



**FEMA**

R274

Dear National Fire Academy Student:

Congratulations on being selected to attend the U.S. Fire Administration's National Fire Academy *Strategies for Community Risk Reduction* course.

This 2-week course engages senior fire executives in the process of reducing community risks from all hazards, with emphasis on risk from fire. As a course participant, you will work in a team to apply a community risk reduction process model to formulate a comprehensive risk reduction program within a simulated community.

Review and complete the attached precourse information.

Increasing students and instructors are bringing laptop computers to campus. You alone are responsible for the security and maintenance of your equipment. The Academy cannot provide you with computer software, hardware, or technical support to include disks, printers, scanners, etc. There is a limited number of 120 Volt AC outlets in the classrooms. A Student Computer Lab is located in Building D and is available for all students to use. It is open daily with technical support provided in the evenings. This lab uses Windows XP and Office 2003 as the software standard.

Should you need additional information related to course content or requirements, please feel free to contact Woody Stratton, Fire Prevention Management Training Specialist, at (301) 447-1380 or email at [Woody.Stratton@dhs.gov](mailto:Woody.Stratton@dhs.gov).

Sincerely,

Dr. Denis Onieal, Superintendent  
National Fire Academy  
U.S. Fire Administration

# Strategies for Community Risk Reduction

Pre-Course Assignment

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE SCRR COURSE

Welcome to Strategies for Community Risk Reduction (SCRR), the second course in the Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP) series. The focus of this course is to enhance the skills needed by an Executive Fire Officer (EFO) to implement and lead community risk-reduction initiatives.

Fire department leaders are acutely aware of national standards pertaining to fire suppression: i.e. fire officer, firefighter operator, hazardous material technician, etc. Did you know that NFPA promulgates and updates a standard which pertains to community risk reduction? Known as Standard 1035, it provides job performance requirements for delivery, development and leadership of community risk reduction initiatives. Three other Standards, NFPA 1201, 1500 and 1600 also contain components of community risk mitigation.

The goal of SCRR is to develop leaders in comprehensive multi-hazard community risk reduction. As an EFO candidate, you will apply a strategic process to address a risk challenge present in your home community. The process begins with pre-course research, continues through guided practice while at the NFA and culminates in actions implemented upon returning home.

In addition to empowering executive officers with a proven risk mitigation process to follow, this course supports the 5-year operational objectives of the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA). The first operational objective is to reduce mortality from fire by 15 percent. Sub-goals of this objective include reducing fire-related mortality rates in populations under age 14 and over age 65 by 25%.

The second objective is to develop a comprehensive multi-hazard risk-reduction plan for 2,500 communities, led by or including the local fire service. A sub-goal includes assuring our industry responds appropriately in a timely manner to emergent issues.

A third, and paramount objective, is the call to reduce line of duty deaths among firefighters by 25%. Think about this: Preventing an incident from occurring is the ultimate step in keeping our people safe. That fact is hard to refute.

You may wonder “why is community risk reduction so important?” There are several components to the answer. Let's begin by looking briefly at the current fire problem in this country.

Each year in the United States over 4,000 people are killed by fire and as many as 22,000 people are injured from fire. For the young, old, disabled, impoverished and challenged populations, fire remains one of the leading causes of death. While these statistics are better than those of 20 years ago, they are still the highest among developed nations.

With advances in fire suppression equipment, wider adoption of fire codes, and more and more public education programs, the loss from fire should be steadily declining. Yet, that reduction is not happening. Why? There are probably numerous reasons, but the most obvious is that the fire service has more work to do in the area of prevention.

Prevention has been recognized for many decades as a key to reducing the effect of fires. The 1947 President's Conference on Fire Prevention cited prevention as a viable and important strategy for reducing the impact of fire. Again, in 1966, fire service leaders recognized prevention as an important strategy for the fire service during the first Wingspread Conference. That belief in prevention has been reaffirmed at three subsequent Wingspread Conferences.

Perhaps the strongest endorsement of prevention programs came in the benchmark report "America Burning", published in 1973. The report stressed two important facts. First, there is not enough focus on prevention by the fire service. Second, prevention has the potential to make a tremendous impact on the fire problem when implemented in partnership with suppression.

Prevention initiatives cannot take the form of a "canned" program, meant to be everything to everybody. Rather, each community must develop a specific plan to address the unique fire problems of that community through a combination of combined preventive interventions. This is what community risk reduction is all about--a community assessing its unique fire risks and hazards, and then developing and implementing specific intervention strategies to address those risks and hazards.

To be effective at leading a risk reduction process, an EFO must understand both his community and organization. SCRR will help you develop that understanding and create strategy of how to effectively reduce risk in your home community.

SCRR is second in the EFO series. SCRR is intended to prepare the fire service executive for leading strategic risk reduction initiatives in the 21st century. Executive traits must include the leader as a learner, one who can anticipate future trends. The effective executive fire officer of tomorrow will be the person who knows himself or herself, as well as his or her organization, community and risks.

SCRR goes beyond simply teaching skills. The course provides insight into the steps necessary to carry out a successful community risk-reduction process. Further, it is designed to impart a set of specific key concepts and attitudes that are needed to lead the community risk-reduction process.

## KEY CONCEPTS FOR RISK REDUCTION LEADERS

- Risk is influenced by social and economic issues. If community risk reduction is to be effective at improving community vitality, the community risk-reduction process must address socioeconomic issues.
- Risky behaviors result in consequences, e.g., residential fires, car crashes involving drunk drivers, etc. These consequences are the events to which fire departments and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) agencies respond on a daily basis. Therefore, the purpose of community risk reduction is to prevent or minimize these events.
- Any effective community risk-reduction strategy integrates emergency response, code enforcement, legislative processes to adopt codes, standards, and prevention-related ordinances, plans review and design, fire and life safety education, public information and relations, risk-reduction-related economic incentives, and other mitigation activities.
- Prevention and response functions within an organization must be integrated into one team. In many organizational cultures the prevention function is viewed as separate and distinct from the response mission. In fact, *both response and prevention have the same goal: prevent or reduce harm to the public from fire, preventable injuries, etc.* Same mission. Same team. Same organization. Same community. The synergy that results from integrating operations and prevention make both functions considerably more effective.
- Risk is a community problem. The process of community risk reduction also must involve the community: its leaders, its groups, its neighborhoods, etc. Any community risk-reduction process that fails to engage the community and its citizens is doomed to fail.
- There may be some communities where the chief officer is unable to gain community endorsement for a risk-reduction process. However, *every* chief officer can apply the process to his or her own organization to create a culture that embodies the philosophy of community risk reduction. The organization then is prepared when an opportunity for community change occurs.
- Community vitality is the product of numerous factors, including the absence of fires, absence of injuries, physical health, economic health, etc. A community risk-reduction process must apply risk management to all those areas that affect community vitality. This includes fires, injuries, terrorism, natural hazards, social crises, and environmental hazards.

## Becoming a Proactive Champion of Risk Reduction

The role of the chief officer is to lead and facilitate the community risk-reduction process. Some chief officers lose their ability to influence risk reduction when they become involved in the day-to-day mechanics of the process. The chief officer must be the vanguard of community change--the *strategic* heart and soul of the process.

There are five critical attitudes for successful risk reduction:

1. **The EFO must have a positive vision for the community risk-reduction program.** Personal, organizational, and community change always begins with a vision of what the future can be. Great movements throughout history have begun with one person's vision. The vision is of a safer community where fire risks, and other hazards, have been addressed through a community risk-reduction process. This vision will be used as a target or benchmark when developing the risk-reduction plan.
2. **The EFO must become a catalyst within the community to make the vision a reality.**
3. **The EFO must be committed personally to the philosophy of prevention (preparedness and mitigation).** The mission of the fire service must be to prevent harm in the community. A safe and vital community will be created only if this commitment is expressed through action, not simply intellectual understanding.
4. **The EFO must be an active member of his or her community.** This includes participating in community organizations, being involved with community events, and meeting with community leaders to learn about pertinent issues facing the different groups and neighborhoods.
5. **The EFO must be a champion of community risk reduction.** He or she must also recognize and support others, especially subordinates, who are potential catalysts for risk mitigation.

## **Benefits of Community Risk Reduction**

There are many benefits to implementing a community risk-reduction process. In fact, the benefits go beyond reducing the impact of fire:

- The use of integrated risk reduction interventions lead to reduced incident occurrence, fewer injuries, fewer deaths, and reduced property loss. These outcomes are truly the bottom line for community risk reduction.
- The balance between risk and resources dedicated to risk reduction is established by a comprehensive process. Through this process an acceptable level of risk is established by the community and resources then are applied to ensure the level is achieved.
- The community is engaged and involved in improving the quality of life of the citizens. The process brings a diverse group of people and organizations together with a common cause. Relationships are established that are beneficial in other community programs and initiatives.
- The local fire department gains influence in the community by demonstrating its proactive commitment to the safety and well-being of the citizens. Those involved in the process recognize fire department leaders as change agents in the community. This new perception of the EFO provides influence in other issues.
- There also are benefits to the organization and its members. The community risk-reduction process increases the credibility and influence of the fire department. This influence can be used in a variety of ways including improved funding for programs and higher firefighter salaries and the fire department is more successful at achieving its mission to the community.
- Finally, the risk to firefighters from emergency operations is reduced, as the frequency and severity of fires and other incidents are reduced as a result of community risk reduction.



