



# Policy Statement

## **The IAFC Supports Fire Safety Management through Aggressive Prevention, Mitigation and Public Education Efforts**

Fire prevention and education is of critical importance to the fire service to decrease the loss of life and destruction of property from the devastation of fire.

The IAFC supports fire prevention through fire and building code enforcement and the development of codes and standards to improve public and firefighter safety.

The IAFC recognizes fire prevention and public education as top priorities of fire agencies within their communities. The development, adoption and enforcement of fire and building codes are an important and vital step toward fire prevention. Fire and building code enforcement increases civilian and firefighter survivability, reduces fire spread and the negative personal and financial impacts of a fire. The code enforcement system is optimized when local code agencies use a team approach with integrated codes and standards, which are enforced by a trained and certified staff.

The fire department is the lead organization for providing technical assistance and public education about fire safety, fire control and elimination of fire hazards. The IAFC will support fire and building codes that provide the fire service with technical guidance in the construction and use of buildings and facilities and the accommodation of the storage, handling and use of hazardous materials. Fire and building codes are encouraged to establish the minimum requirements for commercial and residential occupancies and establish minimum guidelines for alterations and use.

A code compliant building is a safer building. The IAFC supports fire and building codes that provide minimum components that extinguish fires and alert occupants, limit fire potential and spread, and provide escape alternatives for occupants and firefighters. The IAFC encourages fire personnel to participate in fire and building code development to enhance engineering with fire behavior experience.

The National Fire Protection Association has indicated the rate of fire-related deaths in manufactured homes is 2 ½ times the rates of fire-related deaths in on-site constructed homes. The loss of lives in homes where NFPA 13D residential fire sprinkler system has been installed is zero. The IAFC also supports the establishment of a code requiring the installation of an approved NFPA 13D residential sprinkler system in all manufactured homes. The IAFC supports the use of residential sprinkler systems in all residential dwellings.

The IAFC supports the delivery of comprehensive public education programs at the local level as a means to prevent fire and reduce the risk of accidental injury/death. Fire departments should recognize that despite the strictest enforcement of codes, people can still accidentally start fires. These public education programs will become increasingly important as our population ages. The USFA has identified our largest at risk populations as those older than 65 and younger than 14, the disabled and those classified as low income.

**Category: Governance/Leadership**

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