

Daisy Mountain firefighters receive hazmat training

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A north Phoenix fire department now has a hazardous-materials team after 17 firefighters completed training financed by two federal grants.

Previously, if a tanker spilled chemicals on Interstate 17 in north Phoenix, the Daisy Mountain Fire Department alerted nearby fire departments to oversee the cleanup. That changed Friday, when the department announced that a group of Daisy Mountain Fire District firefighters had completed hazmat training. The fire district covers the North Valley, including Anthem and New River.

The cost of the training and a hazmat van cost about \$300,000 combined, which came from the Department of Homeland Security's Urban Area Security Initiative, fire officials said.

"Although all firefighters have basic training involving hazardous materials, the crews housed at Fire Station 141, at New River Road and Circle Mountain Roads in New River, were selected to undergo extensive training," said Dave Wilson, a spokesman for the Daisy Mountain Fire Department. "These crews will be responsible for monitoring the presence of hazardous chemicals, containing spills and leaks as well as decontaminating those who may come in contact with the dangerous materials."

The department applied for grants in 2008 and 2009.

The 2008 grant of \$50,000 covered training for firefighters. The 2009 grant of \$250,000 financed the hazmat van, which is equipped with computers and is capable of researching chemicals on site, said Dave Maxwell, fire division chief.

It took nearly two years for the firefighters to get trained by the Phoenix Fire Department, Maxwell said.

The Daisy Mountain Fire Department responds to about 50 hazmat calls per year, he said.

"This specialized training and equipment makes not only our area safer but our firefighters safer as well," Maxwell said.

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