

February 2008 Newsletter

An Ounce of Prevention Is Worth a Pound of Cure

This article describes Ben Franklin's journey as he learns of a need for better ways to combat fires and uses perseverance, intelligence, and ingenuity to fulfill that need.

The article also demonstrates how training and policy helped to ensure a safe and secure feeling among the citizens of Philadelphia as well as reducing the overall damages sustained from fires.



Synopsis: Developing a Safety Culture in the Fire Service

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Maintaining Acceptable Safety Performance

A cultural change requires patience, time, continuous communication, and long-term support. Communication is the key. Culture change is achieved one small step at a time. Small successes are used to support larger efforts. It is necessary to start changing small parts of the organization first and then expand efforts. All those who want change must carefully model the desired behavior, in this case firefighter safety.

Firefighter Safety: Turnout Coat/DRD Information

At a training session this week, a Firefighter in upstate NY was performing a wall breach maneuver when his DRD (Drag Rescue Device) got caught on a sheet rock nail.

SEAT BELTS SAVE LIVES!

Seat Belts Save Texas Firefighters in Rollover...

All four firefighters inside the engine, however, escaped safety because every one of them was wearing a seat belt. The fatality was that of a civilian involved in the pileup.

Has Your Department Taken the National Fire Service Seat Belt Pledge?

- » **Take the Seat Belt Pledge:** [Click Here to Download the Seatbelt Pledge](#)
- » **Download:** [A Seat Belt Poster](#)

Virginia Firefighter Life Safety Advocate Program Update

The Virginia Fire Chief's Association has adopted the Firefighter Life Safety Advocate Program and placed it under their Health and Safety Committee. This is great news for all emergency service providers in our state.

USFA, NFPA Report: Mitigation of the Rural Fire Problem in the U.S.

The United States Fire Administration (USFA) announced today the release of a comprehensive report from a joint project with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) to examine what can be done to reduce the high death rate from fire in rural America. This report, [Mitigation of the Rural Fire Problem - Strategies Based on Original Research and Adaptation of Existing Best Practices](#), provides implementation strategies for the reduction of rural fires

- » **Also:** [Wildfire Training for Rural Firefighters](#)

Online TRAINING



DOE/IAFF
Training for
Radiation
Emergencies

» **Download:**
[Instructor Materials,](#)
[PPTs, and Video](#)

USFA: Wildfire
Training for
Structural
Firefighters

» **Download:**
[Skills Crosswalk](#)



FEATURED Events



2008 Safety
Summit (IPASS)
Emmitsburg, MD
March 14 - 16, 2008
Read More:
» [About the Event](#)

Facilitators'
Forum
& Initiatives
Workshop
SC Fire Academy
April 26 - 27, 2008
Read More:
» [About the Event](#)



Just a Thought...

Lt. died as a result of heart disease. - 1909

Deputy Fire Chief died of heart disease. -1971

Captain died of a heart attack - 2008

100 Years and the cause of death is still the same.

What does this tell you?

How Do You Like Our New Newsletter Format? [Click Here to Take a Short Survey](#)

An Ounce of Prevention Is Worth a Pound of Cure

Benjamin Franklin's advice was originally in reference to firefighting!

In 1736 Benjamin Franklin organized Philadelphia's Union Fire Company...almost fifteen years before he started experimenting with electricity and gained international fame.

The following article describes Franklin's journey as he learns of a need for better ways to combat fires and uses perseverance, intelligence, and ingenuity to fulfill that need.

The article also demonstrates how training and policy helped to ensure a safe and secure feeling among the citizens of Philadelphia as well as reducing the overall damages sustained from fires.

