



# PRESS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## LEARNING A NEW DECONTAMINATION PROCESS

New kit used to upgrade, improve process during HAZMAT responses

**MUSCATINE, Iowa** – Members of the Muscatine Fire Department began training last Friday on a new decontamination process. The HAZMAT (Hazardous Material) Decontamination Kit improves and speeds up the decontamination process and will be used on HAZMAT calls.

The kit was purchased by Muscatine County Emergency Management for Muscatine Fire following the successful application to the Homeland Security Grant Program written by Emergency Management Director Chris Jasper. Muscatine Fire Captain Andrew McSorley was also instrumental in developing the request for the decontamination kits. The \$11,673 grant was announced by FEMA/HSEMD earlier this year and was accepted by the Muscatine County Emergency Management Commission at their January 17, 2024, meeting.

Muscatine Fire Department is designated as the regional team for Region 16 and provides services to Muscatine, Louisa, Henry, Washington, and Keokuk counties in Iowa. The Hazardous Incident Response Team (HIRT) team consists of members of Muscatine Fire Department and was formed Dec. 17, 1997, as a multi-disciplined special response team that serves the community in the areas of hazardous materials, confined space rescue, high angle rope rescue, trench rescue, and clandestine lab clean up.



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Over time, the Fire Department took on more responsibility and it became apparent that each member of the department needed to be trained to take on those responsibilities. HIRT was eventually dissolved and in 2005 a new HAZMAT tractor trailer was purchased through a federal grant.

Each member of the Fire Department is now trained in the areas of auto extraction, confined space rescue, high angle rescue, tactical emergency medical services, trench rescue, water and ice rescue, and hazardous material response.

Green shift started decontamination training with the new kits last Friday.

"These kits allow us to apply new best practices in decontamination procedures," Lieutenant Joe Rymars said. "It updates a decontamination process that really hasn't changed much in the last 100 years, and takes a lot of inefficiencies out of the process, including the use of large amounts of water, which may cause more contamination issues with the water runoff."

Rymars attended classes in Virginia to learn the new process and to earn certification as a teacher. He is now leading the training for Muscatine Fire Department staff.

The kit includes material to be used to decontaminate first responders and/or citizens who may have come into contact with hazardous chemicals.