## Keys to Success

There are several keys to the success of any community risk-reduction process:

There is strong leadership in the fire department for the community risk-reduction process. Leadership begins at the top with the fire chief and involves all the department's executive fire officers. If the organization's leadership is not solidly behind community risk reduction and does not provide active leadership during the process, the rest of the department will not have a passion for risk reduction.

The community must be engaged in the process. In reality, any community risk-reduction process must belong to the community. The fire department is a partner with the community. Ultimately the community's organizations, leaders, and elected officials will determine the acceptable level of risk. The leaders of the process must reach out to the community and get decision-makers and target organizations involved in the planning, goal setting, marketing, etc.

The community risk-reduction plan must be tailored to local problems and local resources. This requires a comprehensive assessment of local risks and identifying interventions that will work with the local population groups.

The road to institutionalizing risk reduction should be a planned journey that involves collaboration between individuals, organizations and the community. Research builds the foundation to get started on the right track.

## SCRR PRE-COURSE ASSIGNMENT

### Introduction

Each EFOP course requires completion of an Applied Research Project (ARP) related directly to the course just completed. Research conducted during the SCRR pre-course assignment will be used during the NFA experience, ARP and ultimately in your home community.

**Completion of the pre-course assignment is mandatory for acceptance into SCRR.** Information from the assignment will be used to process in-class activities and ultimately develop a draft plan for a risk reduction initiative that can be used in the home community. You may find that your draft plan lends well to building a foundation for your applied research project that applies to SCRR.

Some of the material you will read dates back several years (or even decades in the case of the original “America Burning”). It is important to process all of the readings carefully as they will provide a foundation and rationale for why the *Strategies for Community Risk Reduction* course was created.

You should budget approximately three months of intermittent development time for completing the pre-course assignment. Each of the assignment’s sections includes an estimate of the minimum amount of time you should budget to complete the directives. Each section also includes a brief rationale of why you are being asked to complete the work and how it will apply to the SCRR course.

A checklist for the assignment is included for your benefit and to serve as record of completion. Please forward the completed checklist to Linda Pecher at the National Fire Academy. It is due no later than two weeks in advance of attendance to NFA.

Please Note Date Completed	<b>Pre-Course Assignment Checklist</b>
	<b>Part One: Examination of America’s continuing fire problem</b>
	Download and <i>peruse</i> American Burning. Be sure to read <u>Page X</u> in the introductory section
	Download and read America at Risk
	Download and read the John’s Hopkins report on public fire safety education
	Compare and contrast the John’s Hopkins, “America Burning” and “America at Risk” reports
	Compare/contrast how well your organization and municipality has responded to challenges outlined in the America Burning series and John’s Hopkins report
	Download and read the FEMA Public Fire Education Planning: A Five Step Process
	<b>Part Two: Building a demographic profile of your community</b>
	Practice using American Fact Finder and Population Finder
	Create a demographical, social, economic and housing profile of <u>your</u> community
	Profile how your community has developed and changed over the past 20 years
	Predict what your community may look like ten years from now

	<b>Part Three: Building a risk profile of your community</b>
	Identify and profile the five leading causes of fire in your home community
	Identify and profile other natural and human-created risks that currently or have potential to threaten your community
	<b>Part Four: Identifying root factors of risk and populations at greatest risk</b>
	Download and read Solutions 2000
	Download and read the selected FEMA Topical Fire Research Series reports
	Create a population profile of high-risk groups in your home community
	Identify how fire and preventable injury are affecting each high-risk group at the local
	Locate geographical maps of your community that can be used during SCRR for risk mapping activities
	<b>Part Five: A changing and distracted America at risk</b>
	Read the section adapted from the Changing American Family at Risk
	Respond to the seven directives included in the section summary
	<b>Part Six: Change starts with the Executive Officer</b>
	Read the “Trends and Traditions” section
	Respond to the five directives that are included in the section summary
	Read “Understanding Community Policing” and answer the questions associated with this assignment.

	<b>Part Seven: The Process of Risk Mitigation</b>
	Review the nationally recognized risk mitigation model
	<b>Part Eight: Send pre-course checklist to NFA</b>
	Linda Pecher/SCSC National Fire Academy 16825 South Seton Avenue Building H-026, Re: SCRR Precourse Emmitsburg, MD 21727

<p><b>PART ONE: EXAMINATION OF AMERICA’S CONTINUING FIRE PROBLEM</b></p>
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**Estimated time for completion of this section: Six hours**

**Information from this section will be used in Units 1 and 3.**

Reading Resource	Location
<i>“America Burning”</i>	<a href="http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa-264.pdf">http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa-264.pdf</a>
<i>“America at Risk”</i>	<a href="http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa-223-508.pdf">http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa-223-508.pdf</a> .
<i>“Fire and Life Safety Education in U.S. Fire Departments”</i>	<a href="http://www.homesafetycouncil.org/state_of_home_safety/hsc_fires_survey_p001.pdf">http://www.homesafetycouncil.org/state_of_home_safety/hsc_fires_survey_p001.pdf</a>
<i>Public Fire Education Planning – A Five Step Process:</i>	<a href="http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa-219.pdf">http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa-219.pdf</a>

**Part One Reading Assignments**

The United States is the most prosperous developed country in the world. Yet, current fire experience data identify our national fire problem as one of the worst among developed countries.

One factor contributing to America’s stagnant fire loss rates is our industry’s failure to address risk reduction in a strategic manner. While many departments have excellent public education programs, a more strategic approach that includes combined prevention interventions is needed. Executive fire officers possess the legitimate authority to lead this process.

To understand progress made by our industry, and challenges yet to be conquered, please access the original “America Burning” report. Although the document is lengthy, please *peruse* its content. Be sure to read the “What this Report is About” section. It is found in the introductory area, page x.

Locate the “America at Risk” publication. This document is much shorter than “America Burning” and should be read in its entirety. Consider why America is still plagued by a significant fire problem and what actions are needed to realize tangible improvement.

Locate and read the 2007 John’s Hopkins Center for Injury Research and Policy report entitled: “Fire and Life Safety Education in U.S. Fire Departments”. This report is based on the America Burning series.

Read USFA’s Public Fire Education Planning – *A Five Step Process*: This publication overviews a nationally recognized five-step process for reducing risk in a community. The process can be applied when addressing any type of risk. You will be expected to be able to apply this process during the SCRR course. The five step process (and associated terminology) will be used extensively during SCRR.

### **Part One Writing Assignment**

Upon completion of the readings, perform the following action:

1. In two or three paragraphs, summarize your opinion on why America continues to exhibit one of the worst fire and preventable injury problems among developed countries. In addition, offer your opinion as to actions the American fire service, government and communities need to initiate to reduce our country’s fire problem.
2. How does the John’s Hopkins report compare and contrast with the findings/recommendations of “America Burning” and “America at Risk”?
3. Compare and contrast how well your organization (and municipality) has responded to the challenges outlined in the “America Burning” series and John’s Hopkins report. Be honest and objective. If improvement could occur, please summarize suggested actions.

Note - Response to these questions will be used to build a rationale for the SCRR course culminating activity.

## **PART TWO: BUILDING A DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF YOUR COMMUNITY**

**Estimated time to budget for completion of this section: Eight hours**

**Information from this section will be used in Units 1, 2 and 3.**

### **Background Information:**

Building a community profile is an initial step in risk mitigation planning. Unfortunately, it is a step often overlooked or mishandled. Two factors that contribute to suboptimal performance include: 1) relying solely on national data for local risk analysis and 2) failure to build an objective profile of the local community and its associated risks.

While the EFO is not expected to be a social scientist or front line mitigator, the EFO needs an understanding of how to build a profile of their community's demographics and risks. This knowledge is essential to directing a comprehensive mitigation process.

The U.S. Census Bureau collects demographic data on every community in the country. Executive officers and risk reduction practitioners should be familiar with the information processed by the bureau.

Current local community demographics can be researched through the census bureau's *American Fact Finder*. *Fact Finder* is a user-friendly tool that is accessed through the bureau's web page.



## Use American Fact Finder:

Using this website, you will first locate your local jurisdiction by city. Then you will drill-down to smaller geographical areas within your city called census tracts. Census tracts are accessed using a specific street address. Follow the instructions below to access information on your community.

1. Go to the U. S Census Bureau website at: [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov). Access *American Fact Finder*. It is located on the tool bar on the left side of the Census Bureau's home page. Click on the **American FactFinder** link to display the *Fast Access to Information* screen.

### U. S. Census Bureau Homepage

The screenshot shows the U.S. Census Bureau homepage in a Windows Internet Explorer browser window. The address bar displays <http://www.census.gov>. The page layout includes a top navigation bar with links for 'Subjects A to Z', 'FAQs', 'Privacy Policy', and 'Help'. A search bar is located below the navigation bar. The left sidebar contains a vertical menu with the following items: 'Income, Poverty & Health Insurance Coverage', 'New on the Site', 'Data Tools', 'American FactFinder' (highlighted with a mouse cursor), 'Jobs@Census', 'Catalog', 'Publications', 'Are You in a Survey?', 'About the Bureau', 'Regional Offices', 'Doing Business with Us', and 'Related Sites'. The main content area is divided into several sections: 'Census 2000' with links to 'Your Gateway to Census 2000', '2010 Census', 'Census 2000 EEO Tabulations', 'Summary File 4 (SF 4)', and 'Summary File 3 (SF 3)'; 'People & Households' with links to 'Estimates', 'American Community Survey', 'Projections', 'Housing', 'Income / State Median Income', 'Poverty', 'Health Insurance', 'International', and 'Genealogy'; 'Geography' with links to 'Maps - TIGER', 'Gazetteer', and 'More'; 'Newsroom' with links to 'Releases', 'Facts For Features', 'Monthly Links', 'Broadcast & Photo Services', 'Embroideries', 'Release Subscription', and 'More'; and 'Special Topics' with links to 'Hurricane Data and Emergency Preparedness', 'Census Calendar', 'Training', 'For Teachers & Students', 'Statistical Abstract', 'FastStats', and 'USA.gov'. The right sidebar features 'Data Finders' with 'Population Clocks' showing 'U.S. 302,799,658' and 'World 6,616,574,010' as of 17:47 GMT (EST +5) Sep 06, 2007. Below this are search tools for 'Population Finder' and 'Find An Area Profile with QuickFacts'. The footer contains the USCENSUSBUREAU logo with the tagline 'Helping You Make Informed Decisions' and links for 'Accessibility', 'Information Quality', 'Data Protection & Privacy Policy', 'FOIA', and 'U.S. Dept of Commerce'. The browser's status bar at the bottom shows the URL <http://factfinder.census.gov/> and a 100% zoom level.

