



FEMA

USFA

News in Review

An Electronic Newsletter for First Responders and Allied Professionals

In This Issue:

DHS to Lead Interagency Coordinating Council on Emergency Preparedness and Individuals with Disabilities	2
Homeland Security Launches Expansion of Information Exchange System to States and Major Cities	2
Three Special Reports Look at Structure Fires in the U.S. in 2000, Including Residential Fire Incidence	2
Homeland Security Approves Use of Preparedness Funds for First Responder Training Courses	3
New On-Line Course Helps Urban Firefighters Battle Wildfires More Safely	3
USFA and the National Fire Protection Association Partner to Cut Death Rate from Rural Fires in the U.S.	4
Critical Infrastructure Protection: A Word of Caution	4
New Health and Safety Training Specialist Announced	4
A Focus on the National Incident Management System (NIMS)	5
National Preparedness Month Slated for September	5
Special Reports Use National Fire Incident Reporting Data to Study Nightclub Fires in the U.S.	6
FEMA Joins National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health in Study of Ambulance and Emergency Vehicle Accidents	7
Protecting Emergency Responders	7
Homeland Security Hosts Sports Leaders to Discuss Security Issues	7

New Web Page Enhances Wildland Fire Preparedness

As the Nation braces for what is predicted to be a severe wildfire season in some parts of the country, the U.S. Fire Administration announced a new “2004 Wildland Update” Web link to help firefighters and community leaders locate important and up-to-date wildland fire information. This new Web page, at www.usfa.fema.gov, features a collection of links to critical wildland Web sites, as well as weather predictions, current aviations strategy, community programs, and a daily “Six Minute Safety Briefing.”

“This Nation still has a majority of the 2004 wildland fire season ahead so it’s extremely important that firefighters and residents be able to access the most current information available,” said Michael D. Brown, Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response. “President Bush and Secretary Ridge are aware of the wildfire danger across the country and are happy to provide this important information source.”



Photo by Bryan Day

The USFA consolidated the work of other Federal, State, and local agencies into one source of information. The Web site includes links to the National Fire Plan, FIREWISE, and handbook on “Preparing a Community Wildfire Plan.”

“We at the USFA are not wildfire experts, but we desire to serve as one of the information conduit to the numerous other agencies that regularly post and update excellent wildland information of great value to all firefighters,” said Deputy U.S. Fire Administrator Charlie Dickinson. “A few minutes exploring the various links at the USFA Web page will definitely enhance firefighter safety and understanding of this problem.”

DHS to Lead Interagency Coordinating Council on Emergency Preparedness and Individuals with Disabilities

President Bush recently marked the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act by signing an Executive Order that seeks to integrate people with disabilities fully into the national emergency preparedness effort. The Executive Order creates an Interagency Coordinating Council on Emergency Preparedness and Individuals with Disabilities (Interagency Council), which will be headed by DHS Secretary Tom Ridge.

The Executive Order directs the Federal government to address the safety and security needs of people with disabilities during such emergency situations as earthquakes, tornadoes, fires, floods, hurricanes, and acts of terrorism. The Interagency Council will oversee the implementation of this policy.

Daniel W. Sutherland, DHS's Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties and previously a disability rights lawyer at the Department of Justice, called the President's action "one of the most significant developments in the area of disability policy in several years." Sutherland noted that, "Since 9/11, the disability community, like many in America, has been very focused on preparing for emergencies. This Council will ensure the coordination of preparedness work being done across the country, maximize the value of past efforts and stimulate new work to address the difficult challenges that face this community."

In upcoming months, DHS will host a major conference on emergency preparedness for people with disabilities. The conference will take place from September 22 to 24, 2004, and Secretary Ridge will be a keynote speaker. In addition, FEMA has prepared a number of technical assistance materials on emergency preparedness for people with disabilities, and is committed to publishing new guidance and assistance materials. FEMA also is providing technical assistance to the U.S. Access Board, which will hold a conference in mid-October discussing new research on building evacuation for people with disabilities.

