



# Policy Statement

## **IAFC Supports Active Involvement with Emergency Management; Promoting Prevention, Mitigation, Preparedness, and Effective Response for a Reduced Community Impact and to Minimize Recovery Costs**

Natural events such as earthquakes, floods, hurricanes and landslides, as well as technological and human-caused disasters have claimed thousands of lives and caused billions of dollars in losses over the last twenty years. The acts of terrorism have clearly shown the need for an integrated approach between the fire service emergency managers and federal agencies. The IAFC recommends that local governmental agencies follow the federal government lead by using the Integrated Emergency Management System (IEMS) to plan for disaster circumstances that may occur within a jurisdiction. IEMS highlights the importance of Prevention, Mitigation, Preparedness, Response and Recovery as the primary operational components of a managed disaster. The IAFC believes that the federal government should apply more support to local fire service agencies to improve local efforts to increase the strength of the Integrated Emergency Management System in their communities.

**PREVENTION AND MITIGATION:** The IAFC believes the federal government should provide the necessary support to strengthen the prevention and mitigation efforts to reduce the effects of a disaster in local communities. The fire service mission has expanded to manage and apply more risk reduction in local communities. Aggressive planning and implementation of prevention and mitigation measures would reduce the life safety impacts of disasters. Mitigations such as seismic bracing, storm warning systems, emergency control systems, and other planned methods would reduce the damage and effect of a disaster for each local community. The federal government should fund local fire service concerns for fire, rescue, hazardous materials and emergency medical readiness and implement mitigation actions that would reduce the effects of the disaster threat.

**PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE:** The IAFC recognizes that local fire departments are the first responders to the national or human-caused catastrophic events. The immediate effects of any natural disaster or human-caused catastrophe will challenge the local public safety forces beyond their capacity to address the many life-saving challenges that exist. It is obvious that the results of terrorism and the deadly effects of terrorist actions can devastate a

community and injure and kill many innocent people. The IAFC believes it is the responsibility of the federal government to fund local fire service preparedness and response capabilities so that they can manage the first hours of a response, prior to arrival of state and federal support. Federal funding considerations should include response equipment, training and support for a standardized fire service staffing plan. This provision of federal resources would enable the local fire service agencies, as first responders, to act in a safe and timely manner to minimize injuries, loss of life and damage to property.

RECOVERY: The recovery actions that follow a disaster require a tremendous amount of resources and personnel to restore the community to a normal condition. The logistics and management systems necessary to effectively restore a community after a disaster are often underestimated in the pre-disaster planning phase. The fire service is a key component to the community restoration. The national fire service response to a major local disaster should be coordinated for a more effective recovery management effort. The IAFC supports more federal funding for the development of more effective and efficient methods of managing recovery actions that follow a major local disaster.

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