2. Locate the “Get a Fact Sheet for your community....” in the *Fast Access to Information* section. In the **city/town, county, or zip** field, enter your city. Click in the **State** field and select your state. Then click the **GO** button. The Fact Sheet for your city will display.

**Caution:** Enter only your city and state. Zip codes are not always the most reliable way to search and examine demographical information. Some zip codes may cover a much larger geographical area than what you want to examine.

### Fast Access to Information

- It is important to examine each census tract from your community so demographic comparisons can be made among geographic areas. Census tracts are assigned geographical areas within communities whereby the U.S. census bureau provides demographical information collected during each census. This information is collected and posted every ten years. Information on census tracts is only returned when using a search by address. The "Search by Address" feature is located in the right corner of the Fact Sheet Window. Click the **search by address** link.

### Fact Sheet

The screenshot shows the American FactFinder website interface. The browser address bar displays the URL: [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ACSSAFFacts?\\_event=ChangeGeoContext&geo\\_id=160000542600006\\_geoContext=0\\_street=0\\_county=philadelphia](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ACSSAFFacts?_event=ChangeGeoContext&geo_id=160000542600006_geoContext=0_street=0_county=philadelphia). The page title is "Philadelphia city, Pennsylvania - Fact Sheet - American FactFinder".

The navigation menu includes: Home, Search, Feedback, FAQs, Glossary, Site Map, Help. The left sidebar contains categories: POPULATION FINDER, FACT SHEET (selected), PEOPLE, HOUSING, BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT, ABOUT THE DATA, DATA SETS, DOWNLOAD CENTER, MAPS, TOOLS AND REFERENCES.

The main content area shows the "FACT SHEET" for Philadelphia city, Pennsylvania. It includes a search box with "philadelphia" entered and a "GO" button. A callout box points to the "search by address" link with the text: "Click on Search by Address to enter a street address."

The data section displays the "2005 American Community Survey Data Profile Highlights" and a table of demographic characteristics. The table is organized into two main sections: "General Characteristics" and "Social Characteristics".

	Estimate	Percent	U.S.	Margin of Error
<b>General Characteristics - <a href="#">show more &gt;&gt;</a></b>				
Total population	1,406,415			
Male	651,610	46.3	48.0%	+/-448
Female	754,805	53.7	51.0%	+/-448
Median age (years)	35.3	(X)	36.4	+/-0.1
Under 5 years	109,107	7.8	7.0%	+/-320
18 years and over	1,036,030	73.7	74.6%	+/-366
65 years and over	179,332	12.7	12.1%	+/-321
One (999)	1,385,444	98.5	98.1%	+/-3,522
White	592,159	42.1	74.7%	+/-8,266
Black or African American	628,312	44.7	12.1%	+/-6,581
American Indian and Alaska Native	3,079	0.2	0.8%	+/-818
Asian	72,898	5.2	4.3%	+/-1,267
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	442	0.0	0.1%	+/-420
Some other race	88,554	6.3	6.0%	+/-8,295
Two or more races	20,971	1.5	1.9%	+/-3,522
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	145,856	10.4	14.5%	*****
Household population	1,406,415			*****
Group quarters population	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Average household size	2.49	(X)	2.60	+/-0.02
Average family size	3.33	(X)	3.18	+/-0.06
Total housing units	659,769			*****
Occupied housing units	566,433	85.7	89.2	+/-5,629
Owner-occupied housing units	320,641	56.7	66.9	+/-7,022
Renter-occupied housing units	244,792	43.3	33.1	+/-8,317
Vacant housing units	94,336	14.3	10.8	+/-5,629
<b>Social Characteristics - <a href="#">show more &gt;&gt;</a></b>				
Population 25 years and over	906,267			+/-555
High school graduate or higher	(X)	78.5	84.2%	(X)
Bachelor's degree or higher	(X)	21.6	27.2%	(X)
Civilian workforce (civilian population 18 years and over)	88,413	8.5	10.9%	+/-4,893
Disability status (population 5 years and over)	248,573	19.2	14.9%	+/-9,945
Foreign born	155,961	11.1	12.4%	+/-10,036
Male, Now married, except separated (population 15 years and over)	196,170	39.5	55.9%	+/-7,146

- Use the search by street address feature to examine information specific to census tracts. Enter the street address for your firehouse in the **street address** field. Enter your city in the **city or town** field. Enter your state in the **State** field. Enter your zip code in the **Zip code** field and then click **GO**. Your page will look unchanged. However, under the Fact Sheet section heading, you will notice that the zip code and Census Tract are now listed. For 2006, these items will be grayed out. To access the Census Tract information, click on the year **2000** tab of the Fact Sheet.

Note: Smaller communities may not have data for 2006. Therefore, the screen will default to 2000 data with the census tract link active.

### Search by Address

The screenshot shows the American FactFinder interface for Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The search criteria entered are: street address: 320 south broad street, city or town: Philadelphia, state: Pennsylvania, and ZIP code: 19102. The page displays the 2006 American Community Survey data profile highlights and a table of social characteristics.

Social Characteristics - <a href="#">show more &gt;&gt;</a>	Estimate	Percent	U.S.	Margin of Error
Average household size	2.52	00	2.61	+/-0.02
Average family size	3.53	00	3.20	+/-0.06
Population 25 years and over	922,548			+/-563
High school graduate or higher	00	77.5	84.1%	00
Bachelor's degree or higher	00	20.7	27.0%	00
Civilian veterans (civilian population 18 years and over)	83,404	7.7	10.4%	+/-3,893
Disability status (population 5 years and over)	266,406	20.1	15.1%	+/-8,050
Foreign born	157,661	10.9	12.5%	+/-10,123
Male, Now married, except separated (population 15 years and over)	181,833	34.8	52.4%	+/-5,310
Female, Now married, except separated (population 15 years and over)	176,023	28.4	48.4%	+/-6,606
Speak a language other than English at home (population 5 years and over)	266,536	19.9	19.7%	+/-10,179

5. Now, click the **Census Tract** link to display the Census Tract information.

- Be sure to examine the most current data offered. For larger communities, the Census Bureau will offer an updated report every five years. For smaller jurisdictions it is available every ten years.

The screenshot shows the American FactFinder website interface. The browser address bar indicates the URL: [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFacts?\\_event=Search&geo\\_id=16000US24262006\\_geoContext=01000US%7CD4000US24%7C05000US24021%7C](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFacts?_event=Search&geo_id=16000US24262006_geoContext=01000US%7CD4000US24%7C05000US24021%7C). The page title is "Philadelphia city, Pennsylvania - Fact Sheet - American FactFinder".

The main content area displays "Philadelphia city, Pennsylvania" with a search bar and a "GO" button. Below the search bar, there are tabs for "2005" and "2000". A callout box with a blue background and white text reads: "You can now access information about specific Census Tracts. Keep in mind that information about Census Tracts is generally only available for the year 2000. Click on the tab to the left to switch to that year and then you can click on Census Tract 12." The callout box points to the "2000" tab.

The data is organized into several sections:

