



Highlights:

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For information regarding the EMR-ISAC visit www.usfa.dhs.gov/emr-isac or contact the EMR-ISAC office at: (301) 447-1325 and/or emr-isac@fema.dhs.gov.

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Marijuana Grow Houses a Threat to Firefighters

Illegal marijuana grow operations pose a significant risk to first responders, who may inadvertently stumble into these very dangerous situations during a fire call or other emergency. From the outside, they often look like regular homes – sometimes even in affluent neighborhoods. Inside it is a very different story.

Several recent reports of firefighters responding to marijuana grow houses shed some light on the problem, and Firehouse Magazine recently reviewed [hazards commonly found in grow houses](#). It would be constructive for fire officers to ensure their personnel are familiar with these hazards, as some of them are extremely hazardous to life and safety. Common signs of an illegal grow operation:

- [Doors and windows barricaded or sealed](#) from the inside.
- Special sodium or metal halide lighting.
- Sources of CO2, such as from [pressurized tanks and propane cylinders](#).
- [Fertilizers and other chemicals](#).
- Ventilation ducts, [wiring](#), pipes or tubes, and plastic sheeting, all entanglement hazards.

Many illegal grow houses have [jerry-rigged wiring](#) to mask the amount of power used at that location, which puts them more at risk for electrical fires. Also, firefighters should use extreme caution if they encounter operators of the grow, as they could become combative or attempt to stop anyone from entering the building.

These are deadly situations; last year a [battalion chief with the Fire Department of the City of New York was killed](#) at a Bronx grow house when the building exploded and he was struck by debris. Educating firefighters to recognize the signs of a possible illegal grow house operation helps to protect responders and the public from possibly disastrous consequences.

(Source: [Firehouse](#).)

Law Enforcement Use of UAS

More law enforcement agencies are finding uses for Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) to support their duties. While they have to go through the licensing process with the Federal Aviation Administration just like everyone else, they also must ensure privacy rights of citizens are addressed in any UAS program.

[“Considerations and Recommendations for Implementing an Unmanned Aircraft Systems \(UAS\) Program”](#) from the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) helps agencies navigate the complex legalities of privacy laws, documentation and information collection while still focusing on all the benefits a UAS program has to offer.

Agencies should also be transparent with the community about any UAS program from planning to implementation. This is a key component to address the many civil rights/civil liberties and privacy concerns before the program even takes flight. Building trust with the people you serve is a key part of maintaining a strong and respectful relationship.

In addition to the above resource, the Justice Technology Information Center (JTIC), a program of the National Institute of Justice, is looking for law enforcement officers currently involved in their agency’s use of UAS and who may be interested in attending a UAS focus group meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss law enforcement’s use of UAS technology and to help drive the testing of UAS for that purpose. Please contact JTIC at asknlectc@justnet.org for more information on the UAS focus group meeting.

(Source: [NIJ](#))

Refresh Training Programs With Short Drills

It is important for first responders to keep skills up-to-date and be able to respond quickly to an incident. Regular, repetitive training has proven to be extremely effective toward this goal, but sometimes the training gets stale and it’s beneficial for training officers to find different approaches or mechanisms to break old patterns.

“Burst training” is a fitness trend in which you do very short bursts of high-intensity exercise, which reportedly causes the body to respond in a specific way. It is possible to apply this method to work-related training as well with short, quick drills or instruction on one specific topic to maximize both effort and time.

One way to accomplish this is with the use of media, such as short videos. The [Reality Training series hosted by FireRescue1](#) offers videos on a variety of fire service topics. They run between 3-5 minutes long on average and cover officer safety, operations, management and leadership topics. Some examples:

- The Irate Civilian
- Fire Attack at a Hoarder Home
- The Ghost Ship Fire: A Look at Code Enforcement
- Firefighter Trapped on a Roof

[Police1 also has Reality Training videos](#) produced through July 2016. These run longer, mostly between 5-10 minutes, and also cover wide-ranging topics such as:

- Four Tips for a Safe Approach and Cover
- Managing Stress in the Wake of an Officer-Involved Shooting
- How Cops Can Avoid an Ambush
- Responding to an Incident in Plainclothes

Using short videos such as these together with a brief training exercise or short review of departmental procedures can break training up into shorter snippets that can fit almost anywhere in a schedule.

(Source: [FireRescue1](#))

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