



Coffee Break Training - Fire Protection Series

Administration: Community Risk Reduction

No. FP-2015-6 February 10, 2015

Learning Objective: The student will get an overall understanding of the Community Risk Reduction section of the 2012 edition of the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule.

Fire prevention is the best line of defense against a fire. This can be achieved through proactive plans and strategies, such as community risk-reduction programs. As the name suggests, community risk reduction involves assessing the risks that a community faces and developing meaningful and effective risk-mitigating policies and practices to reduce or even eliminate potential risks.

The evaluation of community risk reduction is part of all Public Protection Classification grading and accounts for a total of 5.5 points toward the grading. These points are in addition to the 100-point grading schedule, bringing the total points that a community could achieve up to 105.5. During an Insurance Services Office survey, the following three broad categories are evaluated.

Fire Prevention Code Adoption and Enforcement (2.2 points)

This section assesses the fire prevention code adoption and enforcement capabilities of a community. Items evaluated include the level of adoption and enforcement of model codes, such as the *International Fire Code* published by the International Code Council or *National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1, Fire Code* published by NFPA. To achieve the maximum points in this section, the provisions for fire hazard mitigation should not be modified or deleted. Adopting fire prevention codes is only the first step toward fire prevention; adopting codes is more effective when adequate personnel are available to enforce them and is more meaningful when codes are enforced by trained, qualified and certified fire prevention inspectors. The Insurance Services Office evaluates the number and qualifications of fire prevention personnel, including certification and continuing education. Fire prevention programs, such as plan review, certificate of occupancy inspections, quality control, code compliance, inspection of private fire protection equipment, fire prevention ordinances, and coordination with fire department training and preincident planning activities are some of the programs that the Insurance Services Office evaluates during the survey.

Public Fire Safety Education (2.2 points)

Creating awareness and engaging the public through fire safety education are also effective techniques to mitigate risks. The Insurance Services Office evaluates the existence of a fire safety education program; the qualifications, training and certifications of public fire safety educators; and the activities of the various public fire safety education programs, such as residential fire safety programs, fire safety education in schools, juvenile firesetter intervention programs, and fire safety education in occupancies with large loss potential or hazardous conditions.

Fire Investigation Programs (1.1 points)

In spite of the best efforts through fire prevention programs and public education and awareness, not all fires can be prevented. When they do occur, careful and thorough investigation of all fires by trained, qualified and certified fire investigators is the key to understanding the cause and origin. This understanding can help prevent future fires when the **lessons learned** become part of the fire prevention code enforcement and public awareness programs. This section examines the fire investigation activities of a community and is based on establishing authority to conduct and enforce fire investigations, the number and qualifications of fire investigators, the activities of the fire investigation staff, and the use of the National Fire Incident Reporting System.

In the next series of Coffee Break Training sessions, we will learn more about the Insurance Services Office's split class concept and other changes.