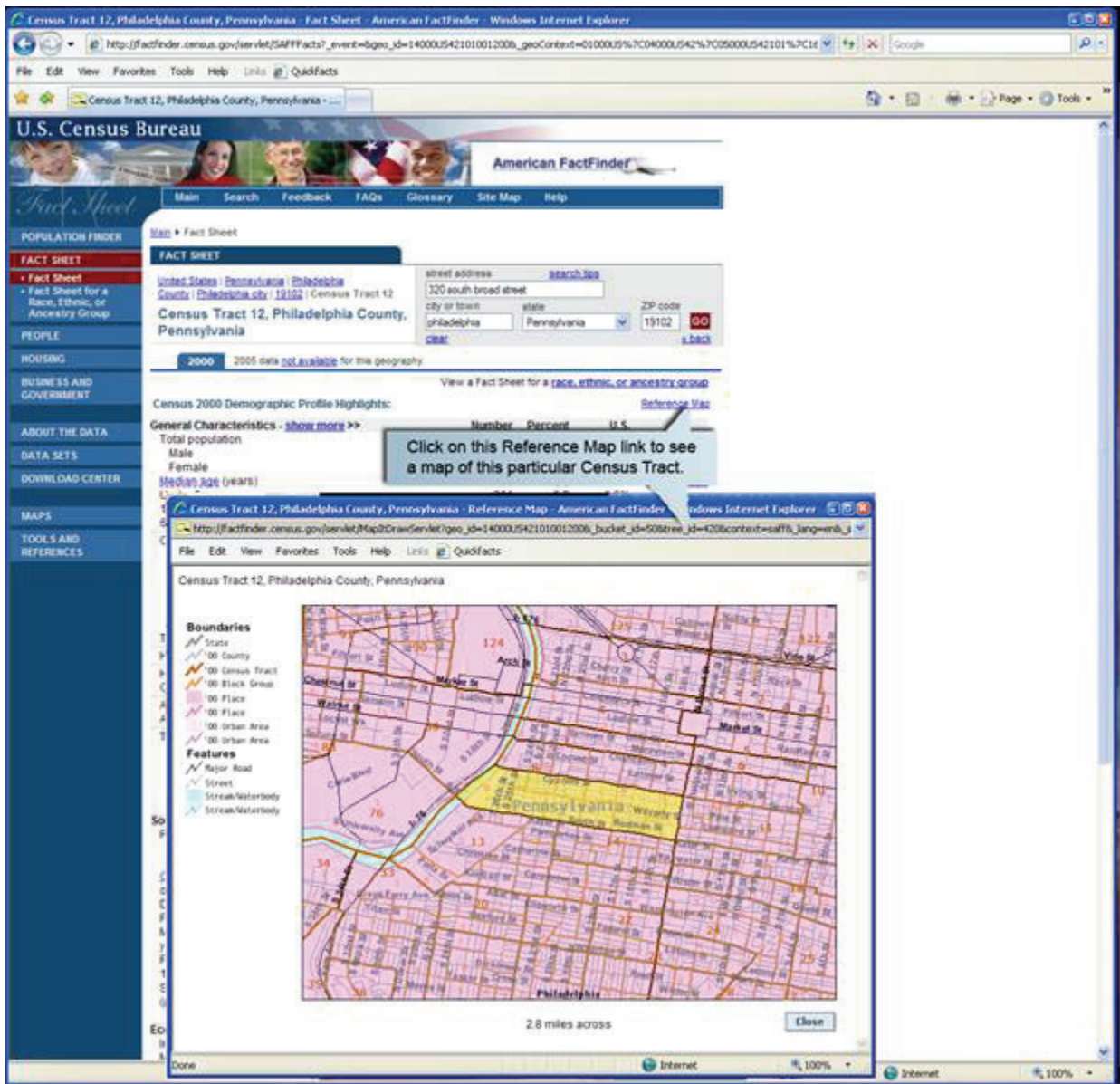
- General Characteristics - show more >>**

	2000	2000	2000
Total population	1,134,081	74.7	74.3%
Male	213,722	14.1	12.4%
Female	1,483,976	97.8	97.6%
Median age (years)	883,267	45.0	75.1%
Under 5 years	655,824	43.2	12.3%
18 years and over	4,073	0.3	0.9%
65 years and over	67,654	4.5	3.6%
One race	729	0.0	0.1%
White	72,429	4.8	5.5%
Black or African American	33,574	2.2	2.4%
American Indian and Alaska Native	128,928	8.5	12.5%
Asian	1,462,819	95.4	97.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	54,731	3.6	2.8%
Some other race	2.48	(X)	2.59
Two or more races	3.22	(X)	3.14
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	561,958		
Household population	590,071	89.1	91.0%
Group quarters population	349,633	59.3	66.2%
Average household size	240,438	40.7	33.8%
Average family size	71,887	10.9	9.0%
Total housing units			
Occupied housing units			
Owner-occupied housing units			
Renter-occupied housing units			
Vacant housing units			
- Social Characteristics - show more >>**

	Number	Percent	U.S.
Population 25 years and over	965,197		
High school graduate or higher	688,107	71.2	80.4%
Bachelor's degree or higher	172,641	17.9	24.4%
Civilian veterans (civilian population 18 years and over)	123,365	10.9	12.7%
Disability status (population 5 years and over)	354,409	25.3	19.3%
Foreign born	137,205	9.0	11.1%
Male, Now married, except separated (population 15 years and over)	221,612	41.0	56.7%
Female, Now married, except separated (population 15 years and over)	218,150	33.3	52.1%
Speak a language other than English at home (population 5 years and over)	251,514	17.7	17.9%
- Economic Characteristics - show more >>**

	Number	Percent	U.S.
In labor force (population 16 years and over)	656,935	55.9	63.9%

6. Explore the various sections of *Fact Finder*. **Use the tool bar on the upper left side of the screen to examine the various categories of information that can be located.** You will be expected to use these categories to build a profile of your community as part of the pre-course assignment. Use the “show more” and “help” options often while exploring *Fact Finder*. It provides explanation about the type of information available in each section.
  - Important note – while you do not have to compile data per census tract for the pre-course assignment, **you must know how to access this information prior to attending SCRR.** This skill will be used extensively during the culminating activity for the course.



## **Assignment for Part Two:**

1. Use *Fact Finder* to build a current demographical profile of your home community. Complete the worksheet. Develop a profile of the people who live in your community (age, gender, race, ethnicity, incomes, poverty, etc...) Perform the same actions for housing (type of homes, age, owner vs. renter, etc...) A profile of employment should also be explored. This information will be used throughout the SCRR course and perhaps as part of your ARP.
  - You **must** have this information available throughout the SCRR course in order to process the in-class activities and the culminating project for the course. Saving the information on a memory device or printing hard copies is highly recommended. All *Fact Finder* categories can be downloaded or printed. You may also wish to save the census bureau site as a favorite on your PC.
  - Explore the *Population Finder* tool that is a component of *Fact Finder*. This tool is located above the fact sheet selection option on *Fact Finder*. *Population Finder* helps the user profile growth trends that are occurring in a community.
  
2. Once information has been gathered, consider how your home community has developed over time (past 20 years). Also consider how it may change as time progresses. As part of this assignment, develop a short narrative on how your community has changed over the past 20 years and what its profile may look like ten years from now.
  - One last huge point to consider: the U.S. census is collected and processed every ten years. Community demographics can change dramatically during that time frame. Executive officers must remain knowledgeable of their home community's changing demographics.
  - It is wise to have a discussion with your local planning or community development professionals. If you have such a discussion, please include your findings as part of the narrative for this section.
  - Being able to explain and use the demographical, social and cultural development of your community is essential to the effectiveness and credibility of a strategic decision-maker.

## DEMOGRAPHIC WORKSHEET

Use *Fact Finder* to build a demographical, social, economic and housing profile of your community. **Bulleated summary statements are acceptable.**

Category	Description	Your Community
Demographical (people-related information):	Population size, distribution, age, ethnicity and cultures.	
Social characteristics:	Education levels, family profiles and poverty rates.	
Economic characteristics:	Employment profile and rates, income levels.	



## DEMOGRAPHIC WORKSHEET

Category	Description	Your Community
Housing profile:	Age of homes and occupants, types of residential occupancies, home ownership vs. rental properties, transience among residents.	
Growth trends:	Use <i>Population Finder</i> to project growth trends for your community. This option is located above the fact sheet selection option.	

## **PART THREE: BUILDING A RISK PROFILE OF YOUR COMMUNITY**

**Estimated time for completion of this section: 20 hours (contingent upon the organization's data collection system and the student's ability to extrapolate objective information)**

**Information from this section will be used in Units 1, 2 and 3**

### **Background Information**

Every 79 seconds, fire occurs in someone's home. Residential fire affects over 400,000 families each year.

Residential fire deaths dropped to approximately 2,600 in 2002. This was the lowest death rate since NFPA began its current level of fire documentation in 1977. A similar reduction trend occurred in the early 1990's. Then, a three-year spike in the mid-1990s followed. Similar trends have occurred since then.

Seventy-nine percent (79%) of fire deaths occur in residential occupancies. Three quarters of all fire-related citizen injuries occur in residential fires.

Over 90% of America's homes have at least one smoke alarm. Up to 30% of these alarms don't work. One third of all fires and 60% of fire fatalities occur in these homes.

### **USFA and NFPA identify the national leading causes of fire to occur most frequently in the following order:**

- Unattended cooking – also leading cause of fire-related injury.
- Arson – also second leading cause of fire death.  
    Juvenile firesetting and fireplay are included in this area.
- Heating Appliances.
- Electricity.
- Smoking – remains leading cause of fire death.

The USFA objective to reduce the loss of life from fire by 15 percent provides a tangible goal for America to reach. Unfortunately, many emergency service organizations plan risk reduction strategies solely on *national* statistics. While national statistics play an important role in identifying common risk issues, close

examination of the local community and its needs is essential to effective risk reduction.

The National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) represents an option for use in obtaining the requested information. However, you must ensure that accurate and objective information has been obtained by your organization.

The United States Fire Administration logically places emphasis on reducing America's fire problem. In addition to reducing the occurrence of fire, today's EFO must examine community risk from a broad perspective.

USFA calls for development of comprehensive multi-hazard risk-reduction plans within 2,500 American communities. These initiatives are to be led by or include the local fire service. In response to this challenge, the EFO should create an all-hazard profile that includes an overview of natural and human-created risks that currently do or could threaten their community.