- Intro by Jen Underwood, Editor

Information courtesy of ushistory.org

On a visit to Boston, Benjamin Franklin noted that the inhabitants of his native city were far better prepared to fight fires than the natives of his adopted city, Philadelphia. Upon returning home, he consulted the Junto, a benevolent group dedicated to civic and self-improvement, and asked for their suggestions on better ways to combat fires. Franklin also sought to raise public awareness about the city's dire need to improve fire-fighting techniques. In a Pennsylvania Gazette article of 1733 Franklin noted how fires were being fought in Philadelphia. "Soon after it [a fire] is seen and cry'd out, the Place is crowded by active Men of different Ages, Professions and Titles who, as of one Mind and Rank, apply themselves with all Vigilance and Resolution, according to their Abilities, to the hard Work of conquering the increasing fire."

Goodwill and amateur firefighters were not enough, though. Franklin suggested a "Club or Society of active Men belonging to each Fire Engine; whose Business is to attend all Fires with it whenever they happen."

For the February 4, 1735 issue of The Pennsylvania Gazette, Franklin sent an anonymous letter to his own newspaper entitled Protection of Towns from Fire. Writing as an "old citizen" he admonished:

In the first Place, as an Ounce of Prevention is worth a Pound of Cure, I would advise 'em to take care how they suffer living Coals in a full Shovel, to be carried out of one Room into another, or up or down Stairs, unless in a Warmingpan shut; for Scraps of Fire may fall into Chinks and make no Appearance



19th c. image of Franklin as



Fire company emblems.

until Midnight; when your Stairs being in **firefighter.** Flames, you may be forced, (as I once was) to leap out of your Windows, and hazard your Necks to avoid being oven-roasted.

He further urged that chimney sweeps should be licensed by the city and be held responsible for their work. He noted that a neighboring city (Boston), "a club or society of active men belonging to each fire engine, whose business is to attend all fires with it whenever they happen." He noted that via practice and regular meetings, the firefighters' skills improved.

Under Franklin's goading, a group of thirty men came together to form the Union Fire Company on December 7, 1736. Their equipment included "leather buckets, with strong bags and baskets (for packing and transporting goods), which were to be brought to every fire. The blaze

battlers met monthly to talk about fire prevention and fire-fighting methods. Homeowner's were mandated to have leather fire-fighting buckets in their houses.

Other men were desirous of joining the Union, but were urged to form their own companies so the city would be better protected. Within a short span of time, Philadelphians witnessed the birth of the Heart-in-Hand, the Britannia, the Fellowship, as well as several other fire companies.

Thanks to the matchless leadership of Benjamin Franklin, the dire fear of fires expired in Philadelphia which became one of safest cities in the world in terms of fire damage.



Leather bucket used to fight fires.

With your leadership we can make sure everyone goes home.

Synopsis: Developing a Safety Culture in the Fire Service

WILLIAM PESSEMIER

Firefighter deaths and injuries continue to be a problem for the US fire service. Over the last 20 years, the fire service has seen significant improvements in safety standards, equipment, and practices. Despite these changes, firefighter death rates are actually on the increase. From 1995 to 2004, the firefighter death rate increased from 4.94 firefighters per 100,000 fires to 6.64 firefighters per 100,000 fires. This is an increase of 34% in the firefighter death rate over the last ten years, which represents a decrease in the safety performance of the US fire service.

Other high risk occupations have been able to make significant improvements in safety performance by utilizing the concept of safety culture. Safety culture is defined as the ability of individuals or organizations to deal effectively with risk so as to avoid loss and yet still achieve organizational goals. Applied to the fire service, this means that a fire department with a strong safety culture would be able to get the fire out without any firefighter injuries or deaths.

As with organizational culture, safety culture consists of three levels: behaviors, value and beliefs, and underlying assumptions. Behaviors are the practices and actions that firefighters take which are directly related to safety. Examples include the use of seat belts and SCBA, as well as vehicle response practices. Values are the generalized, enduring beliefs about the personal and social desirability of different modes of behavior and different organizational practices. For example, safe practices may not have value for individuals because they do not lead to socially or personally desirable outcomes. In the case of seat belt use, putting a seat belt on may be viewed as getting in the way of operational performance, leading to undesirable personal outcomes.

