Successful Community Risk Reduction strategies are directly linked to the prevention of firefighter line-of-duty injuries and deaths. In these days of economic challenges to every fire department service, a vibrant Community Risk Reduction program can be a key to organizational survival. Communities across the United States have to make tough choices—close a fire station or eliminate another essential service. Fire departments must demonstrate their value-added capacity. Adding value, however, does not always mean taking on more services, it can also mean truly understanding our core missions and executing them to the greatest capacity given our resources and staffing. Comprehending the real scope of Community Risk Reduction and how it creates safer communities and protects firefighters is the first step. Understanding what we can accomplish with the tools and people we have is the second.

Fire departments today may not have the money, staffing, or time to accomplish all their risk reduction objectives as sole agencies. In some cases, CRR programs can be multi-faceted with more than one objective. As such, it is important to identify partners and utilize the services and wisdom of community stakeholders. This will have a tremendous public relations benefit as well as efficiently accomplishing the goals of complex risk reduction programs.

Virtually every risk reduction program in the fire and emergency services will have elements of what are called The 5 Es of Prevention. These include:

- Education
- Enforcement
- Engineering
- Economic Incentives
- Emergency Response

Understanding and addressing only one element (for example, Economic Impact) will not lead to a successful program. All five Es must be integrated into every program in order for that program to be effective.

An implementation plan must also be developed in order for the Community Risk Reduction program to be effective. That plan consists of a Community Risk Reduction vision, problem statement, goals, outcome objectives, impact objectives and formative objectives.

Community Risk Reduction programs must also be evaluated based on the change of behavior that occurred as a result of the program as well the reduction of targeted objectives as compared to the baseline data of the department.
Assessing Community Risk & Problem Statement*

Identify Target Risk and Population

Assessing community risk is both a strategic and a tactical exercise. During this phase, fire officials and other local decision-makers have the ability to direct their efforts and resources toward the populations and problems they feel will provide the highest return on their investment.

Problems are identified in specific terms. This phase will allow you to identify the problem and bring it down to a manageable size. It allows for the design of a prevention program tailored to the needs and of that affected group. It maximizes the use of resources by targeting efforts where they will have the greatest impact. This information is critical in developing a problem statement and in identifying target audiences, which is the initial steps in effective Community Risk Reduction planning.

Problem Statement

A problem statement is an effective tool used by the problem solving individual or team as this statement gives a very concise and clear description of the key areas of the problem that are to be solved.

The main purpose for which the problem statement is used for is that it maintains the focus of the problem-solving individual or team. A good problem statement when used and described will always take into account the specific requirements and focus on the major issue (instead of a number of issues and being vague) which could create confusion. The problem statement provides three benefits:

- creates a sense of ownership for the team
- focuses the team on an accepted problem
- describes the symptoms in measurable terms

The problem statement is clear, concise and well-written. It is usually no more then one or two sentences.

Guidelines For Creating A Problem Statement

- The problem statement should not address more than one problem.
- The problem statement should not assign a cause.
- The problem statement should not assign blame.
- The problem statement should not offer a solution

*Chief Mike Chiaramonte, who retired from Lynbrook (NY) Volunteer Fire Department, teaches a class at the National Fire Academy on Community Risk Reduction. The material in this handout is based on his course.
Central City Fire and Life Safety Coalition Bike Safety

Program Vision: Cleveland Park will be one of the safest communities in the region for bicycle riders.

Problem Statement: The problem is the Central City Fire Department responds to a high rate of bicycle incidents compared to similar communities.

Goal: Cleveland Park children will be safe bike riders.

Outcome Objectives
As compared to baseline data, the following changes will have occurred:

By December 31, 20xx, there will be a 35-percent reduction in fatalities from bicycles to children 10 to 16 years in Cleveland Park. Evaluation methods: statistical proof and anecdotes.

Impact Objectives
As compared to baseline data, the following changes will have occurred:

By January 1, 20xx, the city council will have adopted a bike helmet law for children 18 years and younger. Evaluation method: passage of law. Interventions: education, engineering, and enforcement.

Process Objectives
Starting January 1, 20xx, the project coordinator will monitor changes in the prevalence, incidence, and severity of child bicycle injuries by collecting and analyzing data from city emergency medical services run report data, the county’s medical examiner’s logs on fatalities, trauma registry data on children treated in three hospital emergency rooms and local clinics, police reports, and city traffic engineering department reports. Evaluation methods: injury/loss statistics and anecdotes.

Formative Objectives
By March 1, 20xx, the fire and life safety coalition will have conducted a community risk assessment of central city.

By April 1, 20xx, the fire and life safety coalition will select the risk issue and target population to address in the community.

By May 31, 20xx, the fire and life safety coalition will identify core stakeholders in the Cleveland Park district to join the bike safety program.
### Evaluation Measures For Community Risk Reduction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature Measure</th>
<th>Type of Evaluation</th>
<th>Examples of Evaluation Measures</th>
<th>Instruments and Methods to Measure Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| End Result      | Outcome            | Number of deaths, injuries, dollar loss, number of calls  
|                 |                    | Saves attributed to program     | Injury/Loss statistics  
|                 |                    |                                 | Anecdotes* |
| Public Policy   | Impact             | Passage of legislation ordinances, and codes | Legislation |
| Behavior        | Impact             | Percent of children wearing helmets  
|                 |                    | Percent of homes conducting home safety checks  
|                 |                    | Children who can do stop, drop, and roll | Observational survey  
|                 |                    |                                 | Questionnaire  
|                 |                    |                                 | Skill testing |
| Environment     | Impact             | Percent of chimneys cleaned annually | Home visit |
| Knowledge       | Impact             | Percent of public that knows how to extinguish a grease fire | Pretest/Posttest Self-report survey |
| Extent of Program | Process          | Percent of public receiving prevention materials | Estimating number of people attending presentations  
|                 |                    |                                 | Counting, attendance sheets |
| Appeal and Usage | Formative         | Percentage of teachers who think materials meet State objectives and use them | Pilot testing of forms, questionnaire, personal interviews, focus groups |
| Institutional Change | Formative | 1 Introduction of safety curriculum Funding for programs Forming/Joining coalition | Letter of agreement, adoption of curriculum  
|                 |                    |                                 | Budget Minutes of meeting |

**Vision 20/20**

Vision 20/20 and the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation have joined forces to address the emerging issue of CRR management. Vision 20/20 is a coalition of fire prevention experts and educators from across the nation who are dedicated to bringing a new and innovative National Strategy to Fire Loss Prevention. The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, through its Everyone Goes Home® program is dedicated to reducing firefighter injuries and deaths. These efforts support the third element of the Vision 20/20 strategic plan—“Raise the importance of Fire Prevention in the fire service,” and the 16 Life Safety Initiatives, particularly Initiatives 14 & 15.

**FLSI 14.** Public education must receive more resources and be championed as a critical fire and life safety program.

**FLSI 15.** Advocacy must be strengthened for the enforcement of codes and the installation of home fire sprinklers.