Homeland Security Launches Expansion of Information Exchange System to States and Major Cities

Effective and timely public warnings can protect critical infrastructures, save lives, reduce property losses, and speed economic recovery when an emergency occurs. While

public warning is primarily the responsibility of local governments, it requires the cooperation and assistance of State governments, the Federal government, and private organizations. A partnership among these stakeholders is essential to the development and operation of an effective public warning capability.

The Partnership for Public Warning (PPW) is a not-for-profit, public-private partnership established to save the lives and property of people at risk from human-caused and natural disasters. Its main objective is to provide information to assist emergency managers and public officials in understanding the issues associated with public warning and to help them make informed decisions about how best to serve their community.

For this purpose, the PPW prepared "An Introduction to Public Alert and Warning" as a brief overview of the considerations that should be taken into account when developing or evaluating a public warning process and system. Since their efforts potentially can bolster community critical infrastructure protection, the USFA's Emergency Management and Response - Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) encourages emergency officials to go to: www.partnershipforpublicwarning.org/ppw/docs/handbook.pdf.

Three Special Reports Look at Structure Fires in the U.S. in 2000, Including Residential Fire Incidence

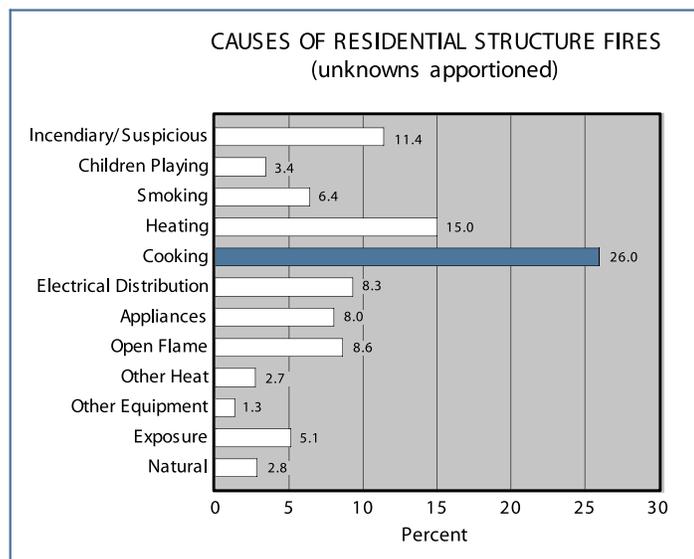
The USFA recently issued three special reports, part of its Topical Fire Research Series, examining the incidence of structure fires in 2000 – which resulted in \$8.5 billion in property loss and 3,500 fatalities.

The three reports, *All Structure Fires in 2000*, *Residential Structure Fires in 2000*, and *Non-Residential Structure Fires in 2000*, were developed by the National Fire Data Center, part of FEMA's U.S. Fire Administration. The reports examine overall structure fires, residential structure fires and fires in nonresidential buildings, and use data from 2000, as it was the most recent year with complete information.

Loss Measure	All Fires	All Structure Fires	Residential Fires
\$ Loss/Fire	\$6,601	\$16,219	\$13,507
Fatalities/1,000 Fires	2.4	5.7	7.4
Injuries/1,000 Fires	15.2	39.9	46.9

Source: NFIRS only

According to the reports, 75 percent of structure fires occur in residences, with kitchens being the leading area of fire origin. The reports also show that structure fires take place most often in winter and that in the majority of structure fires, smoke alarms are either not present or inoperable. The data also reflected that the highest percentage of non-residential structure fires occurred in storage structures, including parking garages.



Source: NFIRS

“These reports underscore the importance of our National Fire Incident Reporting System, which allows us to compile and analyze data to determine the true ‘picture of fire’ in the nation,” said U.S. Fire Administrator R. David Paulison. “It’s imperative that we study what these reports say and take appropriate action.”

Copies of the full reports can be downloaded from: www.usfa.fema.gov/inside-usfa/nfdc/pubs/tfrs.shtm.

