When firefighters arrive on the scene of a car accident, they know the risks that gasoline and diesel pose and how to mitigate and respond to those risks. As fuel cell and battery electric cars began appearing on the roads, first responders needed to understand the risks that electricity and hydrogen posed and the correct response steps.

Frontier Energy, as the operator of the California Fuel Cell Partnership, quickly filled a void in California. We started the first training program to teach first responders about fuel cell vehicles and hydrogen with a combination of classroom training, hands-on exercises, training videos, and reference materials. Over time, the ER training program evolved to include highway patrol, hazmat, and tow truck drivers and add sections dealing with batteries. U.S. DOE contracted with Frontier Energy to create a national training program that included materials, train-the-trainer sessions, an online forum for questions and exchanging lessons learned, and a national database to report incidents and conduct root cause analysis.

Over two decades, Frontier Energy has directly trained more than 20,000 first responders and nearly as many trainers.