Underlying assumptions are the unconscious, taken for granted perceptions about what should be done and why. Basic assumptions tell members of the organization how they should perceive, think, and feel about issues and problems. Some of the basic assumptions that may be held in the fire service, for example, include the inability to control risks and hazards on the fireground, the acceptance that firefighting is a hazardous profession that will inevitably lead to some deaths and injuries among firefighters, that the public expects firefighters to take whatever risk is necessary to save fire victims, and that high levels of risk taking result in high levels of operational performance and organizational value.

Various models of safety culture have been used as the basis for analyzing safety performance within high risk occupations. One of these models is called the Reciprocal Determinism Model of safety culture. This model consists of three elements: safety management systems, safety related behaviors, and organizational safety climate. Safety management systems include the policies, structure, process and practices that are used to manage critical safety related behaviors. Safety related behaviors are those practices and actions that are considered to be critical for the safety of organizational members during the course of their work. Organizational safety climate is a reflection of the values and beliefs that members of the organization hold with regard to safety.

In this model, safety performance is improved by developing a strong safety management system and identifying critical safety behaviors. These critical safety behaviors are managed, monitored and reviewed through the safety management system on a regular basis, using the same principles, practices, and techniques employed in quality management. Safety management then becomes a continuous process of improvement, with the principle focus

on the prevention of unsafe behaviors that would otherwise lead to accident, incidents, injury or death.

In order to improve the safety performance of the US fire service, it may be useful to examine the potential of the RDM model and how it can be developed for implementation within fire departments. However, it is important to recognize that significant obstacles may limit the use of this model for improving safety performance. Changes in safety performance will require a change in the safety culture of the fire service, a change that may not be compatible with the current identity of the fire service. Typically, when an attempt is made to implement a change that is not consistent with or not congruent with the existing identity of members of an organization, resistance to the change is significant, and can prevent the successful implementation of the change.

Organizational identity consists of two essential components: culture and image. Culture is the internal element of identity and consists of the assumptions, values and practices shared by members of the organization. Culture results in an internal self-definition of the organization. It provides a sense of who we are, what we do, why we are important. Image is the external element of identity and consists of a set of beliefs about the organization held by the people outside of the organization, such as the public, elected officials, and other fire service organizations. Image results in an external definition of the organization or a sense of what other think and feel about us as individual members of the organization and about the organization as a whole.

Attempting to change the safety culture in a fire department has the potential to have a high level of inconsistency with the current identity of the organization. Making a change in safety culture means that some longstanding assumptions will be challenged, that significant values and beliefs will be examined, and that certain behaviors and practices will be modified. As a result, a certain level of resistance can be expected.

Changes that challenge the identity of an organization can result in resistance in the form of defensive behaviors. These defensive behaviors include denial, rationalization, attributional egotism, and self aggrandizement. Denial is used as a way of coping with conflict, anxiety and distress that would otherwise be extremely difficult if not impossible to deal with. Research has suggested that people who engage in denial do so in order to conceal disagreeable truths from themselves and others as an unconscious attempt to maintain individual and collective self-esteem. Rationalization involves the development of justifications for actions that are consistent with the current self-concept. This may include what has been called retrospective sense making, which occurs when individuals provide explanations of their past actions in order to preserve their self-esteem.

Rationalization may sometimes be used along with the concept of attributional egotism, which occurs when people provide self-serving explanations for incidents. These explanations may be self-serving in that unfavorable outcomes are attributed to external factors, while favorable outcomes are attributed to the efforts of the members of the organization. If attributional egotism is present, then self-aggrandizement may not be far behind. This refers to the propensity for people to overstate their accomplishments. Self-aggrandizement can also be accompanied by self-absorption, claims to uniqueness, and feelings of invulnerability.

