

Vision 20/20
A Strategic Agenda for Fire Loss Prevention
Bridging the gap from yesterday into tomorrow

The goal of Vision 20/20 has been to identify significant gaps in service for fire loss prevention in the US and to make recommendations to fill them. The term “gap” in this context should not be misconstrued as a void where no service exists. Rather, it is an area that needs increased emphasis if we are to continue improvements upon our fire loss record. Also, in this context “fire loss” is chosen deliberately because it represents the direct, indirect and related losses of injury, death and property damage caused by fires.

Participants should keep in mind that placing increased emphasis on these key strategies does not mean that important elements of a prevention strategy should receive less emphasis unless specifically stated in the plan. Ongoing efforts for residential fire sprinkler systems, fire safe cigarettes, and other national campaigns should obviously continue to receive strong support. Integrating these new strategies into a more comprehensive view of fire prevention is part of our challenge.

*These **draft** strategies are an attempt on the part of the working team and the Steering Committee of Vision 20/20 to draw attention to a potential working consensus on strategies that will ultimately be adopted and supported. This work is based on a review of the Web Forum Satellite discussions. The matrix of web forum discussions is attached for more detailed review, and to demonstrate the source of our deliberations.*

These strategies received the most frequent mention at various host locations and they are put forward to stimulate participant thinking about the national priorities in advance of the Forum. Participants of Vision 20/20 will be given time to review these documents, validate them and add any significant strategies that may have been missed in our review.

Our primary goal will be to identify the top strategies needing attention – and spending most of our time discussing action items for each. We are attempting to find common ground that will take advantage of the expertise of public and private sector partners to move toward action and measurably improved fire safety.

Draft Strategy #1.

Establish a consistent, sustained, multi-faceted national education/social marketing campaign to reduce risks and losses from fire by getting people to change their behavior toward fire safety.

Major Action Areas:

- *Involve non-traditional partners*
- *Execute at the local, state and national levels*
- *Conform to societal and cultural changes*
- *Make use of influential spokesperson(s)*
- *Reach both high-risk populations and ages 10-45*

Gaps Addressed:

Resources are historically currently insufficient to adequately educate necessary constituencies.

- ✓ Funding sources for national media campaigns are needed.
- ✓ Resources of fire departments are limited to provide continual training through schools as students advance through the system.
- ✓ Expensive costs for public announcements.
- ✓ Lack of corporate sponsorship.

There exists a general lack of sustained and strategically/methodically driven fire prevention education, both within the fire prevention community and its constituents.

- ✓ Unfocused efforts
- ✓ Standards for teaching curriculum fire prevention are needed.
- ✓ Sustained delivery is lacking.
- ✓ No continuum of fire/injury prevention education in school system.
- ✓ Need to educate our own firefighters.
- ✓ Public sector employees do not receive training on fire safety and education.
- ✓ Fire departments are not on the same page, teaching the same accurate information.
- ✓ Lacking universal education program for adults.
- ✓ Fire safety is not a required curriculum in schools.
- ✓ Need to educate the public about the fire department and the services they provide.

Several key constituents are not reached through current education and marketing efforts, including young adults, older adults, diverse ethnic groups with unique language and cultures, and persons with disabilities.

- ✓ Educational strategies have not kept pace with the younger generations increased capacity for learning and access to information.
- ✓ On-line communities provide access to a broader audience that is not being utilized.
- ✓ Fire prevention campaigns target under 17 and over 50 age groups, with little emphasis on the middle age groups.
- ✓ Need efforts to target better cooperation from local builders, government and insurance companies.
- ✓ Language and cultural barriers.
- ✓ Culturally sensitive fire prevention campaigns.
- ✓ Reach out to ethnic groups.
- ✓ Multi-cultural societies and language barriers require targeted educational methodologies.
- ✓ Culture gaps between younger and older adults.
- ✓ Difficult to reach young audiences.
- ✓ Older adult – aging population.

Draft Strategy #2

Improve the collection, reporting analysis and management of national incident data such that it better serves fire prevention needs.

Major Action Areas

- *Revise the national incident reporting procedures to better track trends in injuries, deaths, and property loss, and resolve gaps in data management.*
- *Fund research to determine desired outcomes and needed data for fire prevention, and the fire safety technologies and human behavior interface.*
- *Tie state and national funding to incident reporting.*
- *Develop model evaluation measures*

Gaps Addressed:

The quality of data reported is found to be incomplete and/or inaccurate and its timeliness requires improvement.

- ✓ *Incomplete/inaccurate data input because of complexity of NFIRS reporting system.*
- ✓ *Dollar loss (data entry) is not consistent across the US.*
- ✓ *Bad data in, bad data out.*
- ✓ *Lack of quality control.*
- ✓ *Lack of injury prevention data.*
- ✓ *Need accurate and complete information.*
- ✓ *Data supports suppression staff, not prevention staff.*
- ✓ *Timely data reports needed.*

There exists a lack of understanding about the role and importance of data collection and reporting among line firefighters/suppression staff.

- ✓ *Need to educate line firefighters on why data collection and reporting is crucial for evaluating fire losses, injuries, and deaths, both civilian and responder.*
- ✓ *More training is needed to teach suppression staff to enter correct NFIRS codes.*
- ✓ *Better training for field personnel (teach skills like report writing and use mock trials like law enforcement)*

Draft Strategy #3

Shift the organizational culture within the fire service so that prevention is accepted and supported as a primary service for public safety.

Major Action Areas:

- *Reflect the value of prevention by increasing budget, assignment of personnel, training, and opportunity for advancement.*
- *Establish national standards and reporting requirements for rating fire department's fire prevention performance.*
- *Require training in fire prevention activities for all fire service personnel.*
- *Educate community and government leaders of the critical role of prevention in reducing fire loss.*
- *Conduct risk assessments in all communities to better formulate strategic planning for fire prevention and response.*
- *Advocate for a Cabinet level position to oversee a national plan for fire prevention.*

Gaps Addressed:

- ✓ *The fire service culture needs to realize that reducing risks is a primary responsibility within their mission.*
- ✓ *Recommendations have been reported since 1947 of the need to devote more attention to fire prevention.*
- ✓ *A culture that values suppression above prevention within the fire service is a reflection of leadership.*
- ✓ *Fire prevention training is not uniformly required or available for fire service personnel at the same level as other operations.*

The culture of the fire service, specifically the relationship between suppression and prevention, limits the success of fire prevention education efforts.

- ✓ *Begin to change the culture of the fire service to realize reducing risks is our primary responsibility.*
- ✓ *Open communication between suppression and prevention is needed.*
- ✓ *Incentive to move within the fire service to prevention/inspections is needed.*
- ✓ *Tools to help fire prevention update their education style.*