



# Coffee Break Training - Fire Prevention and Public Education

## Public Fire Education Planning — A Five-step Process

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**Learning Objective:** The student will be able to articulate the purpose of the publication guide, “Public Fire Education Planning — A Five Step Process.”

Current fire departments use many terms for educational fire and injury prevention programs. Programs differ in size and approach, but the goals are the same: Change the behavior of the public so that there are fewer dangerous situations, fires and injuries.

This U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) publication, “Public Fire Education Planning,” presents a five-step planning process for developing and implementing successful fire and life safety public education programs. Planning is the process that ensures that program strategies and initiatives really address the community problems, whether it’s identifying the fire and injury risks in the community, developing and implementing a program, or evaluating the results. This guide takes you through that planning process.

### A successful program follows a five-step process:

1. **Conduct a community analysis.**
2. **Develop community partnerships.**
3. **Create an intervention strategy.**
4. **Implement the strategy.**
5. **Evaluate the results.**

The temptation to “just get something implemented” is hard to resist. Unfortunately, this is a trap. Yes, it’s easy to schedule some presentations at a school; pass out brochures, stickers and plastic helmets; and do some media interviews. But do those presentations address the community’s worst fire or injury problems? Do the solutions being promoted really work? Is the appropriate target audience even being reached? Are community groups working together? Is the program being implemented in the best way?

A “ready, fire, aim” approach will not hit the target. It can give the impression that the department is out there educating the public, but it may achieve little else. Successfully reducing fires and preventable injuries involves effective community planning. Notable public education programs around the country always prove this to be true.

This guide recognizes that fire prevention is now an important part of the larger goal of preventing injuries and unsafe situations. Fire departments often provide Emergency Medical Services, and preventing injury, illness and other unsafe acts is part of the mission of saving lives.

Source: USFA publication FA-219, “Public Fire Education Planning — A Five Step Process,” June 2008.

To download a copy of this publication, follow this link: <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa-219.pdf>.

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