Several other obstacles must be dealt with if the safety culture of an organization is to be transformed so that safety performance can be improved. These include what has been termed "melioration bias", "rare-event bias", and the cost of safety behaviors. Melioration bias refers to the tendency to assign greater weight to short-term results when making a choice between safe and unsafe action alternatives. The rare event bias concerns the tendency to under-estimate the likelihood of being injured or killed by rare and uncontrollable events. As a result, the short term benefit of unsafe behaviors has greater value than the low probability and long term benefit of safe behaviors, resulting in unsafe acts. In other words, the value of the unsafe acts exceeds the value of safe acts, and is reinforced by the fact that the unsafe acts result in immediate benefits. The long term effect of repeated experience in making the choice to engage in unsafe practices is reinforced learning and development of the shared belief that unsafe practices provide immediate benefits and are the accepted and expected practice within the organization. Unsafe practices then become the norm.

Changing the safety culture within the US fire service begins with one fire department at a time. In order to make that kind of change, fire departments need to understand the concept of safety culture and how changes in safety culture can conflict with existing ideas about identity. It is also important to understand the potential reaction in terms of the defensive behaviors that may result from efforts to change the assumptions, values and behaviors of the organization as part of the development of a more effective safety culture.

In addition, fire departments need to be able to put effective safety management systems in place. Critical safety related behaviors will need to be identified and targeted for monitoring, measurement and review. Departments will also need effective tools and techniques for managing critical safety behaviors, such as Risk Control Systems, Preventive Action Plans, and Corrective Action Plans. Measuring and reviewing safety performance will require the development of active measures of performance so that unsafe practices and behaviors can be reduced or eliminated before they result in injury or death.

Developing a more effective safety culture in the fire service requires the commitment of fire administrators to the development and implementation of more effective systems for managing critical safety behaviors. It will also require a commitment of resources in order to sustain a continuous process of safety improvement. Most importantly, it will require the active participation and involvement of the members of the department. Each member of the fire service must be willing to challenge ineffective assumptions; to reprioritize their values; and to support new and more effective safety practices. The end result will be a fire service that provides not only a higher level of safety for the firefighters, but also a higher level of reliability in terms of the services provided to the public. Most importantly, a fire service with a strong safety culture benefits individual firefighters who live longer more productive lives.



Chief Bill Pessemier spent 25 years in the fire service serving in a number of positions throughout his career, from firefighter to training officer to fire chief. Prior to his retirement as the fire chief in Littleton, CO, Bill was the incident commander for the fire and emergency medical response to the shootings at Columbine High School.

Bill was appointed by James Lee Witt, past Director of FEMA, as a member of the America Burning Recommissioned Panel. In his role with the International Association of Fire Chiefs, Bill has recently written a handbook on interoperability titled: *Top Priority: A Fire Service Guide to Interoperable Communications*.

Bill holds a Master of Public Administration degree from the University of Illinois and is currently working on a Doctoral Degree in Public Affairs at the University of Colorado at Denver.

Maintaining Acceptable Safety Performance

Chief Michael D. Chiaramonte CFO, MIFireE

An older very experienced chief trained in old school firefighting went to visit a younger chief in another state that he met at the National Fire Academy. The younger chief asked his new friend if he would like to ride with the department. It had been a long time since the senior chief had ridden in the crew cab of engine and he thought it might be a kick and a good experience. Soon enough, a call came in and the visiting chief got into the crew cab. He was what he thought, ready to go, when a young probationary firefighter, with a bright orange helmet shield, looked at the chief and said, "Chief, seat belt." This astonished the chief. In his day a probationary firefighter would never tell a chief what to do. However, the chief in an instant turned to the young firefighter and said, "Thanks son." He thought that this was truly a demonstration of the courage to be safe. He also thought that he and his department often talked safety but this department has brought safety from a mere campaign to a change in culture.

What makes systems that must be in place to ensure that changes such as safety are not just a campaign but also a way of life? What performance measurements can be used to assure the organization that a culture change, in fact, has occurred?

Toolpack Consulting, a major business consulting company, states, "Organizational culture can be defined as the shared assumptions, beliefs, and norms of a group."

