Learning Objective: *The student will get an overall understanding of how a community is graded under the Public Protection Classification (PPC™) program.*

Have you ever wondered what components are evaluated during the Insurance Services Office's grading process of your community? Everyone in the fire service is aware of at least one component: the fire department evaluation. You may have often heard or used this statement during your conversations: "What is your fire department's Insurance Services Office PPC classification?" Well, the question needs to be rephrased to, "What is your community's Insurance Services Office PPC classification?" There is a misconception in the industry that the PPC refers to the fire department's classification. Actually, it is a community's classification. Of course, the fire department plays a very important role in the evaluation.

Public Protection Classification, Part 2

Water Supply System

Does your community have sufficient water supply for fire suppression beyond daily maximum consumption? The Insurance Services Office compares the available water supply at representative community locations with the needed water supply for those locations. As part of this analysis, the supply works capacity, the water main capacity, and the fire hydrant distribution are evaluated to find the limiting factor. The distribution, maintenance and condition of hydrants, pumps and storage facilities are also reviewed. This section has a total of 40 available credit points. More than 32,000 unique water supply systems are recognized by the Insurance Services Office throughout the country.

Community Risk Reduction (New Section)

The Insurance Services Office evaluates a community's proactive efforts to reduce fire risk and frequency by examining three distinct areas: fire prevention, public fire safety education, and fire investigation capabilities.

Does your community enforce the latest edition of a nationally recognized fire prevention code? Do you have certified plan reviewers to review new commercial buildings for compliance with the adopted fire prevention code? Does your community have certified fire inspectors to perform fire prevention inspections? Do you have a preincident planning program? These are some of the items evaluated as part of your community's fire prevention programs.

The Insurance Services Office also reviews a community's public fire safety education programs, such as residential fire safety programs, fire safety education in schools, juvenile firesetter intervention programs, etc. These are some of the important public fire safety education programs that could reduce losses of life and property.

A community could do a better job in preventing fires by investigating the causes of fires. Does your community have professional fire investigators to investigate all structure fires? About 23,000 fire departments report structure fires and other incidents in the National Fire Incident Reporting System each year. Is your fire department one of them?

These are the types of programs that the Insurance Services Office evaluates to recognize proactive efforts taken by your community to reduce fire risk and frequency. The idea of having such programs is to increase public awareness in methods of reducing losses of life and property. This section has a total of 5.5 available credit points.

In the next series of Coffee Break Training sessions, we will explore in depth the changes to the Emergency Communications section (formerly Fire Alarms) of the 2012 Fire Suppression Rating Schedule.

The National Fire Academy's course information and registration is available at http://www.usfa.fema.gov/index.shtm.