### **Part Three Assignment**

1. Access the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov>. Examine the section on injury, violence and safety. The Center for Disease Control collects and provides national data on age-specific leading causes of morbidity and mortality. Data queries can be refined per state through the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC).
2. The web address specific to injury query is:  
[http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/Economic\\_Burden\\_of\\_Injury.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/Economic_Burden_of_Injury.htm). This site highlights the book *Incidence and Economic Burden of Injury in the U.S.* It emphasizes the daily toll and cost of injury in the U.S. Click on data link at top of page. This will go to the NCIPC Injury Center site entitled Scientific Data, Statistics, and Surveillance. This site is linked to:
  - WISQARS (Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting Systems)
  - Injury mapping – maps for county, state, region and entire U.S. mortality rates.
  - Leading Causes Charts that include:
    - Ten Leading Causes of Death by age groups. 2001-2003
    - Ten Leading Causes of Nonfatal Injuries Treated in Hospital Emergency Department. 2002 – 2004
    - Ten Leading Causes of Injury Death: Highlighting Unintentional

## Injury. 2001 and 2003

### - Ten Leading Causes of Injury Death: Highlighting Violence 2001 and 2003

3. Using local fire experience data, identify the five leading causes of fire in your community. Provide a brief profile of each cause so it includes:
  - Frequency of occurrence
  - Morbidity and mortality
  - Rate of rise for occurrences
  - Geographic distribution of occurrences
  - Financial impact to fire hosts, the community and organization
  - Populations most affected by each specific type of fire

**Note – This information must be compiled and interpreted prior to attending SCRR. You will not be able to process an effective risk analysis of your community without it.**

4. After reviewing the CDC site, use past experience and current strategic projections to identify types of risk other than fire that are currently challenging, or have potential to threaten, your community. Considerations should be based upon potential loss of life, personal property and overall vitality of the community. This profile should include potential natural and human-created risks.

**PART FOUR: IDENTIFYING ROOT FACTORS OF RISK AND  
POPULATIONS AT GREATEST RISK**

**Estimated time to budget for completion of this section: Ten hours  
(contingent upon the accessibility of reliable and objective data)**

**Information from this section will be used in Units 1, 2 and 3**

Reading Resource	Location
<i>“Solutions 2000”</i>	<a href="http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/solutions2000.pdf">http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/solutions2000.pdf</a>
<i>Fire Risk – Volume 4, Issue 7 (age, demographics and socio-economic factors)</i>	<a href="http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/tfrs/v4i7.pdf">http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/tfrs/v4i7.pdf</a>
<i>The Fire Risk to Children – Volume 4, Issue 8</i>	<a href="http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/tfrs/v4i8.pdf">http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/tfrs/v4i8.pdf</a>
<i>The Fire Risk to Older Adults – Volume 4, Issue 9</i>	<a href="http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/tfrs/v4i9.pdf">http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/tfrs/v4i9.pdf</a>
<i>Fire Risks for the Mobility Impaired</i>	<a href="http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa-204-508.pdf">http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa-204-508.pdf</a>

**Background Information:**

The roots of America’s fire problem are similar to those of the majority of other life safety risks in our country. Contributing elements that often lie at the core of risk include social, cultural, economic and environmental factors.

Executive officers and risk reducers must master how to identify, understand and address how these factors are impacting fire risk at the local level. Of interest - many social, cultural and economic risk elements often remain consistent regardless of community size. Differences most frequently occur in environmental factors.

## Social Factors

Social problems such as a lack of quality housing, affordable health care, inadequate or unavailable childcare, lack of education and job opportunities, etc. are all social factors that contribute to risk.

Government systems, or lack of systems and services, can greatly impact social factors. Peers, family members, societal trends and commercial marketing efforts can also generate social influences.

## Cultural Influences

Cultural influences are the values, beliefs, behaviors, etc. of a specific group. Cultural beliefs are learned over time and through experiences. These beliefs can greatly influence a person or group's behavior.

Social and cultural influences are so inter-connected that they often appear one and the same. Don't get hung up trying to over-analyze the differences. The point to consider is that both social and cultural factors/influences can have huge impact on risk in America – both positively and negatively.

## Economic Factors

Income levels often impact the risk of fire or preventable injury among populations. Families with low income may not be able to afford fire protection systems, quality housing, regular day care, etc.

National statistics clearly indicate the risk of fire and preventable injury is higher among economically challenged populations. Economic factors include family, societal and workplace influences that affect personal finances.

A strong local economy and workforce can influence the level of potential community risk in a positive manner. A broad-based spectrum of employment that offers an adequate number of jobs can lead to stable employment rates and a healthy diverse community.

In contrast, a community that offers limited employment options with the majority being lower paying manufacturing positions may see higher numbers of people challenged by preventable risk.

## Environmental Elements

The environment in which populations live and work can affect risk. Lack of fire protection systems, cluttered living conditions, fire load, poorly maintained housing and sub-standard construction are examples of such factors.

Environmental factors are often compounded by a lack of building and fire codes, or the lack of retroactive application of those codes. The lack of fire protection systems in aging multi-family housing is a common environmental factor that contributes to America's fire death rate plateau.

### Contrasting Urban, Suburban And Rural Fire Risk

Fire risk affects all communities regardless of size. Risk reducers should be able to identify risks and associated factors specific to their community regardless of size.

Historically, emergency providers believed the demographics of urban, suburban and rural communities were vastly different. As technology continues to impact our society, many of the old stereotypes about the starkly different characteristics of urban, suburban and rural communities will gradually disappear. A common fact will remain: the lifestyles of families are influenced by social, cultural, economic and environmental factors.

It is important to have an understanding of these elements and how they contribute to fire and other preventable risks. It is also important to examine populations that are more vulnerable to risk.

### Identifying Risk Factors In Specific Populations

Community risk is best addressed based on the objective study of data. Many national organizations (i.e., the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), NFA, and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)) have conducted extensive research and identified four respective populations known to be at higher risk from fire:

1. Young children (aged 5 and under).
2. Older adults (aged 65 and older).
3. People with disabilities.
4. People living in poverty.

Of interest, these populations consistently represent the groups that are most at risk from a plethora of other preventable occurrences.

Several factors can place people at greater risk for fire and preventable injury:

- Age and gender
- Cognitive ability and intellectual level

- Physical, mental and emotional condition
- Socioeconomic status
- Community demographics and personal living conditions.

An important point to consider during the entire SCRR course: When the risk factors that contribute to fire or preventable injury occur in combination, a person's vulnerability to risk may increase dramatically. For example: A visual-, hearing-, and mobility-impaired older adult living below the poverty level may be at much higher risk from fire than an older adult with only one of these challenges.

In 1999, leaders convened to discuss fire risk among the populations confirmed to be most vulnerable. A report entitled "Solutions 2000" was generated as a result.

High-risk populations are at greater risk from the effects of most hazards, both natural and human-created.

- Children (age five and under)
- Impoverished households
- Older adults (age 65 and over)
- People affected by disabilities
- Populations who speak little or no English

The Solutions 2000 series focused on fire risk. However...A person's age, intellect, social class, physical ability and living environment can impact their vulnerability to virtually any type natural or human-created risk.

In addition to the Census Bureau, there are many other community resources that may be useful when researching high-risk populations. Other sources for obtaining information on **local** community demographics include:

Children age 5 and under: Office of Community Development, Board of Education/School Districts, Head Start Programs, Child Care Associations

Adults over age 65: Office of Community Development, Commission on Aging, Older Adult Advocacy Agencies

People with disabilities: Office of Community Development, People with Disabilities Advocacy Agencies



People living in poverty: Office of Community Development, Office of Housing and Urban Development, Social Service Agencies, Community Action Councils, Advocacy Agencies for Low Income Families

English as second language and diverse cultures:

Office of Community Development, Board of Education/School Districts, Head Start Programs, Child Care Associations, Social Services and Community Action Council

### Risk Mapping

In addition to understanding his or her community's leading risks, the EFO should be able to (or have someone) produce maps that can be used to show the geographical distribution of risk. As part of the SCRR course, you will conduct a risk mapping activity to visually identify targeted areas of your community. Thanks to today's advancing technology, you should be able to electronically locate maps of your community.

### **Part Four Assignment**

1. Download and read the Solutions 2000 document.
2. Download and read the following FEMA Topical Fire Research Series reports. The reports provide excellent background information on the groups confirmed to be at highest risk from fire and preventable injury.
  - Fire Risk – Volume 4, Issue 7 (age, demographics and socio-economic factors)
  - The Fire Risk to Children – Volume 4, Issue 8
  - The Fire Risk to Older Adults – Volume 4, Issue 9
  - Fire Risks for the Mobility Impaired

3. Complete the High Risk Populations worksheet for your community using *American Fact Finder* and *Population Finder*. Identify the current and projected population size of the following groups within your home community:

**HIGH RISK POPULATIONS WORKSHEET**

<b>High-risk group</b>	<b>Current population size</b>	<b>Current geographic distribution of the population</b>	<b>Projected demographical growth of population over next 10 years</b>
Children age 5 and under			
Impoverished households			
Adults over age 65			

<b>High-risk group</b>	<b>Current population size</b>	<b>Current geographic distribution of the population</b>	<b>Projected demographical growth of population over next 10 years</b>
People affected by disabilities			
Populations who speak little or no English			

4. Identify how fire and other preventable injury are affecting each confirmed high-risk group in your home community. Succinct summaries are encouraged. You will use this information during several SCRR units and the culminating course activity.

**IMPACT OF FIRE AND PREVENTABLE INJURY WORKSHEET**

High-risk group	How fire and other preventable injury is affecting the group at the <u>local</u> level
Children age 5 and under	
Impoverished households	
Adults over age 65	
People affected by disabilities	
Populations who speak little or no English	

## **PART FIVE: A CHANGING AND DISTRACTED AMERICA AT RISK**

**Estimated time for completion of this section: Four hours**

**Information from this section will be used in all units**

### **Background Information:**

As society evolves over time, some things remain consistent. Among the constants is the fact that social, cultural, economic and environmental factors can influence risk - positively and negatively.