A cultural change requires patience, time, continuous communication, and long-term support. Communication is the key. Culture change is achieved one small step at a time. Small successes are used to support larger efforts. It is necessary to start changing small parts of the organization first and then expand efforts. All those who want change must carefully model the desired behavior, in this case firefighter safety. While one or two people with strong ideas must often spearhead cultural change, the change must dominate and permeate the entire organization. Complacency has to be avoided. There must be a firm commitment from the top. This firm commitment may not be easy at times and must be consistent. However, it is important to note that in order for any change in culture to occur, everyone in the organization must be involved. To get this type of buy in, the changes must be sincere as well as reasonable and meaningful. To affect change, especially in the area of safety, it is not necessary to reinvent the wheel simply to seek and study other departments that have successfully created a safety culture.

Peter Drucker declared that every organization needs one core competence: innovation. The concept of core competencies was developed in the management field. C.K. Prahalad and Gary Hamel introduced the concept in a 1990 Harvard Business Review article. It wrote that a core competency is "an area of specialized expertise that is the result of harmonizing technology and work activity." Using this definition of a core competency, it is apparent that this author may believe that safety absolutely should be a core competency of every fire department in this nation. How many of the important innovation opportunities do we miss? Mr. Drucker says that we miss these innovation opportunities because we don't see them or we dismiss them. Is this true of safety? Only you can answer that question.

If a department is to make safety, more than a campaign but a departmental core competence innovation and, in fact, a way of life, they must start with creating a strategic plan. This plan should include a vision statement and mission and value statements that include terms referring to safety. Departmental goals and the action items that bring these goals to fruition must also include references to safety.

Once the strategic plan intrinsically includes safety, the members of the department must be motivated and committed to that plan. Some ways of accomplishing this are:

- Encourage department members to participate in setting goals and determining how to reach those goals.
- Provide department members with the tools and training necessary to establish and maintain a safety culture.
- Establish clear and understandable safety policies and procedures.
- Empower all members of the department to make safety decisions.
- Management must be accessible. Listen actively and empathically.
- Give credit and praise to those department members who demonstrate safe behavior and reward those who practice safe behaviors.
- Encourage department members to seek training, attend conferences and classes related to safety beyond those provided by the department.
- Establish a team attitude.
- Encourage members of the department to make safety suggestions.

Changing the culture of a fire department definitely takes planning and evaluation. Any plan needs evaluation. This evaluation is necessary to measure the effectiveness of the plan and allows the plan's designers to amend the plan, if necessary, to obtain the desired results. In order to do this, it is essential that safety becomes an intricate part of the evaluations of all departmental personnel.

Every member of the department must demonstrate a general knowledge of the cultures that have evolved in the fire service and changes that need to take place to improve firefighter safety. They must identify fire service traditions that have compromised firefighter safety. Departmental members need to recognize dangerous situations that could result in injury or death to firefighters. They must also be able to identify changes that need to take place to reduce the potential for injury and death to firefighters.

Written evaluations for each member of the department should not only include job skills but the following as well:

- An effort to maintain good health and physical condition.
- Wearing the proper protective clothing and equipment appropriate for the incident.
- Seated and wearing a seatbelt whenever the apparatus is in motion.
- Watching for traffic when exiting apparatus or working around the apparatus.
- Staying with the officer and crew when operating at an emergency scene.
- Using proper techniques when lifting.
- Be aware of the location of the fire and fire conditions at all times when working at a structure fire.
- Paying strict attention to accountability procedures.
- Walking rather than running at a scene and being constantly aware of surroundings.
- Be alert to slippery surfaces
- Hydrate regularly.
- Knows level of endurance
- Watches out for fellow firefighters before, during and after taking any action.
- Uses common sense when undertaking any activity.

By diligently working with a plan to institute safety as a core competency in the department, injuries and deaths will be prevented. Safety will be able to be evaluated and safety will become the central focus of the entire department.

