



Community Risk Assessment



Why Have a Community Risk Assessment

A risk assessment is the foundation for determining the most appropriate fire safety programs to deliver to the public. In order to manage the community fire risk, you must determine local needs and circumstances. These needs and circumstances are directly related to the area's demographics. Demographics include population, buildings, terrain, obvious hazards and fire department capabilities.

Utilizing data from several sources, including the National Fire Incident Reporting System, the National Fire Protection Association, local hospital discharge records and department-based smoke detector audits, will provide a working base to determine where to start your program development and delivery plan.

This portion of your program does not have to be difficult, as data points such as fire damage statistics, fire injury data and smoke detector utilization, combined with collecting information on age groups who are involved with fires and fire injuries, can lead you directly to the critical messages you need to deliver, as well as the age group you need to target with your programs.

A community fire safety program should include:

- A fire risk assessment (see Module 2 Appendix)
- A smoke alarm program
- Distribution of fire safety education materials and fire safety programs

Keeping It Simple

A simple fire risk assessment is a practical information gathering application intended to create a community fire profile. This will aid in identifying appropriate programs or activities that can be implemented to effectively address the community's fire safety needs, as well as target hazards that require more strategic assessment.

This simple risk assessment is designed to serve the needs of smaller communities and departments, and should be used as a first step (basic foundation) for larger departments that face more complex fire safety challenges within their communities.

The simple community risk assessment is made up of the following components:

- Demographic profile
- Building profiles
- Fire loss profiles
- Information evaluation
- Priority setting for risk
- Implementing solutions

The information gathered through this simple risk assessment is useful in developing your purpose for the creation of the Community Fire Safety Coalition.