PI’s SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE—with its new crop of members—is up and running. I’m honored to co-chair this committee alongside Robert Milner, CAPP, director of parking and transportation services at the University of Maryland, Baltimore. We worked in fire service and law enforcement, and we are grateful for the opportunity to take the reins and work with a committee that has a wonderful blend of representatives from the public and private sectors.

We have an ambitious agenda this year. The first item is a challenge for our fellow IPI members: Complete the emergency response training modules offered on the IPI website. These online independent-study classes are offered through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and—even more exciting—offer points toward CAPP recertification.

The value of these points cannot be underestimated considering the training is free, the skills are invaluable, and you will receive foundational knowledge that will enhance your ability to work with other agencies in the event that disasters strike your area.

Cooperation and Communication

Our committee plays an important role in studying the role parking operations and employees play in disaster responses and offering relevant information and training opportunities. A common theme that runs through these courses is the need for interagency cooperation and interoperable communication, terms of art that boil down to ensuring everyone works together to provide the most efficient aid to minimize the loss of services. Facets of FEMA’s Incident Command System (ICS) are taught as part of CAPP classes, and First Observer Plus Training was offered at the 2017 IPI Conference & Expo in New Orleans, La. First Observer Plus is also one of the courses available on the IPI website; it takes less than an hour to complete and provides one point toward CAPP recertification.

Other courses that offer CAPP points are:

- Introduction to ICS, 3 points.
- National Incident Management System (NIMS): An Introduction, 3 points.
- ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents, 3 points.
- Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Management and Operations, 4 points.
- Fundamentals of Emergency Management, 6 points.

That’s 23 total points, including the point for First Observer, and more than enough to get you past the recertification hump. Of course, you still need to balance these courses with points from

By Victor A. Hill, MPA, CAPP

Take the FEMA Training Challenge

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other categories—I’ll say that IPI’s other online offerings are outstanding. If you’re not sure how to tackle the courses, take them in the order they’re presented above.

**The Courses**

The intro course lays out the foundations of the ICS, and the concepts are scalable and transferrable. You don’t need an incident to use ICS. Its appeal is in its applicability to anything that requires organization and logistics. We use it on my campus for special events that can be as simple as a departmental breakfast or as complicated as a track meet that attracts thousands of athletes and spectators.

NIMS and the National Response Framework courses take the national view and contextualize ICS, while the single-resource course provides insights into specialized approaches. EOC operations is important for understanding the nerve center aspects of incident management. The fundamentals class, which offers the most points, gives even more detail.

**Benefits**

IPI is offering credit for the FEMA courses, which provide immediate understanding and value to anyone who works in the parking industry. Walking the walk and talking the talk make a significant difference during disasters. Emergency responders and incident commanders appreciate liaising with officials who understand command structures and operational needs. Take the time to complete these courses and consider which ones your employees and others in your organization should enroll in. Visit parking.org/learnonline for the full list of courses.

**Outside Resources**

After you do that, look at the rest of FEMA’s offerings and keep going. As of this writing, the FEMA training website is training.fema.gov. Dozens of additional courses are available for free, and many of them are specific to the private sector, airports, municipalities, and higher education. ICS courses include specialized training for higher education and other disciplines, for example, and our employees are required to complete basic ICS and its higher education module.

Other courses worth considering cover social media, community emergency response teams, continuity of operations, damage assessment, workplace security awareness, active shooter, and mitigation measures that are disaster-specific. The courses I’ve listed are the ones I’ve found particularly useful and are by no means definitive.

Be sure to share your experiences and ideas with IPI’s Safety and Security Committee. One of our goals is to provide examples of best practices that promote safety and efficiency in disaster response. My email address is listed here—please get in touch anytime.

**Victor A. Hill**, MPA, CAPP, is director of parking and transportation services at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and co-chair of IPI’s Safety and Security Committee. He can be reached at vhill@uwlax.edu.