Fire Inspector I & II

CHAPTER FIFTEEN
FIRE AND SAFETY EDUCATION

Slide 1	Welcome to Chapter 15, Fire and Life Safety Education. In this Chapter we will only skim the surface of what it takes to have a successful fire and life safety program. If you are assigned to develop or deliver the program the task may seem daunting at first, but there are lots of resources available to you. Many fires and life safety educators are passionate about the subject and being passionate about your job means you never have to work another day in your life.
Slide 2	In this Chapter we will discuss: • The role of the fire inspector in fire and life safety education • Public education, public information, and public relations • Creating a fire and life safety education program • Identifying the fire problems in your community • Collecting fire date • Fire frequency versus severity • Developing a fire and life safety education program • Gaining support for the program • Identifying stakeholder to provide support and resources • Developing relationships • Setting goals and objectives • Content development • Budgeting • Presenting the material We will finish this Chapter with a discussion on effective metrics that can show the effectiveness of the program.
Slide 3	In some jurisdictions public education is mandated by the senior government. In Ontario for example, the Fire Protection and Prevention Act requires every municipality to establish a program which includes public education with respect to fire safety. In Alberta most accredited municipalities will identify public education as part of the Quality Management Plan. Whether mandated or not, most jurisdictions recognize the value of public education and provide the best level of service they can based on available resources. Often fire inspectors are assigned fire and life safety education duties as part of their role. In some larger fire departments public education is a standalone function.

Slide 4	Fire and life safety educators are personnel that teach fire safety messages to target audiences. They are some of the most valuable members of the fire service, yet the least understood. To create a successful fire and life safety program, you must understand how to assess risks and their causes, and to develop relationships that support your program. After your program is up and running, you must know how to measure your programs' effectiveness in preventing fires, reducing injuries, and saving property. To help you develop programs that deliver the proper fire and life safety message, you should understand the differences in Public Education, Public Relations, and Public Information.
Slide 5	**Public education** is the presentation of a safety message with the sole goal of reinforcing good behavior or changing undesirable behavior to make the community safer. We can all help make the world a safer place by learning more about how and why fires start. **Public relations** is used to build and maintain a positive public image of your organization and creates public support. Sometimes it is easy to confuse public education with public relations because good education will build better relations, but good public relations may not provide effective public education.
Slide 6	Public information is information that is disseminated to the public. Fire departments do this in a variety of ways such as news releases and interviews. Public information may include information about incidents that have occurred, events that will be taking place, or other matters of public interest. For example, the public are always interested in the cause and origin of a fire, so releasing some of the details through an interview or press release is appropriate public information. If personnel from your organization are permitted or expected to provide interviews, having some predeveloped messages drafted, and on hand, will help guide them through an interview and result in positive messaging. In the additional resources section of this chapter, you will find a sample of a post fire press release that was drafted by the Ontario Fire Marshal's Office (OFM). This could be used as a written press release or to provide key message points for interviews.
Slide 7	When creating a fire and life safety education program, you should follow a series of steps to ensure that your resources are used in the most effective way. Based on convenience, there is often a tendency to use another

	community's program without understanding how or if it fits with or would address your community's needs. Firstly, you need to assess your community to identify the problem and many times, anecdotal evidence is used to determine the fire history in your jurisdiction. Anecdotal evidence may or may not be accurate and may not provide you with a clear picture of your fire problem. When developing your program, you should take the time to collect accurate data that identifies the root causes of *your* fire problems.
Slide 8	A root cause is the fundamental reason that an event occurs. The term implies a depth of analysis that looks beyond the obvious causes of a problem to uncover greater underlying issues. For example, the data collected indicates that several fires have started on the beds in the bedrooms occupied by teenage children. Fire investigators reported the origin of these fires as laptop computers on the beds. Failure of the computers was the initial suggested cause, but further investigation suggests that fabric on the bed blocked ventilation of the computers resulting in a buildup of heat to the point of ignition of the bedding. A well-designed public education program could overcome this problem.
Slide 9	A well-designed public education program could make people aware of the hazard of leaving electronic equipment on surfaces where they cannot ventilate properly. A successful program would result in a reduction of these types of accidental fires.
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Slide 11	When collecting the data, you should use numerous sources not just consider the information found in the anecdotal evidence. You should be drawing on the numerous available sources to understand why certain events are happening in your community. Firstly, look locally for available data that reflects your community fire experience. Start with any records that your department keeps, because that is probably your best source of current information. There are also other local organizations like hospitals, libraries, and the Red Cross that may have information of value that can help direct your program. If that is not enough, most Provincial and Territorial jurisdictions collect fire data that may assist you with your plan creation. There are also Federal agencies, like the Canadian Association of Fire Marshals and Fire

