

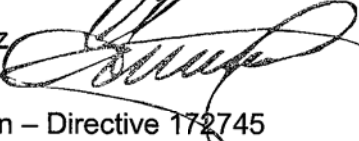
Memorandum



Agenda Item No. 2(B)1
June 5, 2018

Date: May 11, 2018

To: Honorable Chairman Esteban L. Bovo, Jr.
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

From: Carlos A. Gimenez,
Mayor 

Subject: AskRail Application – Directive 172745

The following information is provided in response to Resolution No. R-58-18 adopted by the Board of County Commissioners (Board) on January 23, 2018, directing the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department (MDFR) to evaluate the feasibility and advisability of making the AskRail Application (App) available to the department.

The AskRail App is an application that can be installed on any smart device which provides real-time information about any hazardous cargo being transported by rail cars throughout the United States and Canada. The App features four different sections that provide necessary information to first responders. The four sections available in the App are: Car Lookup, Railroad Contact, Hazardous Materials, and Placard References. Fortunately, rail car incidents are rare when it comes to transportation emergencies. In the last five years, MDFR has had two rail car incidents where hazardous products were involved. Below are the findings for each section after a thorough evaluation was conducted by the MDFR Special Operations Division, Hazardous Materials Bureau.

Car Lookup: This feature is the most useful and the most important component for public safety. This feature enables the first responder to enter the rail car identification that is stamped on the side of every rail car. When the rail car identification is entered, the application provides the product and the amount contained in the rail car. The MDFR evaluators entered data for more than 50 rail cars over the evaluation period and the information provided by the application was accurate. Of the four features that the application provides, all MDFR evaluators felt that this feature was extremely beneficial for first responders.

Railroad Contact: MDFR's Fire Communications Center already provides all railroad contact information when requested by the first responder. The Fire Communications Center assures that all contact numbers are updated on a regular basis to assure accuracy. In Miami-Dade County, there are only two cargo railroad systems: Florida East Coast (FEC) and CSX Transportation. The AskRail App provides the contact information for CSX Transportation only; the FEC contact information is not available.

Hazardous Materials: This feature is useful and user friendly. However, this information is already provided by the Emergency Response Guidebook (ERG) which is required to be on every MDFR apparatus.

Placard Reference: This feature is also useful and user friendly. However, this information is already provided by the ERG that is required to be on every MDFR apparatus.

All three evaluators found that of the four sections on the application, the Car LookUp feature was extremely valuable, while the other three sections duplicated information found within reference materials already carried by every MDFR apparatus. MDFR has seven Hazardous Materials units strategically placed throughout Miami-Dade County: Battalion 11, Hazmat 69, Engine 56, Engine 63, Ladder 17, Rescue 28, and Platform 59. Hazmat 69 is considered the Hazardous Materials Specialty Unit that contains most of the research capabilities necessary during a hazardous materials call.

One great advantage of the AskRail Application is that it is available for free. Once the AskRail App is downloaded onto a smart device, approval to use the App is necessary from AskRail. Overall, MDFR has determined that the AskRail App provides useful information when dealing with rail car incidents and serves as an additional tool to assist with rail car emergencies.

If you have any questions regarding this program, please contact Dave Downey, Fire Chief, at 786-331-5118.

Per Ordinance No. 14-65, this report shall be placed on the next available Board meeting agenda.

c: Abigail Price-Williams, County Attorney
Geri Bonzon-Keenan, First Assistant County Attorney
Maurice L. Kemp, Deputy Mayor, Office of the Mayor
David Downey, Fire Chief, Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department
Cathy Jackson, Interim Commission Auditor
Christopher Agrippa, Clerk of the Board
Eugene Love, Agenda Coordinator