Factors such as poverty and poor living conditions have and always will be large contributors to America's fire problem and other risk occurrences. In contrast, modern-day factors such as the technology revolution and population explosions in suburban areas are more contemporary contributors to preventable risk.

Risk reducers must remain aware of societal trends and design mitigation strategies that are effective in these changing times. The most effective risk reduction strategies are those that focus on targeted problems affecting specific groups of people.

The fast pace of today's society creates many challenges that risk reduction strategists should consider. The NFA course entitled "The Changing American Family at Risk" promotes strategies on how to address preventable risk in an ever-changing world.

An information-overloaded and distracted society is at higher risk from natural and human-created risk. The paradigm of "It can't or won't happen to me" exacerbates this challenge.

The roots of successful risk reduction are anchored by education, with resultant knowledge gain, and (hopefully) a positive behavioral change. This applies not only to those at risk, but also to policy makers who have influence over the adoption of technology, codes and standards.

The definition of behavioral change is simple: Influencing a person's thinking that ultimately results in that individual making a choice to act in a different manner. When it comes to health and life safety, individuals may choose to make behavioral change if they:

- Are aware that a problem or threat exists.
- Understand the problem and factors contributing to it.
- Believe they or loved ones are personally at risk.
- Believe the benefits to change outweigh the barriers to do so.
- Believe they are capable of the behavioral change.
- Understand what they are supposed to do to reduce the risk.
- Understand and believe in their reasons for taking action.
- Have the resources to make the change possible.
- Receive feedback on their efforts.

Although the strategy sounds simple, changing a person's behavior can be a complicated effort influenced by social, cultural, economic and environmental elements.

In preparation for SCRR, please read the following section that has been adapted from the "Changing American Family at Risk" course.

### A Changing America

The demographics of America's families, schools, workplaces and communities continue to change. This section explores current trends in the following categories:

- Households, Neighborhoods and Communities
- Schools
- Mass Media and Technology
- Workplace
- Emergency Services

### Households, Neighborhoods and Communities

- The demographics of households continue to diversify. 93% of households are non-traditional. (Traditional American household – Never-divorced parents and stay-at-home mom)

- Two-parent households increased 6% since 1990. Single-mother (sole income generator) households increased by 25 percent.
- Twenty percent of toddlers are raised in poverty.
- Family structure and household demographics can change due to relationship changes, new social groups, cultural influences, employment changes, pregnancy, aging, economics and death.
- Due to delayed marriage, an aging population, and low unemployment, there are more single person households than nuclear families.
- 60% of moms with children work outside the home either part- or full-time.
- In response to demand, the number of childcare facilities has increased significantly. Some centers serve hundreds of families - others are small home-based operations.
- The pace of society influences the pace of families. More activities exist for children and families than ever before. Time pressures impact the majority of families, especially families with children.
- The majority of children's parents work. Children want more quality time with parents. The family is still very important to children and pre-teens.
- Our nation continues to become more diverse. By 2050, "minorities" will represent nearly 50% of the population.
- Baby boomers will begin to retire in earnest by 2010. The number of older adults living alone or with a retired spouse will grow exponentially over the next two decades.
- Older adults are now less likely to be in a nursing home. Assisted living communities are growing.
- The safety and welfare of children and grandchildren will continue to be of concern to older adults.
- As the number of older adults increases, support systems for this population will become stressed for resources.
- As Americans age, so does the age of their homes. Many communities have older established neighborhoods where the condition of housing is rapidly deteriorating.
- The composition of many established neighborhoods is changing. As older residents pass on or relocate, their homes are often purchased by investors

for use as rental properties. Some properties fall into states of disrepair due to tenant turnover and lack of maintenance.

- As communities age, many urban areas are experiencing surges in community revitalization efforts.
- Suburbs continue to expand in size as people move from crowded inner city areas. Areas once rural are becoming more suburban in nature.
- Income levels and size of homes continue to rise in many affluent suburban communities.
- The formation of neighborhood associations is becoming more common in many communities.
- The definition of “neighborhood” is diverse. It could mean a street or two in a large city, a several-block area in a suburban location, or a several square mile zone in a rural setting.
- In the 1950’s, most people knew their neighbors. In many of today’s neighborhoods, folks are cordial, but often barely know their neighbors.
- Neighborhood grocery stores were once gathering places where folks took time to talk and share important news. Today’s “big box stores” feature a fast-paced environment similar to a super-highway.
- Local firehouses and churches were often the center of neighborhood activity. Now, due to the threat of terrorism, most are locked and monitored with security cameras.
- While trends point toward a resurgence of neighborhood-based activity, America’s “neighborhoods” will probably never return to what they looked like 40 years ago.
- Many rural areas still remain untouched by major suburban influences.
- Poverty remains a serious challenge in urban and rural communities. Poverty will impact older adults at a greater frequency as that population grows.
- The resource gap between the ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’ continues to widen.
- Social isolation often affects not only the older adult population. Many people live alone. Solitary activities, like surfing the Internet, can promote social isolation among younger populations.
- The church still has significant influence over many households throughout America. However, mainstream religion is losing popularity with the young.



- The retail industry continues to influence the demographics of many communities. Super-Malls and Mega-Mart complexes continue to impact how consumers spend their resources. One stop shopping is proving to be a convenience demanded by Americans.

## Schools

The internal demographics of schools in many American communities are changing at a rapid pace. Here's why:

- The U.S. continues to lag behind in educational achievement when compared with many other industrialized nations. This fact places America at a disadvantage when competing in a global economy. Today's workers must have higher levels of education, computer literacy, critical-thinking and information analysis skills.
- Taxpayers have requested enhanced performance and greater accountability from schools. The government has listened and responded.
- National and state initiatives to enhance both teacher and student performance have placed challenging accountability standards on local schools. These performance standards place added workloads on administrators, teachers and students. These workloads can increase stress at all levels.
- Curricula are being revised to arm students with the information required to show proficiency in core subject matters such as language arts, mathematics and technology.
- Many communities are utilizing the concept of "magnet schools" that focus on specific curricula like arts and technology.
- Over two million children attend private schools. Home schooling is another rapidly growing trend.
- Time pressures and competition for curriculum topics are increasing the possibilities that risk reduction may be overlooked as a core priority subject.
- Historically, most schools routinely requested some level of fire safety program from local firefighters. Unfortunately, annual firefighter visits and/or firehouse tours are being eliminated as schools scramble to meet increased educational standards.

- Competition for a school's curriculum priority can be a frustrating situation for risk reducers. However, risk reducers should not give up. Rather, must empathize with professional educators and understand the tremendous pressure to improve academic performance.
- Risk reducers must collaborate with school officials to develop innovative safety lessons that integrate with core curriculum topics such as language arts, science, technology and math. The first step is meeting with officials to learn what is included in a school's essential curriculum.
- School officials respond best to risk reducers seeking collaborative win/win resolutions to curriculum challenges. Our industry should offer assistance in developing, presenting and evaluating user-friendly life safety initiatives.
- Integrating risk reduction with school-based curricula requires vision, collaboration and effort on behalf of risk reducers. Using these strategies will prove successful, as the trend toward performance-based schools is here to stay.
- A measurable, school-based life safety curriculum that includes family extension activities remains one of the most effective forms of primary risk prevention.

### Mass Media and Information Technology

This section features information on two components that have tremendous influence over how information is received by consumers: mass media and information technology.

For the sake of this section, mass media will include newspapers, television and radio. Information technology will focus on computers and the Internet.

- After a several year decline in circulation numbers, newspaper sales are rebounding (or adjusting publication strategies) from the influences generated by the Internet. Many consumers still consider the newspaper a preferred source on local and national news.
- Many suburban communities are seeing an increase in the number of "local" papers that report news and happenings in regional geographic areas. Some larger papers offer sections that outline events in specific neighborhood areas.
- Thirty years ago, many consumers could receive just ten channels on their televisions. Cable networks and satellite services have revolutionized the television industry. Many households now receive literally hundreds of

channels. In some communities, a consumer must pay extra fees to receive local programming via their satellite service.

- Many cable networks remain community focused by offering a variety of local programming. In many cases, local government has its own channel. Local companies and stations are often interested in collaborating with the emergency services to enhance risk reduction efforts.
- The composition of television programming has changed dramatically. Fast moving, action packed shows with intense visual stimulation dominates today's TV market. Viewer attention is often maintained through use of explosive scenes or alluring connotations.
- In the 1970's, the NBC series Emergency offered an action packed view of the Los Angeles fire department. Today's television market offers a wide variety of shows that spotlight life in the emergency services. Sadly, few (if any) primary injury prevention messages are integrated into these programs. Drama and excitement rule!
- Radio has changed in many ways. Today, it is not uncommon for one company to own dozens of radio stations. In many areas, local radio personalities are being replaced by syndicated programming.
- Locating a true "local" station that focuses on news and happenings in the local community can be challenging in many areas. As with television, satellite service is impacting the radio industry by offering subscribers hundreds of commercial-free stations. However, many people still listen to car radio and watch local television stations.
- Older adults are the biggest consumer of traditional media. Younger generations are more accepting of newer, technology-driven message media.
- Risk reducers must recognize trends in mass media and determine how they affect the dissemination of information in the respective local community.
- Partnerships with the media must be solidified at the local level. Reporters, editors, news directors and other key people must know about and understand what risks threaten the local community.
- The emergency services cannot view the media as an enemy. Like us, the media has a job to perform. With or without our help, they will report the news. Understanding how local media function is an important skill for risk reducers. The media can be utilized as an integral component of the risk reduction team.

