

Industrial fire training underway today

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RINCE GEORGE – What a bit diesel and aviation fuel can do. Make a big fire. The scream of the flames is audible as it gains in intensity. It's the job of forty trainees to put the inferno out.

“We're out here training with our responders from all across Canada in flammable liquid fire fighting,” explains Spencer Buckland, President of Emergency Response Assistance Canada. “These are industrial firefighters that ERCA trains on a regular basis.”

These folks are training to work for Emergency Response Assistance Canada works with dangerous goods shippers and transporters, like CN Rail, to ensure compliance with Transport Canada's regulations. They're not your average firefighters. They specialize in tackling industrial fires.

“They mock-up, for example, a leaking truck or a railcar that catches on fire. The responders will apply foam or dry chemical, depending on the situation, to put it out.”

Emergency Response Assistance Canada is a non-profit that has crews all across the country. If local responders like a municipal fire department find themselves in a situation beyond what they are capable of handling, these guys are called in. and these forty are from all over the country.

“We've got teams out of Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario. They're part of our network of responders who respond in the rare event that something goes wrong with flammable liquids transporting by rail or road.”

The Prince George airport training facility is a regular site for training the local firefighters and there's a good reason this site was chosen for this high-end training.

We do train all across Canada. Certainly, the opportunity to come up to Prince George and use the facilities here, does allow us to burn live fuel,” explains Buckland. “You can't mock this up with water. You gotta use the

real thing. So we do this in other locations in Canada and we try to spread it out so we get practice in different jurisdictions in the country.”

These crews have been here for three days and, today is the last day before they pack and head home, while others will head to other cities to do it all over again.