Just as the young probationary firefighter in the beginning of this article had the courage to be safe by reminding the experienced chief to put on his seat belt, all those who read this article should have the courage to be safe as

well. They should do everything in their power to make safety a core competency in their department. It is each and every firefighter's responsibility to help establish and maintain a permanent safety culture within their department. Go for it!!!

Seat Belts Save Texas Firefighters in Rollover...

PAUL PELUSO

Firehouse.Com News

Amarillo District Fire Chief Michael Campbell was at home on annual leave the morning of Jan. 31 when he heard word of an engine rollover coming from his scanner.

It was his shift involved in the incident, which was part of a 40-plus vehicle highway pileup.

When he heard there was a fatality in the crash, "That really made my hairs stand up," he said.

All four firefighters inside the engine, however, escaped safety because every one of them was wearing a seat belt. The fatality was that of a civilian involved in the pileup.



Amarillo Fire Department
All four firefighters inside the engine escaped safety as every one of them was wearing a seat belt.



Amarillo Fire Department
The rollover was part of a 40+ vehicle highway pileup.

"The stupid human factor is always in there usually, so you can't guarantee" that everyone is wearing their seat belt, Campbell said. When he found out they were and that they were safe, "I said 'That a boy!' The officer was doing his job and everyone else followed his lead."

"We banged up a \$300,000 fire truck we can't fix, but everyone went home."

This was Amarillo's first ever known rollover according to Public Information Officer Bob Johnson and its first serious apparatus incident since April 23, 2005. That's when Firefighter Brian Hunton fell out of a ladder truck while putting on his gear. He wasn't wearing his seat belt. He died the next day from the injuries he sustained in the crash.

Following Hunton's death, Firehouse.com contributor Dr. Burton A. Clark pushed forward an effort to change the culture of the fire service and get firefighters to wear their seat belts.

So far, close to 45,000 firefighters have signed Clark's National Fire Service Seat Belt Pledge.

Amarillo, like many departments, had a seat belt

policy for years before the tragedy, but Safety Officer Bruce Tidmore said that it was evident that the policy was not being followed completely.

"After the incident we reinforced that it was not going to be tolerated anymore," he said. "The policy was changed so that new employees after their one-year probation would be fired on the spot" if in violation.

Tidmore said that the department's latest incident proves progress has been made.

"When I met with firefighters in the station following the rollover, I told them that I still have the fear that some people are still not following the policy. They all chimed in 'Not anymore.' "



Amarillo Fire Department

Tidmore said that recently an apparatus driver threw out a firefighter from his truck and left him at the station because he couldn't find his seatbelt.

"It's sad you had to have someone die because of something like that," he said. "But maybe in a way Brain died so that no more of us would have to."

Has Your Department Taken the National Fire Service Seat Belt Pledge?

By Brett Pollock, Deputy Chief

West Manatee Fire & Rescue District, Everyone Goes Home State Advocate

Following the death of a rookie Texas firefighter Brian Hunton, the National Fire Service Seat Belt Pledge was created to bring awareness of buckling up while in a fire department vehicle and a way to reduce firefighter fatalities. According to Dr. Burton Clarke, Training Specialist for the United States Fire Administration (USFA) and outspoken advocate for the use of seat belts. "Over 400 firefighters have died in vehicle crashes in the last 30 years, 300 of them did not have their seat belt on."

Dr. Clarke states. "Not wearing seat belts is the #1 safety violation in the fire service today." Provisional data for 2007 showed the cause of fatal injuries as attributed to vehicle collisions, resulting in 26 line of duty deaths (LODD) the second leading cause of firefighter fatalities. Additionally, 21% LODD were a result of incident responses. So, the smartest and safest way to protect yourself and your crew is to insure that everyone has his or her seat belt on.

Currently, eleven fire departments in Florida have taken the pledge. But these 11 only represent a small number of departments and firefighters across the state. The ability to save one firefighter or an engine company can be as simple as taking the pledge. While having his personnel take the seat belt pledge, Boca Raton Chief Thomas Wood found that one of his firefighters could not use a conventional seat belt. An extension had to be purchased to ensure departmental seat belt compliance was being followed. Without taking the pledge, the firefighter might still be responding without a seat belt.

