



NEWS RELEASE

Media Contact:

Amanda Vela | (317) 873-1585 | www.zionsville-in.gov | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)

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Zionsville Fire Department equipped with new thermal cameras

The Zionsville Fire Department (ZFD) has purchased technology to help increase firefighter safety and improve situational awareness. ZFD now has thirteen Seek Thermal Pro cameras, two on every engine and ladder, two on each frontline ambulance and one in the training division.

Thermal imaging technology isn't a new concept. ZFD has been using thermal cameras since the department was all-volunteer based. According to Brian Miller, ZFD Deputy of Operations, the original thermal cameras that the Department used in the 90s were the size of a football and worn on a firefighter's special helmet. The new thermal camera, the Seek Thermal Pro camera, is smaller (the size of a smartphone) and offers better pixel resolution.

One of the main purposes of the thermal camera is to help firefighters locate a victim and see more clearly under low visibility conditions. This allows the firefighters to both protect themselves and save lives. Other uses include viewing the temperature of hazardous materials and locating any hotspots or hind fires after the fire is extinguished.

"For a firefighter lost or disoriented, we talk about situational awareness a lot," Miller said. "When we walk up to a building, we see different things than the average person does – how many windows are there? How many doors? We are trying to improve situational awareness if some of those things are missed. It's a tool to locate a window or door or an egress in a hurry."

The cameras are also being used in the training division. The training division received a Seek Thermal Pro camera last fall.

"The camera is another tool in our toolbox for our firefighters," Division Chief of Training Mark Hart said. "These allow us, from a training standpoint, to train in the most realistic situations as possible. We can put a lot of smoke in a training room and then the training division can use this tool to keep an eye on the firefighters that are doing the training drill."

Every riding assignment – the seat that a ZFD member is assigned to each shift – is now equipped with a Seek Thermal Pro camera.

"We assign the cameras to every apparatus and seat assignment so each time a firefighter comes to work this furthers our commitment to protecting our citizens and visitors through highly trained and well-equipped firefighters," Miller said.

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