materials if they do not understand hazardous materials response and have not been equipped to properly protect themselves from the threat elements.

EMS personnel must be trained and equipped to perform their expected tasks consistent with existing applicable laws, regulations and standards including but not limited to: 40CFR311⁴, 29CFR1910.120⁵, 29CFR1910.134⁶ & NFPA 472⁷/473⁸.

¹ NFPA 472: Standard for Competence of Responders to Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction Incidents -

<http://www.nfpa.org/aboutthecodes/AboutTheCodes.asp?DocNum=472&cookie%5Ftest=1>

² NFPA 473: Standard for Competencies for EMS Personnel Responding to Hazardous Materials/WMD Incidents - <http://www.nfpa.org/aboutthecodes/AboutTheCodes.asp?DocNum=473>

³ http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=standards&p_id=9765

⁴ http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title40/40cfr311_main_02.tpl

⁵ http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=STANDARDS&p_id=9765

⁶ http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=STANDARDS&p_id=12716

⁷ NFPA 472: Standard for Competence of Responders to Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction Incidents -

<http://www.nfpa.org/aboutthecodes/AboutTheCodes.asp?DocNum=472&cookie%5Ftest=1>

Unfortunately, there continues to be contemporary obstacles for EMS personnel and organizations receiving adequate personal protective equipment and training necessary to safely and effectively respond to these incidents.

Therefore, it is the position of the International Association of EMS Chiefs (IAEMSC) to fully support the 2008 version of NFPA 472 / 473.

Moreover, the increased level of responsibility for all emergency response disciplines, especially EMS, requires that the federal government provide to local jurisdictions and EMS agencies the necessary fiscal relief to acquire the requisite training & equipment as well as the costs associated with maintenance and service.

NFPA 473 mandate that all Emergency Medical Services responders be trained to at least the core competencies of NFPA 472 Operations Level Responders requires that Emergency Medical Services organizations have access to and receive previously unavailable federal, state, and local funding to support the equipment and training needs addressed in this standard.

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Drafted and Approved:

International Association of EMS Chiefs
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Denver, Colorado

Updated and Approved:

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Raleigh, North Carolina

⁸ NFPA 473: Standard for Competencies for EMS Personnel Responding to Hazardous Materials/WMD Incidents - <http://www.nfpa.org/aboutthecodes/AboutTheCodes.asp?DocNum=473>