	Commissioners and Statistics Canada that collect data specific to fire and life safety, but their data is usually out of date
Slide 12	Useful data provides more than just the basics: time, date, location, type of event, and who responded. This basic information lacks the details you need to determine common fire events and the underlying factors that caused those events to occur. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the US, encourages fire departments to use the National Fire Incident Reporting System. This US database collects information on the many underlying factors about the causes of fire which is essential to making good public education programs available in the community. As the fire problems are assumed to be similar between the US and Canada, you may want to access this data base during your research.
Slide 13	Once the data has been collected and analyzed, you should begin to see that some events occur more often (**Frequency**), than others, and that some of the issues can be more significant when those events occur (**Severity**). You should be able to look at both frequency and severity and assign them a number on a scale with one being the lowest to ten being the highest. Create a matrix plotting the problems based on a horizontal and vertical axis, like the one shown in this diagram. Note where the problem lies on the graph. Problems with high severity and high frequency will appear in the upper right-hand corner of the graph, while problems that do not happen often and are of low severity will be in the lower left-hand section of the graph. This allows you to quickly determine the highest priority of problems for your organization to address.
Slide 14	With the problems now identified, and for the fire and life safety education program to be successful, it must be well thought out with clear goals established. Some of the questions to consider include: • What do you want to achieve with this program? • Who is the target audience? It is likely there will be several target audiences. For example, it may be school age children up to grade 5, or perhaps an immigrant community where language may be a barrier, or perhaps a program for seniors is warranted. • Who will lead the education program? • Will you provide refresher training and if so on what frequency? • Will you provide the venue or go to the audience? • How much will the program cost and how will it be funded? • When will the program start? Where will you get the need resources?

Slide 15	The best made plans will fail if there is little or no support for the program. One of the first steps is to determine the level of support within your organization. This can be a simple discussion with your peers, immediate supervisor, and branch or division director. If they think it is a good idea, it is probably time to develop a business case for the program. A business case puts a proposed investment decision into a strategic context and provides the information necessary to make an informed decision about whether to proceed with the program. It is also the basis against which continued funding will be compared and evaluated. A business case captures the reasoning for initiating the project and includes the background leading to the need for the program, the expected benefits, service delivery options, the expected costs of the project, and the expected benefits or risks. From this information, the justification for the project is derived.
Slide 16	You can use stakeholder engagement to develop support and resources to solve an identified problem. A stakeholder is an individual or group that is impacted by an issue. There may be many stakeholders for one problem. As an example: You identify a problem with fires starting because children are playing with lighters. Who are your stakeholders? The children and their parents would obviously be stakeholders, but you could also include the hospital burn unit because of injuries that may occur due to the fires. City council and staff are stakeholders because the public looks to them to solve problems concerning community safety. Insurance companies are stakeholders as well because of the claims that may result due to property damage.
Slide 17	The people who will be delivering the program, often firefighters, are one of the most important stakeholders. The program will not reach its full potential without their support and commitment You should keep a list of all the stakeholders for each issue you wish to address. Once the list is developed, it should be prioritized by those who are impacted the greatest by the problem and you should take the time to create a strong relationship with all your stakeholders.
Slide 18	Once the root cause of the problem is identified, the educational focus is identified, and the department and stakeholders are on board, you need to determine the goals and the objectives of the fire and life safety program. **Goals** are broad in nature and reflect the overall direction of the program. **Objectives** are specific and measurable and provide the means for evaluating the success of the program. As the creator of the program, you should include a wide variety of personnel to assist in the setting of goals and objectives. This

