



Policy Statement

The IAFC Supports the Advancement of Technology that Prevents Fires, Increases Life Safety and/or Improves Response to Fire and Emergency Medical Situations

The IAFC has endorsed a comprehensive approach to fire prevention, including aggressive public education; promotion of smoke detectors, fire sprinklers and other forms of built in fire protection; exit drills and evacuation planning and effective code enforcement. This approach to fire safety was initiated in 1972 with the development of the federally funded report entitled "America Burning." Fire professionals embarked upon a mission of fire safety and professional management technique to reduce the staggering fire losses that were occurring in our country at that time. The success of the America Burning logic has resulted in significant reductions in fires and fire deaths. The number of fire deaths has dropped from approximately 12,000 per year to less than 6,000 in the recent years.

The IAFC supports the federal direction being promoted by the U.S. Fire Administration that places emphasis on the fire service to promote higher levels of risk management, especially for the very young, the very old and for the emergency responders. The risk management techniques should take advantage of all technological opportunities, public education measures and the powers of code enforcement to reduce injuries and deaths from fires and from accidents that cause an EMS response.

All fire deaths and serious injuries should be evaluated for their cause and a determination made on how the death or serious injury could have been prevented or mitigated by better safety measures, built in safety devices or a higher level of knowledge and ability of those involved with the accident. The IAFC historically has promoted and endorsed technology and governmental response for such things as: flashing signal devices as a warning beacon for emergency responders; autopsies for all fire death victims to assess cause and to determine the potential for drugs and alcohol to affect decision making when caught in a fire; promotion of civilian respiratory protection as an escape measure during a fire or other emergency circumstance that has dangerous levels of contamination; adequate radio frequencies for fire service communications to improve emergency responder safety; fire retarding treatment

of furnishings and clothing; fire safe cigarettes and many more prevention and mitigation measures that can reduce injury and prevent death from fire.

With the beginning of a new era of accountability on injury prevention, the IAFC endorses the ideals of risk management on a broader basis for the fire service mission, to include better prevention, mitigation and preparedness for emergency medical response and treatment. The number of injuries and deaths from incidents that cause the emergency response of the fire agency should be reduced in measurable ways by adding “risk management” as a part of the mission of the fire service. These measures would include promotion of technology that prevents and mitigates accidents as well as promotional and educational programs such as the Department of Transportation “First There, First Care” program for first on scene emergency care and treatment of victims of a vehicle accident and the fire service promotion of CPR and first aid classes as a mandatory part of the high school curriculums.

Category: Governance/Leadership

Policy Number: 02.03

Proposed By: IAFC Policy Task Force

Date of Adoption: January 2002

Date of Review

Revised Date: