

News from the Savannah River Site

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SRS Fire Department enhances safety with new and improved hazmat vehicle



SRSFD's vehicle fleet was designed and built in Appleton, Wisconsin, home of the world's largest manufacturer of fire apparatus', Pierce Manufacturing.

AIKEN, S.C. (October 14, 2024) – The Savannah River Site Fire Department (SRSFD) recently received a new addition to their vehicle fleet, a Pierce Manufacturing Velocity hazmat truck. This truck replaces an existing vehicle from the mid-90's, offering 21st century technology and improvements to aid in emergency response.

The truck features a dual lens camera with thermal and optical abilities mounted on a 45-foot telescoping mast, advancing situational awareness of incident scenes regardless of weather or time of day. With an industrial compressor, the truck can offload liquids more efficiently by pressurizing the tank they are stored in and creating a controlled flow. This is especially helpful when transferring large volumes to another vehicle or into a water supply for firefighting.

While its purpose is to mitigate hazardous materials, the hazmat truck can also be used as a command cab or rehabilitation space where emergency responders can go to assess vitals,

replenish fluids and rest a moment in case they are needed again. The command cab features a backup onboard internet connection which ensures constant communication is maintained, a weather station and multiple display monitors to access images from the telescoping camera, view drone footage, broadcast television and more. The body of the truck also has several fold-down doors that double as seats, giving responders a place to sit while donning their personal protective equipment.

Equipped with a 12-volt generator, the hazmat truck possesses the capability to power all onboard equipment. This allows the engine to be shut down on long incident scenes, reducing the noise on the scene and complications that could result from diesel regeneration systems.

SRSFD Chief Travis Scott stated, “I’m excited about the capabilities and added safety measures this truck brings us. Hazardous material incidents are some of the more high-risk, low frequency emergencies we are subject to respond to; therefore, having the best equipment and technology available enhances the safety and mitigation efforts of our responders.”

This addition will not only increase the safety of Savannah River Site (SRS) employees, but also the community, as SRS has seven mutual aid agreements with surrounding counties. This year, the SRSFD have gone above and beyond to support the community, responding to 29 mutual aid calls – nearly double the amount they typically respond to annually. The agreement is reciprocal for SRS, meaning the SRSFD can also request the help of other local agencies should the Site need additional aid in an emergency.

“We hold the safety of SRS employees and citizens in our surrounding communities as a core value,” said Rick Sprague, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions Senior Vice President, Environmental, Safety, Health and Quality. “In an emergency, the SRS fire fighters and their equipment must be prepared to respond to diverse facilities and environments quickly and efficiently. Enhancing the emergency fleet provides our responders with better resources when every second matters.”

According to Scott, the old truck is being excessed and donated to the Department of Energy’s (DOE) Brookhaven National Lab in New York who does not currently have a large vehicle on their fleet capable of storing their specialized hazmat or rescue equipment. “Being able to help other DOE-Complex fire departments is something we take a lot of pride in,” he continued. After refurbishment, Brookhaven plans to use this truck for special response.

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