

Training firefighters in today's digital world

By Dave Kuiawa, Director of Training

If you take a look at the newswire you will no doubt encounter reports that detail the tragedy of people hurt in plant explosions, poisoned in confined spaces, and sickened by gas releases. Some of these situations are unavoidable, but most are not. In today's digital world we have multiple channels to share best practices, and training programs can often make the difference between an incident being handled in a safe manner and one that ends catastrophically. We have the technology to detect these hazards, but if that technology is used in an unfamiliar manner, the data can often be inaccurate and the outcome fatal.



In the late 1970s, Industrial Scientific was formed to provide gas monitoring solutions to the mining industry. In coal mines around the world, horrific accidents were all too common. Workers were continuously exposed to explosive concentrations of methane, lethal doses of carbon monoxide, and asphyxiating levels of oxygen. Detecting these gases and knowing how to work safely in the face of danger were keys to averting disaster and making it home safely on a daily basis. Initial and continuous training were then, and are still, the keys to achieving a safe work environment.

Industrial Scientific has diversified since those early days and now supplies gas monitoring equipment (both portable and fixed) to virtually every conceivable industry worldwide. Along with achieving the "highest quality products," the company believes in "providing the best customer service." This includes ensuring that workers are properly trained in hazard awareness and gas monitor operating principles. Technology has allowed us to deliver this training in various forms but

the goal is always the same; make the complex topics understandable, elevate the level of safety for the end user, and eliminate death and injury due to gas accidents. This is a lofty goal, but it is the main principle that drives the company.

Firefighter Hazard Awareness Training On-line (FFHA 301)

Industrial Scientific recognizes that face-to-face training often comes with great challenges. First, it involves getting all of the appropriate people in the same room at the same time. This in itself can be costly and difficult. Post 9/11, individuals view travel through different eyes. Some are willing and eager while others shy away. Additionally, training styles and session dynamics can sometimes leave trainees with diverse impressions. Finally, face-to-face training, unless recorded, cannot be referred to at a later time.

For these reasons, Industrial Scientific has chosen to utilize today's Internet technology to produce training modules that can be delivered online. Because training programs are delivered online, the audience can access the program, at their own pace, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Training is delivered in a consistent manner and because the program is modular, a student can always go back and review material to gain a greater understanding.

The Firefighter Hazard Awareness (FFHA 301) Class can be accessed by visiting our website at www.indsci.com and clicking on the Training Central logo. Once enrolled, the student will have access to 10 different educational modules. These include:

- **Course orientation:** familiarizes you with the class and instructor
- **Understanding Atmospheric Hazards:** reviews gas hazards Firefighters face
- **Atmospheric Testing:** discusses best practices in gas sampling
- **Sensor Technology:** details available technologies and capabilities
- **Bump Testing and Calibration:** reviews the importance of routine maintenance
- **Applications:** discusses common applications a Firefighter might face
- **Instrument Review:** details Industrial

Scientific instruments and how they operate

- **Data Logging – Hygiene Information:** reviews industrial hygiene terms
- **Instrument Maintenance:** discusses proper maintenance techniques and automated systems
- **Course Wrap up:** Parting thoughts from your Instructor

These modules are presented in a "flash" video format and consist of narrated presentations with imbedded video clips. At the end of each module, there are recommended reading links that give the student greater insight into the curriculum. Additionally there is a five-question multiple choice/true-false quiz so that the students can test their comprehension before moving on to the next module. Once all modules are complete, the student will take a 50 question "certification assessment" exam. If the student scores 80% correct or higher, they will receive a competency certificate via e-mail.

When it comes to training, everybody learns in different ways. Industrial Scientific recognizes this and offers gas monitor training manuals, videos, computer based training (CBT), DVD, face-to-face, and on-line classes. The main driver for this diversity is our desire to eradicate gas accidents and elevate safety throughout the world. When it comes to gas monitoring, the consequences are far too high to approach the situation from an uneducated standpoint. In the world of hazardous gases the old saying does not apply, what you don't know CAN hurt you!

To learn more about Industrial Scientific's Training Services, visit our website at www.indsci.com and click on the Training Central button. Once there you can review all of the face-to-face, video, and on-line training courses offered. If assistance is needed, please feel free to contact the Training Department at 1-866-788-4353.

Dave Kuiawa is Industrial Scientific's Director of Training. With 19 years of experience, Dave has held positions including Product Manager, Service Manager, and Sales Manager, North & South America. Dave can be reached at 412-490-1867 or please e-mail him at dkuiawa@indsci.com.