



The SIREN UPDATE

Special Farewell Message

I would like to take this time to thank all of the incredibly dedicated EMS and Fire personnel that I have had the honor and privilege to work with over the past ten years here at the Division of Emergency Medical Services.



Before I came to the Division of EMS, I responded to many crashes working for the Ohio State Highway Patrol. Before EMS squads were as prominent as they are now, I had to bandage up a lot of victims and wait for vehicles to transport them. After a few years, EMS Squads with qualified EMT personnel began responding and my job became a lot easier—and crash victims were much more likely to survive.

I learned very early on in my Patrol career to respect and depend on Fire as well as EMS. I rolled up to many crashes that involved a variety of situations that dictated the need for Fire personnel to respond. Whether it involved a car fire or hazardous spill, I looked forward to them arriving and taking charge of the scene, allowing me to complete the police investigation.

It was exciting for me to be able to come to the Division of EMS and work more closely with these professionals in a little different arena. I have made a lot of friends in EMS and Fire over the past 10 years that will last a lifetime. However, a wise man once wrote that there is a time for everything, and I have decided that it is time for me to take a different direction and will be stepping down as the Executive Director of the Division of EMS. I have truly enjoyed sharing the past several years with you and experiencing many successes, and learning from some less successful adventures.

Ellen Owens will be the Interim Executive Director while the EMS Board goes through the selection process of filling my position.

Thank you again for all of your help over the years.

EMS and Fire will always have a special place in my heart.

Sincerely,

Richard N. Rucker

Communication System Survey

The Ohio Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC) recently sent a survey to all EMS, Fire and law enforcement agencies. All EMS and fire departments are encouraged to complete and return the survey. The survey should take approximately about twenty minutes to complete.

The SIEC is tasked with increasing interoperability between the various radio communications systems operated by first responders statewide. The first step in this process is the assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of Ohio's current communication system.

The survey should be completed by May 6th and returned via e-mail to nancy.hall@aecom.com. Questions regarding the survey should be directed to Dave Ford at (614) 889-7154.

Ellen Owens Appointed Interim EMS Director

State EMS Board Chair Jim Davis and Ohio Department of Public Safety Director Thomas Charles, recently announced the appointment of Ellen Owens, a twenty-five year veteran of the Department of Public Safety to serve as interim executive director of the Ohio Division of Emergency Medical Services (EMS). Owens succeeds Richard N. Rucker, who has accepted a position with Ohio State Highway Patrol Operations.

"With her extensive background in the administration and operations of the Division of EMS, Ms. Owens is uniquely qualified to serve as the agency's leader through this transitional period," Director Charles said.

Owens, 52, of Ashville, Ohio currently serves as the Executive Officer of the Division of EMS. She began her career in state service with the EMS office in 1987, when it was a part of the Ohio Department of Education. The Division of EMS transferred to ODPS in 1992.

"She is well-respected by the State EMS Board and her peers in the Division of EMS, as well as by the EMS community. I look forward to working very closely with her during the coming weeks," said Board Chair Jim Davis.

Prior to state service, Owens worked as a paramedic with Gallia County EMS in Southeast Ohio. She received her M.A. Degree at Morehead State University in Kentucky. Owens is currently certified as a paramedic and volunteer firefighter.

Blast Injury Training Online

The Homeland Security Committee of the State Board of EMS is recommending completion of the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) online training dealing with patient care for blast injuries.

The training provides the latest clinical information regarding blast-related injuries from terrorism. The training can be found at: http://www.bt.cdc.gov/masscasualties/bombings_injurycare.asp. The CDC awards 2.3 CNE for the course.

Blast injuries are categorized into four areas by cause of injury.

- Primary – Caused by the blast wave.
- Secondary – Caused by flying debris.
- Tertiary- Caused by the blast wind.
- Quaternary – Caused by other vectors (heat, radiation, etc.).

Given all of the competing interests for our time, many may see the word bombings in the link for this training, and think "Why do I need this?" It is sometimes hard to see the benefit when you cannot see the risk to your community.

This training is focused on terrorist bombings being the cause of the blast injury, but the injury care is applicable across a wide range of events, including explosions that are not related to bombings as well as severe weather events.

During the first three months of this year, natural gas or propane explosions occurred in three Ohio counties.

January 2011– Lake County – Gas line explosion damages 20 homes.
February 2011–Columbiana County – Explosion rattles community.
March 2011 – Portage County – Two killed in propane explosion.

The most common cause of death in a blast event is secondary blast injuries. These injuries are also the most common type of injuries experienced during a tornado.

It does not have to be a terrorist event to make the training received in this course a value to you and your community.