- Where were you when you first learned of the vision to create the Internet?  
The Internet has changed the way many people receive information.
- Two million people go online for the first time each month. Nine of ten school-age children have access to computers either at home or school. Families with children have a 70% higher propensity to possess a home computer that is connected to the Internet.
- Busy parents are looking to outside tutors and products to help educate their children. Nearly half of today's families who have a home computer use it primarily for research activities.
- Most non-commercial Internet sites for children have vanished. Retailers are being told to make websites child-friendly.
- While the growing availability of computers at work and school has made the Internet available across all demographic groups and geographic regions, not everyone has access to a computer. Nearly 140 million people are unable to connect to the Internet. Family income is the most important factor in Internet use.
- Advances in technology have even changed the face of children's games. Most of today's youth are proficient operators of electronic high-tech gadgets. Older children seem to have as much, if not more knowledge, of computers as do their parents.
- Thanks to technology, Americans have more to see, do and learn than ever before in the history of our country. All this stimulation, however, comes with a price: how can marketers (and risk reducers) use it to successfully elicit attitudes and behavioral changes that favor safe lifestyles?
- In general, most people are fed up with telemarketers, SPAM and other distractions viewed as intrusions of privacy.

## Workplace

- In the last four decades, economic and technological forces have transformed the U.S. economy from a production- to service-based economy. This trend demands a more intellectually prepared workforce. The need for life-long learning is not a projected trend; it's a reality that's here to stay.
- Our performance-driven society has tremendous influence over today's workforce. Americans demand fast and quality customer service. Email, voice mail, pagers, cell phones and PDA's have made lightning quick worldwide communication possible. Today's iphone combines all means of communication into one device. The future will see further refinement of communication capabilities.
- As technology revolutionizes the workplace, many jobs once considered "blue collar" are becoming more technical in nature. On-going staff training is standard as employees are required to have competencies in a variety of core subjects.
- No matter how "technical" society becomes, labor skills will still be needed in the workplace. No machine will ever replace the backbone of American labor: people. Due to varied levels of education, it sometimes can be a challenge to initiate behavioral change within labor-oriented cultures.
- Corporate downsizing has become a modern reality. Much like the mega-mart effect on small retailers, small corporations are being acquired by larger corporations. In the end, fewer jobs may be available as employees are forced to perform the jobs of several people. This can result in stressed employees and morale problems.
- Management staff faces performance pressures as well. As performance demands increase, a focus on routine workplace safety and overall concern for the employee's family may be inadvertently overlooked. Getting the attention of management and decision-makers can be a challenging process in today's high-pressure workplace.
- While the workplace can be a challenging environment, many forward-thinking corporations consider employees to be their most important resource. Many offer on-site childcare, and part-time or work-from-home telecommuting employment options for parents.
- The number of home offices has grown exponentially during the past decade. Many people have home offices that rival the best-equipped corporate workplace.

- As performance pressures grow and healthcare costs skyrocket, the human resource department becomes an even more important component of today's workplace. Growing companies are placing increased responsibilities on HR departments to offer a wide-variety of wellness programs designed to support employees and reduce staff turnover.
- Employees are changing jobs more than ever before. In days gone by, an employee could count on staying at a job and retiring with a pension after 30 years of service. Today, many employees invest contributions toward employer sponsored investment programs.
- Many employees have personal retirement and investment portfolios. This trend makes it easier for employees to switch jobs. Employee loyalty to single corporation for an entire career is diminishing.
- Government regulations continue to have an impact on many American workplaces. Agencies that serve children, special needs populations and older adults are often required to offer annual emergency preparedness training to staff.
- Due to a changing economy, many people are delaying retirement and working longer. In addition, the projected growth of the older adult population has spawned a dramatic increase in the development of housing, services and people that will serve this group in years to come.
- The American workplace has changed dramatically in the past forty years. Although it can be a challenging process, the workplace remains a promising place to integrate risk reduction initiatives. Risk reducers are wise to collaborate with corporate leaders to develop innovative programs that integrate both workplace and home safety training.

### Summary

America's communities, neighborhoods and families will continue to change over time. Technological innovations have led to a faster-paced society. The structure and composition of communities and neighborhoods continues to evolve in a vast array of directions.

Information overload and fast-paced living often create distraction and less focus on basic issues like safety. Executive officers must understand a changing America to effectively address fire risk in the local community.

As summary to this section, it is important to reflect on how a changing society may be affecting your community. Answers to the following questions will be used as foundation information for several SCRR learning activities and the culminating activity for the course.

## **Part Five Assignment**

Please respond to the following seven directives:

1. After reflecting upon what you have just read, succinctly summarize how a changing society is affecting your home community.
2. An uninformed and distracted society is more vulnerable to natural and human-created risk. In your opinion, how knowledgeable are your citizens about current and potential risk issues in the local community?
3. What perceptions of local risk are held by your citizens?
4. What perceptions of local risk are held by community decision-makers?
5. What is the level of risk mitigation collaboration present between your organization and the community?
6. Identify the groups and organizations that your agency currently collaborates with to address local risk.
7. In your opinion, are there other groups and organizations that your organization should be collaborating with at the local level? If so, please identify them.

## PART SIX: CHANGE STARTS WITH THE EFO

**Estimated time needed for completion of this section: Four hours**

**Information from this section will be used in Units 1, 4 and 5**

Reading Resource	Location
<i>“Understanding Community Policing: A Framework for Action</i>	<a href="http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/commp.pdf">http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/commp.pdf</a>

### **Background Information:**

The ability to lead a strategic risk mitigation process is a skill that must be possessed by an executive officer. SCRR will help the EFO build that skill set.

A successful risk reduction process begins with a leader’s vision. It advances through local data analysis and risk mitigation planning. It culminates in sustainable actions that are evaluated for success and modified according to need. Many of America’s safest communities owe credit to EFO graduates who have helped design and implement a comprehensive risk reduction strategy that focuses on local needs.

The following section overviews some of the progressive changes that are occurring within today’s emergency services. It also chronicles traditions that may be hampering organizations from institutionalizing risk reduction as a core value.

### **Emergency Services - Trends and Traditions:**

- The emergency services have embraced the technology revolution. Life saving technology like thermal imaging cameras and digital communications are being used nationwide.
- Organizations are taking advantage of computer technology. Most offer websites that provide information about their department.
- The challenge of marketing ourselves remains. How can we expect the public to visit our websites if they don’t know about them? In addition, how many organizations offer quality information and prevention strategies on



local risks? Are links to credible national sources like USFA, NFPA and Safe Kids included on department web sites?

- Most organizations continue to offer some level of primary prevention program at the elementary school level. The most effective efforts occur when the fire department works closely with school officials to design prevention strategies that integrate with core school curricula.
- Some departments assume their local schools are providing adequate lessons on primary fire and injury prevention. No communication takes place and programs are absent.
- Many organizations use fire prevention week as their sole window of opportunity to conduct risk reduction efforts. School visits are crammed into a short time frame and the annual open house at the fire station seems to draw few visitors.
- Progressive departments have integrated risk reduction as part of their overall year-round mission. They know their leading risk issues and are constantly designing contemporary intervention strategies. Their organization's staff participates willingly in risk reduction because they understand how their efforts are vital to creating a healthy community.
- Many organizations are frustrated by the lack of citizen attendance at fire department open houses, retail store parking lot events and table set-ups at malls. They embrace the philosophy – "If one person gets the message, we have been successful". Would the corporate or retail industry accept that philosophy?
- Progressive organizations are conducting market research on their target populations. Some are seeking advice from professional marketers and developing contemporary strategies that are successfully reaching their intended audiences.
- Risk mitigation strategists are learning that seeking advice about marketing doesn't have to be expensive. Often, it is free, as many marketing professionals are happy to give advice for the good of the community. Many universities offer free marketing consultation services from student groups performing projects or internships.
- Most marketing professionals give similar advice: Develop a series of strategies, each designed to permeate a specific target population. Do things that make the target population inquisitive about the service being offered. Create a culture whereby target populations view risk reduction as a needed commodity. Most importantly, use strategies that show the most promise of success.

- Collaboration with retailers is paying off. Many retailers are allowing public educators to interact with customers at safety equipment point-of-sale areas and other high traffic locations in their store.
- Fire departments in many communities are enjoying strong partnerships with local businesses and industry. Risk reduction is integrated into employee wellness programs and includes home safety initiatives.
- More than ever, fire departments are visiting neighborhoods and getting to know their customers. Many departments install free smoke alarms on request. Others canvass neighborhoods post-fire to check alarms. Some even visit a portion of their community each year, personally discussing risk issues and offering smoke alarm assistance.
- In most areas, residents warmly welcome a visit from local firefighters. Unfortunately, some organizations have decided against initiating neighborhood visitation because of concerns that citizens may view these actions as an invasion of privacy.
- Many risk practitioners are realizing the value of conducting post-incident interviews with fire victims. This strategy uncovers the behaviors that contributed to a preventable incident. It also provides valuable information on what consumers knew about prevention of the problem. One of the greatest benefits of this strategy is that firefighters are obtaining information on how they can better market risk reduction in the community.
- Some fire departments offer tours of burned homes to neighborhood residents. People learn how the fire began and spread through the home. More importantly, they learn how the fire could have been prevented. Home safety displays are present and firefighters offer free home inspections and smoke alarm installation.
- Many organizations are feeling the impact caused by increased consumer litigation. Decision-makers are sometimes forced to deny use of certain windows of opportunity due to liability concerns. For example...a risk reducer may be directed by his or her superiors not to use a burned home as an interactive neighborhood classroom due to potential liabilities.
- Most organizations have people interested in leading or participating with risk reduction. Some organizations lack those catalysts. A few have malignant personnel who will openly criticize anyone who supports risk reduction efforts.
- Many progressive organizations have developed political savvy and realize the importance of communication and customer service. They have adopted the philosophy that today's organizations must be "transparent" in nature.

