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Hazmat Team Lead First/Last Name: Lieutenant John Ross

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Department Name: Aurora Fire Department

Department Address: 3770 McCoy Drive

City: Aurora

State: Illinois

Zip Code: 60504

Department Phone Number: 630-256-4080

Number of Active Hazmat Team Members: 27

Area Served by Hazmat Team: The city limits of Aurora consist of 45.91 square miles. Our Hazmat Team is also a member of Illinois MABAS (Mutual Aid Box Alarm System) 13, which is a state-wide deployable team. MABAS 13 consists of the following departments: St. Charles, Elburn, Geneva, Batavia, North Aurora, Sugar Grove, Aurora Township, Montgomery, Big Rock, Maple Park, Burlington, and Kaneville.

Population Served: The City of Aurora population is about 180,530 people residing within the city limits.

Annual Number of Hazmat Calls: 536 in the last year.

Annual Total Income the Hazmat Team Receives:

- The Hazmat specific budget excluding salaries, ranges between \$5,000 - \$10,000.

Department Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/AuroraILFire/?locale=fo_FO

Department Website: <https://publicsafety.aurora.il.us/Fire>

1. **What is the total amount (minimum \$500 - \$2,500 maximum) that your hazmat team is requesting?**

Include the specific costs of the hazmat equipment to be purchased and/or the cost per person for attending advanced training (course costs only, the award cannot be used to cover travel expenses). NOTE: You should not be utilizing any of this funding to attend or purchase any training that is provided FREE through TRANSCAER.

The City would like to request the maximum award available through this program. Initial information provided indicated a maximum award amount possible of \$5,000, however, within the application, it is stated that \$2,500 is available. With a total estimated cost of \$4,033.65 we propose to purchase an AEMC Emergency Responder Ground/Test Kit. As discussed in further detail below, the City of Aurora Fire Department Hazardous Materials Team has responded to over 600 Hazardous Condition calls within the past 36 months. During such events, the equipment proposed for acquisition is vital to the safety of the Aurora Hazmat members when mitigating flammable liquids or other fluids, which could cause a static electric response. This equipment is critical in minimizing the risk of static electricity sparks and explosions involving hazardous materials.

Though our overall department budget appears significantly larger than many other municipalities, the City of Aurora represents the second largest municipality in the State of Illinois. Additionally, our Hazmat team represents approximately 95% of the MABAS 13 area cache and manpower. Despite historic contributions, state budgetary constraints have entirely diminished a significant source of our team's hazmat-specific funds. Furthermore, existing budget line items are carefully and specifically allocated to support necessary day-to-day operations. This leaves us with a quickly growing backlog of aging and unusable equipment to address through alternative funds.

2. How would this funding benefit your hazmat team?

Please be specific about how this funding will increase your team's response capabilities to hazardous material transportation incidents. Describe if this funding will be used to improve any mutual aid responses or assist with calls/incidents outside of your department's area.

The AEMC Emergency Responder Ground/Test Kit will enhance our response capabilities to hazardous material transportation incidents in several key ways:

Improved Safety: The kit significantly reduces the risk of sparks and explosions caused by static electricity during flammable hazardous material transfers. This is crucial for ensuring the safety of our first responders and mitigating the risk of secondary incidents.

Efficient Grounding and Testing: It includes advanced tools like the AEMC Model 6422 digital ground resistance tester, which provides quick, one-button testing. This minimizes our response time and ensures accurate grounding before handling hazardous materials.

Compliance with Standards: The kit meets NFPA 472 requirements, ensuring adherence to established safety protocols for hazardous material response. This compliance supports operational effectiveness and regulatory adherence.

Versatile Applications: The kit is designed for a wide range of hazmat scenarios, including chemical spills, petrochemical incidents, and transportation accidents. Its comprehensive components, such as grounding cables, auxiliary ground electrodes, and bonding clamps, make it adaptable to various situations.

Enhanced Operational Coordination: By establishing an equipotential plane of ground, the kit facilitates safer hazmat transfer operations. This capability aligns with integrated Incident Command Systems (ICS) under frameworks like NIMS, improving our interagency coordination during emergencies.

In summary, the AEMC Emergency Responder Ground/Test Kit would provide our department with essential tools to respond safely and effectively to hazardous material transportation incidents while reducing risks and enhancing operational efficiency.

