



How to Increase Community Outreach

Local fire departments have always been a fundamental staple within a community. Understanding the community is important for a department to deliver the best service; knowing how to interact with all members of the community can be the difference between life and death.

WHY is it important to connect with all members of the community? It is important because the more educated the community, the safer the community. Communication is extremely important to ensure the safety of the citizens and the members of the department. It is the responsibility of a department to find whatever means to distribute information and form a trusting relationship.

HOW can a department connect with citizens? By reaching out to schools, religious groups, community service organizations and other diverse communities. The goal is to become as involved as possible and create relationships. Learn from these groups and find out what needs they have and what they expect from their local fire department. Provide safety materials, like magnets with emergency numbers, home safety evacuation plans and car seat safety.

WHAT are some other ways to expand community outreach? One good way is to coordinate with local schools and preschools to teach children basic fire safety and how to call fire and police services. Departments can also assist community service organizations with standby, crowd control or setting up a cooling or first aid tent.

WHO should be involved with department outreach? The answer is, of course, everyone! The entire department should be working to promote positive relationships and constantly working towards building trust within the community. If any members of the department speaks other languages or are a part of any other organizations, utilize the skills and knowledge of these members. Remember that the goal of the department is public safety and trust.

If you have any questions about community outreach or other How To guides, please email the VWS staff at vws@iafc.org or visit our website at whatfuelsyourfire.org.