## Summary

An organization that has institutionalized risk reduction as a core value will display the following behaviors:

- Time and attention dedicated to risk reduction
- Research on leading local risks and affected populations
- Resources (people, time, money and equipment) will be allocated
- Intervention strategies will be designed, implemented and evaluated

Unit five of SCRR focuses on building organizational and community support for risk mitigation. It also provides information on how to initiate political action.

## **Part Six Assignment**

As summary to part six of this pre-course assignment and to build background information for several SCRR activities, please respond to the following five directives:

1. Risk reduction strategies are most effectively created when the entire organization understands the level of natural and human-created risk that faces the community. Line staff, mid-level management, executive officers, administrative and political decision-makers need a fact-based rationale of why they should provide tangible support to reducing risk.

In your opinion, how knowledgeable is your internal constituency about current and potential risk issues in the local community? Please provide your view on each of the following groups:

- Line Staff
- Mid-level Management
- Executive Officers
- Chief of Department
- Administrative Leadership (ie – city administrator)

- Political Leadership (ie – council, commission, board of aldermen)
2. Attitudes and values drive behaviors. In your opinion, what are the attitudes and values of your internal constituency about supporting risk reduction? Please provide your view on each of the following groups:
- Line Staff
  - Mid-level Management
  - Executive Officers
  - Chief of Department
  - Administrative Leadership (ie – city administrator)
  - Political Leadership (ie – council, commission, board of aldermen)
3. After reflecting upon the “trends and traditions” of the emergency services and responding to questions one and two, please offer your objective opinion on the following:
- How well has your organization institutionalized risk reduction as a core value? Please justify your answer by including the following information:
- Does your organization’s mission statement include prevention as a core objective? Please note the mission statement.
  - What level of resources (attention, time, people and money) does your organization invest into risk mitigation?
  - Does your organization have a staff position dedicated to risk mitigation?
4. Executive officers need baseline knowledge of risk reduction initiatives currently in place within their home community. Please identify examples of school and community-based risk reduction programs that your organization is currently involved with.

School-based programs:

Community-based programs:

5. In measurable terms, please summarize the outreach, impact and outcome that have been created by your organization's school and community-based programs.

Note: Outreach measures the number of people being served by your initiatives. Impact indicates the changes in knowledge, behaviors and living environments that your initiatives have helped to facilitate. Outcome measures how your work has impacted the occurrence of preventable risk in the community.

## Pre-Course Assignment

### [Understanding Community Policing: A Framework for Action](#)

In 1994 the Bureau of Justice published a landmark report about community policing. The report, *Understanding Community Policing: A Framework for Action*, provided a detailed analysis of community policing and its impact on reducing crime. The report clearly identified the benefits of police officers working with the residents in a specific neighborhood or area. Many times these benefits did not include a reduction in crime statistics, rather, the benefits were found in the nature of the relationship between the police and the residents of the community.

Even though this report is over 10 years old, it is still considered a landmark report about the benefits and challenges associated with community policing. There are numerous corollaries between the dynamics of community policing and fire fighters performing risk reduction at the neighborhood level, especially the relationship between the fire fighter and the target audience. The lessons from community policing can and should be analyzed and applied by fire service leaders to community risk reduction initiatives.

Read the Bureau of Justice Assistance report as part of your pre-course tasks. Use the information from the report to answer the following questions. Your answers should be word processed with your name and department in the upper right hand corner of the first page. Your answers must be complete. This assignment is due on the first day of class.

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1. The report states that "community policing is democracy in action". Why is this statement accurate?
  2. According to the report, how has the social fabric of the United States changes in recent decades? How has this change in the social fabric impacted the level of risk in our communities?
  3. How did the involvement of citizens in local government policy making change during the 1960's and 1970's?
  4. Studies show that community policing has had minimal impact on the level of serious crime. Yet, most police agencies and citizen groups consider it effective. Why?
  5. What is the key to successful community policing?

6. In community policing what methods are used to develop trust with the citizens in the individual neighborhoods? How could these methods be adapted and used by fire companies in their response areas?
7. Why is the building of trust more difficult in low income neighborhoods?
8. What are the two core components of community policing? How can those two components be adapted and applied to reducing other risks in the community?
9. For community policing to be successful, the organization's values about community policing must be changed. Does the same issue apply to a fire department's success with community risk reduction? Justify your answer.
10. Explain the elements or lessons from community policing that can be used by the fire service in a community risk reduction initiative.

## **PART SEVEN: THE PROCESS OF RISK MITIGATION**

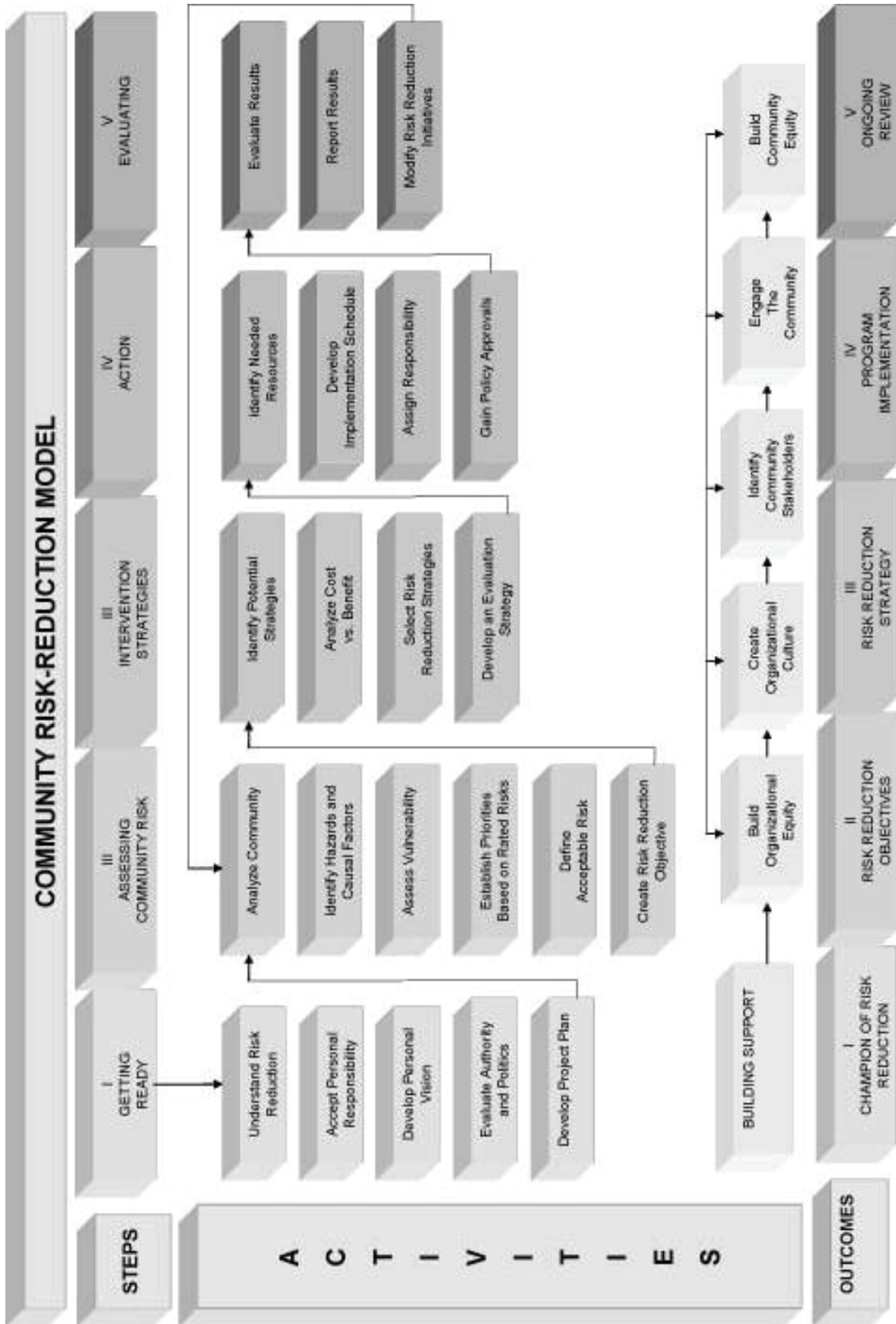
**Estimated time for completion of this section: One hour**

**The SCRR model will be used throughout the entire course**

### **Part Seven Assignment**

Examine and become familiar with the nationally recognized community risk mitigation model. The model outlines the process needed to build a successful community risk reduction strategy. The SCRR course promotes use of this model.





## **PART EIGHT: COMPLETE PRE-COURSE ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST**

**Estimated time for completion of this section: One hour**

**The pre-course assignment checklist serves two purposes:**

- To serve as a guide that helps keep you on track with completion of the assignment.
- To serve as record for the NFA program chair that you have complete the prerequisite assignments that are required for entry into SCRR.

Please complete the pre-course assignment checklist (located on pages 10-12 of this package) and send to Linda Pecher at the National Fire Academy.