Sponsors of the seatbelt pledge, USFA, National Volunteer Fire Council, International Association of Fire Chiefs', National Fallen Firefighters Foundation and the National Fire Protection Association want to make sure that Everyone Goes Home. Take the pledge by going to: www.trainingdivision.com/SeatBeltPledge.asp

Florida fire departments that have taken the Pledge:

Boca Raton Fire Rescue	Punta Gorda Fire Department
Cedar Hammock Fire Rescue	Southern Manatee Fire & Rescue
Deland Fire Department	Villages Public Safety
NAS Key West Fire Department	Volusia County Fire Services
Minneola Fire/Rescue	West Manatee Fire Rescue
Orange City Fire Department	

NATIONAL FIRE SERVICE SEAT BELT PLEDGE

VOLUSIA COUNTY FIRE SERVICES
DELAND, FLORIDA

HAS ACHIEVED 100% PARTICIPATION
IN THE SEAT BELT PLEDGE CAMPAIGN TO INSURE THAT
EVERYONE GOES HOME.

JANUARY 2008



Jay B. Lee *Ray C. Scilling* *Don P. Lewis* *Hal Bruns* *John J. ...*

Virginia Life Safety Advocate Program Update:

New Home for Virginia Firefighter Life Safety Advocate Program

The Virginia Fire Chief's Association has adopted the Life Safety Advocate Program and placed it under their Health and Safety Committee. This is great news for all emergency service providers in our state. The details of the task group have not been ironed out but it is important for the Life Safety Advocate Program to have a home and have a seat at the table.

This will allow us to coordinated statewide Life Safety Advocate Programs in each region of the state and to coordinate legislative proposal and other actions in a cooperative and effective manner.

More details on Life Safety Advocate Program task group to follow.

Plan of Action for the Next Three Months for the State Advocate

Coordinating new Life Safety Advocate Program activities and documenting model initiative actions by members of the Courage to be Safe Team. We will be opening up statewide advocate positions by region in the state as well.

If you are interested in stepping up to the challenge of being an advocate email [Tom Schwartz](mailto:Tom.Schwartz).

I will be sending updated calendar of events, initiative programs and training dates after replies are received.

USFA and the National Fire Protection Association Release Report on Mitigation of the Rural Fire Problem in the United States

[U.S. Fire Administration Press Release](#)

EMMITSBURG, MD. - The United States Fire Administration (USFA) announced today the release of a comprehensive report from a joint project with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) to examine what can be done to reduce the high death rate from fire in rural America. This report, [Mitigation of the Rural Fire Problem - Strategies Based on Original Research and Adaptation of Existing Best Practices](#), provides implementation strategies for the reduction of rural fires. The report targets the fundamental differences in the nature of the rural fire problem compared to the U.S. fire problem as a whole.

"USFA has a long commitment to reducing fire deaths in this country through effective mitigation and preparedness."

"As communities with fewer than 2,500 residents have a per capita fire death rate almost twice the national rate, this is an important life safety effort," said Gregory B. Cade, U.S. Fire Administrator. "USFA has a long commitment to reducing fire deaths in this country through effective mitigation and preparedness."

The project reached out to leaders of organizations serving rural communities to learn what works in implementing programs in those communities. Also, national and local fire service organizations were consulted to learn more about their program successes and challenges in the reduction of fires, deaths, and injuries in rural communities.

In addition to fire protection and suppression, human issues such as public fire safety education and technical factors, including fire and smoke detection, codes, consumer product safety, and residential fire sprinklers, are discussed in the report. "NFPA was pleased to partner with USFA on this innovative project that has identified ways to reduce fire deaths in rural America," said James Shannon, NFPA president. "This initiative supports NFPA's efforts in saving lives, protecting property, and reducing risks associated with fire."

Whether it is the separation of communities from one another or the separation of residents from one another, the report finds separation to be the defining characteristic of rural America. Ultimately, separation makes it more costly to conduct business in rural communities - impacting the economy - and residents are more likely to be on the lower end of the economic scale. The communications challenges some businesses face due to separation, like print media for example, may impact the quality and ease of communication within and to a rural community. This is an example of something that may limit the distribution of safety information.

Poverty was found to be the most significant factor driving the higher fire risk in rural America. Less income means potentially fewer resources. While rural populations have a greater need for fire safety, they have a reduced ability to fill that need without outside help. They would benefit from safer products - which can sometimes mean newer products - as well as devices designed to provide safety like smoke alarms.

This report also includes Train-the-Trainer presentations for the rural fire service and community leaders on

administering successful outreach programs and a separate presentation for citizens highlighting key fire safety and preparedness messages.

The U.S. Fire Administration has a mission to reduce life and economic losses due to fire and related emergencies through leadership, advocacy, coordination and support. It is the federal leader in public fire education and awareness, fire service training, fire-related technology and data collection.

NFPA has been a worldwide leader in providing fire, electrical, building, and life safety to the public since 1896. The mission of the international nonprofit organization is to reduce the worldwide burden of fire and other hazards on the quality of life by providing and advocating consensus codes and standards, research, training, and education. Visit NFPA's Web site at www.nfpa.org.

USFA and The National Wildfire Coordinating Group Announce New Wildfire Training Aid for Rural Firefighters

[U.S. Fire Administration Press Release](#)

» **Download:** [Skills Crosswalk: Wildland Training for Structural Firefighters](#)

Emmitsburg, MD- Today, the U.S. Fire Administration in cooperation with the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, announced a new aid to help local and rural firefighters identify training equivalencies and needs for effectively fighting wildfires that threaten residential areas. The *Skills Crosswalk* identifies critical wildland firefighting skills that structural firefighters need to be safe and effective when making an initial attack on a wildland fire in their jurisdiction, or when working with state and federal wildland firefighter agencies.

"Our nation's firefighters already have the necessary skills for fighting fires in all structures in a community," said U.S. Fire Administrator Greg Cade. "Structural training does not however always address the critical wildland fire suppression techniques which differ from structural firefighting techniques. The new *Skills Crosswalk* highlights the differences in order for structural firefighters to be able to address wildland fire suppression challenges."

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2006 report, in every area of the nation rural development is expanding into wildland areas. Since the 1980's, the rural population has more than doubled, with 140 million people now living in rural areas. As a result, rural and volunteer firefighters increasingly manage fire in the Wildland/Urban Interface.

The new *Skills Crosswalk* provides a performance-based methodology and a learning resource guide for qualified structural firefighters to develop wildland firefighting knowledge and skills in a focused and time-efficient format. This methodology will assist structural firefighters with wildland skills in working more safely and effectively on initial and extended attack operations and enhance cooperative firefighting efforts with neighboring jurisdictions and federal wildland firefighters.

For more information, visit the [Wildfire section of the U.S. Fire Administration's Web site](#).

» **Download:** [Skills Crosswalk: Wildland Training for Structural Firefighters](#)

DOE/IAFF Training for Radiation Emergencies

Courtesy of [U.S. Department of Energy](#)

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The International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) developed this course for the Department of Energy (DOE) under the direction of Fluor Daniel Fernald, DOE's environmental remediation contractor for the Fernald Environmental Management Project. The goal of this contract was to provide needed information and a method to train fire departments and other emergency responders who may be called upon to respond to accidents involving radioactive materials along DOE transportation corridors and routes.

The training material contained in this course is available without restriction. However, please be aware that the representation of certain concepts in the course could be subject to differing professional and personal opinions. We caution that knowledge, experience and sound judgment be used by anyone attempting to translate these materials into instructional programs for emergency responders and others.

We encourage you to utilize this material, as appropriate, in your training programs and to make these resources available to other emergency services organizations that reveal a genuine need for such information."

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