The City of Aurora as briefly mentioned, represents approximately 95% of the MABAS 13 area required to respond to Hazardous Materials and WMD incidents throughout Kane County. Until the events of 9-11, the city was the only source of manpower for this Division. Obtaining this equipment would greatly increase our ability to respond to events not only in Aurora, but throughout Kane County.

Additionally, the City of Aurora encompasses 45.91 square miles of land, and lies within four counties, including Kane, Kendall, DuPage, and Will Counties. Our staff are responsive to Hazmat events within our entire geography in addition to surrounding events in Kane County.

3. Please briefly describe the hazmat incidents that could occur or have occurred in your community?

The City of Aurora, Illinois, has responded to 643 hazardous condition calls over the past 36 months, with several notable incidents highlighting the fire department's hazmat response capabilities:

- 1. Chemical Mixture at Arbor West Apartments (March 18th, 2024):** A Level 2 hazmat response was initiated after muriatic acid and chlorine were accidentally mixed, producing a strong odor and toxic fumes. The area was evacuated, and our hazmat technicians neutralized the chemicals and ensured public safety. No injuries were reported, and the chemicals were professionally disposed of.
- 2. Mail Incident at State Representative's Office (December 9th, 2024):** A staffer in State Rep. Barbara Hernandez's office fell ill after opening suspicious mail. Multiple hazmat teams responded to assess potential chemical or biological hazards, and the staffer was hospitalized. This incident remains under investigation, and the hospitalized staffer has since recovered.
- 3. Chemical Spill on West Illinois Avenue (December 15th, 2022):** Two chemicals were accidentally mixed, creating a vapor cloud that led to two hospitalizations. Hazmat teams contained the situation, and two firefighters sustained minor injuries during the response due to the failure of personal protective equipment. This event further highlights the importance of obtaining adequate and reliable equipment.

These incidents underscore Aurora's robust hazmat response protocols, including rapid deployment of specialized teams and effective containment strategies to protect public health and safety.

In terms of Hazardous Material incident risk, Aurora is home to several educational, healthcare, and industrial facilities, which pose potential risk as described in further detail herein. These risks can arise due to a combination of the materials used, stored, or transported in these sectors. The below highlighted items include a summary of potential risks associated with each sector:

Educational Facilities

- Laboratory Incidents:** Schools Marmion Academy, the Illinois Math and Science Academy (IMSA), Aurora University, or Waubensee College likely have science laboratories that use chemicals. Accidental spills or improper storage of laboratory chemicals could lead to hazardous events.

- **Maintenance Chemicals:** Cleaning agents, solvents, and disinfectants used in educational institutions could lead to chemical exposure or reactions if mishandled. This applies to many institutions; however, in combination with proximity to laboratories, this risk is elevated.

Healthcare Facilities

- **Medical Waste:** Hospitals and clinics such as Rush Copley Medical Center and Ascension Mercy Hospital generate biohazardous waste, including sharps and contaminated materials, which could pose risks if improperly disposed of or transported.
- **Radiological Materials:** Healthcare facilities may use radioactive materials for diagnostic imaging or treatment. Accidental leaks or improper handling could lead to radiological incidents.
- **Pharmaceutical Chemicals:** Spills or leaks of chemical agents used in treatments could also result in hazardous exposure.

Industrial Facilities

- **Chemical Manufacturing and Storage:** Aurora's industrial sector includes facilities that handle flammable, corrosive, or toxic chemicals. Accidental releases during storage or transport could lead to fires, explosions, or environmental contamination.
- **Transportation Incidents:** Hazardous materials are frequently transported via roadways near our industrial zones. Vehicle accidents involving these materials could result in spills or explosions.
- **Waste Disposal Risks:** Improper disposal of industrial waste like solvents, acids, or heavy metals could lead to environmental hazards or even health risks for other nearby communities.

General Community Risks

- **Household Hazardous Waste:** Residents contribute to hazardous waste through items like automotive fluids, paints, pesticides, and cleaning agents. Improper disposal can result in chemical reactions or contamination.
- **Proximity Risks:** The location of hazardous material storage near schools or residential areas increases the risk of widespread impact during incidents like fires or explosions.

Aurora's diverse mix of facilities necessitates robust planning for hazardous material management and emergency response to mitigate risks effectively.