

International Fire Training Centre launches new Electric Vehicle fire training course

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The UK's first dedicated Electric Vehicle (EV) fire course, which will provide emergency responders with practical training in managing EV involved fires combined with critical safety awareness, has been developed at the International Fire Training Centre (IFTC), managed and operated by Serco.

Featuring an innovative and realistic 'EV fire simulator', the course includes electric vehicle thermal runaway and fire simulation. The simulator has been designed and engineered to facilitate multiple scenarios to enhance the training opportunity, enabling effective and repeatable training of electric vehicle fire containment and suppression tactics.

Fire personnel will participate in, and receive instruction on fire suppression techniques, including vehicle fire blanket application and under chassis cooling. In addition, non fire first responders will have the opportunity to participate in vehicle fire blanket application, as a precautionary measure, and to safely quarantine cars with a suspected fault. They will also observe the live fire exercises, seeing and hearing the simulated conditions of an EV fire.

Speaking about the new course, Ryan Flaherty, Serco Training and Resilience Director, said: "With almost one in four – that's 14 million – electric vehicles already in operation around the globe, it's never been more important to know how to safely contain and suppress Electric Vehicle fires. The EV market is extensive, and as we all strive to meet the decarbonisation challenge the figure is only set to grow, extending far beyond cars and vans, electric vehicles to include personal mobility devices, commercial and passenger carrying vehicles as well as work equipment and vehicles.

"Yet many responders tell us that they don't feel prepared to keep up with this evolving picture, so we are

delighted to be launching our new Electric Vehicle Responder course that will provide the crucial training, education and the opportunity to participate in safe, controlled and realistic simulated practical exercises learning how to safely approach and contain these EV fires.”

The IFTC has partnered with Martin Lown BEM from FireWiseUK Learning Academy. Martin, served in the UK Fire and Rescue Service for 30 years and is a trained, qualified and experienced Fire Scene Investigator, specialising in

Vehicle Fire Investigation and Alternative Fuelled Vehicles (AFVs) / EVs, teaching internationally.

Using his expertise to design and develop the simulator in partnership with Bridgehill Fire Blankets, Martin said: “With the worldwide green agenda dictating the transition to zero emission vehicles, and the subsequent rise in AFVs on our roads, vehicle risk is changing rapidly, as numbers of AFVs increase, dramatically. Our experience shows that Emergency Responders find themselves ‘behind the curve’ in knowledge and tactics due to the rapid advancements. Lithium Ion batteries, often used to power electric vehicles, can pose more significant risks and hazards if they develop faults, or are involved in a collision or fire. First responders are concerned and want to be best prepared for how to manage this new type of fire, be that on our highways, runways or in industry”.

The new course is aligned to the new IMI National Occupational Standards EV02a & EV02b for Electric Vehicle Response and will provide essential awareness, recognition and knowledge of Electric Vehicle abnormal thermal events and fires, with unbelievably realistic training conditions using the new EV Fire Simulator.