



## Coffee Break Training - Fire Prevention and Public Education

### Public Fire Education Planning – A Five-step Process – Step 1: Conduct a Community Risk Analysis

No. FM-2014-2 January 9, 2014

**Learning Objective:** The student will know the process of conducting a community risk assessment (Step 1 of 5) as presented in the publication “Public Fire Education Planning — A Five Step Process.”

**W**hat is a **community risk analysis**? A community risk analysis is a process that identifies fire and life safety problems and the demographic characteristics of those at risk in a community. A thorough risk analysis provides insight into the worst fire and life safety problems and the people who are affected. The analysis results create the foundation for developing risk-reduction and community education programs.

Conducting a community risk analysis is the first step toward deciding which fire or injury problem needs to be addressed. Risk analysis is a planned process that must be ongoing, as communities and people are constantly changing.

**Why conduct a community risk analysis?** Fire and rescue departments must use facts in order to correctly identify leading safety risks that need attention. A community risk analysis will provide this data.

Too often, an objective and systematic community risk analysis is a step that is overlooked in the community education process. Many emergency service organizations address risks based on a perceived need for service that isn't really there. This approach can be costly (i.e., misdirected resources, continued property loss, injuries or deaths).

It is easy to become distracted from local issues by big media splashes about national happenings. Don't let that happen; stay focused! Invest the time to conduct an objective community risk analysis. Having facts about the leading causes of risk and the people being affected will set the stage for a successful risk-reduction process.

Objectivity means using reliable data to make conclusions based on facts, not beliefs. The analysis provides a factual overview of the risk issues using the information obtained, and it should be used to develop a risk-reduction proposal. This will produce a picture of what is wrong and who is at risk.

#### What does a community risk analysis include?

- Identify data to be analyzed.
- Develop a community risk profile.
- Write a problem statement.
- Prioritize issues.
- Identify target areas and populations.

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

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