

# ASKRAIL APP PROVIDES HAZMAT DATA FOR FIRST RESPONDERS

Thousands of first responders from throughout the nation have signed up for one of freight rail's latest innovations: a mobile app called AskRail. Launched in October 2014, the app is designed to prepare responders for a rail emergency by providing immediate access to accurate, timely data about what type of hazardous materials a railcar is carrying. Qualified emergency responders who have completed rail emergency training sponsored by one of the Class I freight railroads or at the Security and Emergency Response Training Center (SERTC) can download and use the restricted features in the AskRail app. In addition, railroads can offer the app to known emergency responders along their routes.

## TRAINING AND COMMUNITY RESPONSE PLANNING

California's 26 freight railroads collaborate with cities, counties, and the state and federal governments to provide training to first responders and draft response plans in the case of a possible rail incident involving a hazmat spill. More than 20,000 first responders are trained every year through individual railroad efforts and industry programs, like SERTC in Pueblo, Colorado. SERTC is a collaborative effort of the rail industry and the Federal Railroad Administration to give first responders hands-on experience with simulated hazmat incidents. The center

also offers free, web-based training for those who cannot attend in person.

City officials should reach out to their local railroad representatives to work with them on safety issues related to potential hazmat spills.

## LOCAL TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

In California, Union Pacific, Burlington Northern Santa Fe and their short-line railroad partners provide free training using railroad and Transportation Community Awareness and Emergency Response (TRANSCAER) resources. Founded in 1986 by Union Pacific and the Dow Chemical Company, TRANSCAER is a voluntary national outreach effort that focuses on assisting communities in preparing for and responding to a hazardous material transportation incident. (More information is available at [www.transcaer.com](http://www.transcaer.com).)

Cities interested in obtaining training should contact Dave Buccolo, TRANSCAER Region 4 coordinator; phone: (209) 405-4884; email: [fivebuccs@icloud.com](mailto:fivebuccs@icloud.com). Information about SERTC's online training opportunities can be found at <http://sertc.org/course-type/web>. ■

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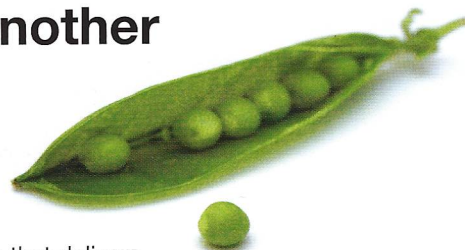
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