	allows "buy in" from the potential providers of the program, including other fire personnel, such as firefighters and members of the prevention staff.
Slide 19	Once the goals and objectives have been established and you know what the available resources are, the content can be developed. Many programs are available at no charge and there are commercially developed programs and materials available as well. If the financial resources are available, commercial programs may be advantageous because some provide the metrics needed to measure results. If cost is a limiting factor, you can create your own program. Developing your own fire and life safety program can be very time consuming and takes a significant understanding of educational techniques to ensure that it is created properly. You may want to seek the help of local educators for technical expertise. On the positive side, there are a lot of educational materials already developed that are free. For example, NFPA has fire education materials specifically designed for Canada. The OFM in Ontario, the OFC in BC, the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association, and the Manitoba OFC all have public education materials available.
Slide 20	If you are developing your program from scratch, NFPA has a free online Fire Safety Program Toolkit. The toolkit was designed for fire safety education personnel and provides free tools and materials to assist in the development of educational programs. The toolkit breaks down the program development process into basic steps to create or enhance a fire safety education program for your community. There is also a "Beyond the Basics" in each section which provides more resources, strategies, and tools. A copy of the toolkit is included in the additional resources section of this Chapter.
Slide 21	A budget will have to be established and approved for the program. The budget includes both direct and indirect costs. Direct Costs include expenses that must be paid but would otherwise not have occurred without the program such as printing, supplies, and fuel. Indirect Costs are those costs that the fire department would have incurred weather the program existed or not. An example of an indirect cost would be the value of the fire personnel's time spent on presenting the program. While these funds will be expended whether the fire personnel are being used to provide the program or not, knowing these costs allows for a valid cost/benefit analysis to be conducted. Once the expenses are determined, funding sources should also be considered. Funding may come solely from the fire department budget, but other revenue such as grants, or donations must also be accounted for. Funding may also

	come from other public agencies, service organizations, civic groups, literacy training programs, and faith-based organizations who may be willing to partner with, or provide resource support to, your fire safety prevention program. Once the revenues and expenses are identified, the budget should balance and provide a roadmap for the program. The person in charge of the program is accountable for its funds and must ensure that the program stays within budget.
Slide 22	Once the fire and life safety program are developed, it's time to implement it. You may decide to present the program yourself, but often it is delegated to firefighting personnel. Firefighters and officers may not understand their role, or the effort required to present a satisfactory life and safety education program for the public. You must create a reason for them to want to participate in the program. This can be done in a variety of ways. One way is to show them the goals of the program and how it will make the community a safer place. You can also show them that it will make firefighting less dangerous in their community. You may also have to make it fun, so the firefighters want to deliver the program and want to deliver more in the future.
Slide 23	Nearly every fire department provides some sort of public education; however, the effectiveness of these programs is difficult to prove without effectiveness metrics. Effectiveness measures how well the program is meeting its goals, and metrics are the data proving the claim. Because most departments have limited resources, they must be able to quantify the return they are getting on their public education investment. But how do you measure something that didn't happen? To measure the effectiveness first, measure the behaviors creating the problem before the program starts. Then examine the data to see if there is a change in behavior. The results should be compared to the goals and objectives of the program. If the program is not successful, it should be modified or replaced. Positive change should be attributed to your program but be ready to make adjustments to meet the changing needs of the community.
Slide 24	If this brief overview of the role of Fire and Life Safety educators has piqued your interest, there is lots of training and education materials and courses available. NFPA 1035 is the Standard on Fire and Life Safety Educator, Public Information Officer, Youth Firesetter Intervention Specialist and Youth Firesetter Program

	Manager Professional Qualifications. This standard identifies the minimum job performance requirements (JPRs) for these positions. There are three levels of Fire and Life Safety Educator that can be attained. IFSTA has the third edition of Fire and Life Safety Educator manual available, and Jones and Bartlett have their second edition Principles and Practices manual available. Courses are widely available so check with you training providers for courses near you.
Slide 25	In this Chapter we discussed: • That some jurisdictions mandate includes fire and life safety public education • Whether it is mandated or not it is a good idea • Often fire inspectors are assigned public education duties • How to assess fire risks is fundamental to creating a successful program • The difference between public education, public relations, and public information • The steps in creating a public education program • That root cause is the fundamental reason that an event occurs • Collecting data and some of the sources of data • Local data best reflects your community fire problem • Frequency and severity of events and creating a matrix plotting the incidents on a graph
Slide 26	• Establishing program goals • Building a business case for the program • Stakeholder engagement • Establishing goals and objectives for the program • Developing content and sources of materials already developed • Establishing and responsibility for a budget • Implementing the program • Engaging fire department personnel in the program • Measuring the effectiveness of the program We concluded this chapter by identifying the professional qualifications for various positions, the training manuals available, and that accredited courses are widely available through training providers.
Slide 27	That's the end of The Fire Inspector level 1 & 2 Course. We hope you've enjoyed this journey with us. Please complete the chapter quiz and final exam. If you have any questions now is a good time to contact your instructor