

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO FIREFIGHTER LINE OF DUTY DEATH IN THE UNITED STATES

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The United States Fire Administration (USFA) worked with the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) in a project to enhance risk management capability of local fire departments. The goal of this initiative was to enable fire departments to design effective risk management programs based on community hazards and service commitment, enhance firefighter safety, and provide tools for continual evaluation of emergency response systems.

The ability of fire departments to design an acceptable level of resource deployment based on risks and service commitment and to provide tools for continual evaluation of emergency response systems is crucial in the enhancement of firefighter operational safety and occupational health. The adequate placement of firefighting resources also supports the reduction in civilian fire fatalities.

This study examined critical issues related to adequate resource deployment tying them to the development of effective risk management programs. Geographic information systems (GIS) computer simulation was used to develop staffing and deployment models that will be recommended for department of various sizes serving different populations in varying geographic regions.

The first phase of the analyzed retrospective data from the years 2000-2005 to identify and quantify the major factors that contribute to fire fighter line-of-duty death (LODD) in the United States. The identified contributing factors were examined for frequency of occurrence and clustering with other factors. The results are to be used to develop risk management programs for fire departments.

This first phase used data compiled from six years of verified firefighter on-duty fatalities from four reputable industry sources. Sources included the United States Fire Administration (USFA) as well as the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), and the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF). For each LODD, factors contributing to the death were recorded from Federal investigations and eyewitness reports. The contributing factors were then analyzed for frequency of occurrence and clustering with other factors. Contributing factor clusters identified include the following.

Cluster #1 includes incident command, training, communications, standard operating procedures, and pre-incident planning.

Cluster #2 includes vehicles, personal protective equipment, equipment failure, and human error.

Cluster #3 includes private owned vehicle, accidents, and civilian error.

Cluster #4 includes company staffing/crew size, standard operating guidelines and health/fitness/wellness.

Clustering information is being used to develop risk management recommendations for local fire departments. From the first phase of this study, the following report, Contributing Factors to Firefighter Line of Duty Death in the United States was developed by the IAFF.

This second phase of the study will also address effective risk management programs for the fire service as the same methodology will be used to assess firefighter on-duty injury.

Data sources for phase II are being sought.

to download the report: http://www.myfirecompanies.com/filelock/1202755975Contributing%20Factors%20to%20FF%20Line-of-Duty%20Death_IAFFand%20USFA.pdf



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