Homeland Security Approves Use of Preparedness Funds for First Responder Training Courses

Homeland Security’s Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness (SLGCP), in cooperation with the USFA announced today the approval of additional preparedness training courses for emergency responders.

“We are excited that our partnership with SLGCP is providing the Nation’s emergency response and management leaders with the opportunity to receive this critical preparedness training. This initiative between USFA and SLGCP will assist in developing the foundation for incident management teams at the State and local level,” said U.S. Fire Administrator R. David Paulison.

In his Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8, President George Bush directed the Department of Homeland Security to multiply and enhance the training courses available to first responders. The newly approved courses, offered by the National Fire Academy, include *Introduction to Unified Command for Multi-Agency and Catastrophic Incidents*, *All Hazards Incident Management*, and *Command and General Staff Functions in the Incident Command System*.

With this approval, States and urban areas can use allocated Homeland Security Grant Program and Urban Area Security Initiative funding to conduct or attend these courses. Additionally, States and urban areas now can use this funding to reimburse overtime and backfill costs associated with attending these courses as well as other SLGCP-approved courses.

Contact Gordon Sachs (Gordon.Sachs@dhs.gov) at (301) 447-1594 or Robert Murgallis (Robert.Murgallis@dhs.gov) at (301) 447-1347 for details about the *All Hazards Incident Management* course. More information about other courses can be found by entering the school (NFA), course name, and/or course code at the following link: www.usfa.fema.gov/applications/nfacsd/index.jsp.

New On-Line Course Helps Urban Firefighters Battle Wildfires More Safely

The USFA has unveiled an online, independent study course that will enable urban firefighters with expertise in responding to structure fires to participate safely in a wildland/urban interface event.

“The 2004 wildfire season is predicted to be long and hard, and will pose a challenge to all of this Nation’s firefighters,” said Michael D. Brown, Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response. “This course is important as it provides another tool for the fire service so that urban firefighters can safely assist in battling wildfires.”

Specialists at the U.S. Fire Administration’s National Fire Academy developed the online course, *Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Operations for the Structural Firefighter Self-Study (Q618)*. The online course identifies many of the operational activities and safety concerns for the structural firefighter in the so-called interface areas, where housing is located in or near wildlands. The course also includes wildland fire behavior, safety issues, and operational issues.

The training program is a joint effort of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) and USFA's National Fire Programs Division. The course takes between 2 to 8 hours to complete; those successfully finishing it receive a certificate of completion. Course information is located at: www.usfa.fema.gov/applications/nfacsd/display.jsp?cc=Q618.

USFA and the National Fire Protection Association Partner to Cut Death Rate from Rural Fires in the U.S.

The USFA recently announced a joint project with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) to examine what can be done to reduce the high death rate from fire in rural America. Communities with fewer than 2,500 residents have a per capita fire death rate almost twice the national rate.

The USFA will work directly with the NFPA to build on data from the USFA report, *The Rural Fire Problem in the United States*, and to offer information on effective strategies and techniques to local fire and government officials and educators. Strategies will focus on public fire safety education, technical improvements, including fire and smoke detection, fire codes, consumer product safety, and residential fire sprinklers.

"NFPA is pleased to be part of this innovative partnership that will examine what can be done to reduce fire deaths in rural America," said James Shannon, NFPA president. "This initiative supports NFPA's efforts in saving lives and protecting property for conducting independent research on the reduction of the risk of fire."

More information on this partnership may be found on the USFA Web site: www.usfa.fema.gov/inside-usfa/research/other/rural-mitigation.shtm.

The Rural Fire Problem in the United States may be ordered or downloaded at: www.usfa.fema.gov/applications/publications/display.cfm?it=9-1387.

Critical Infrastructure Protection: A Word of Caution

When examining what items suitable for terrorism or degrading critical infrastructures can be found on the Internet, a CIP specialist discovered an "eBay" advertisement for a private enterprise selling its entire inventory of State

police uniforms and gear. The article elaborated that a large quantity of "new condition" uniform components were available for sale.

Considering the current threat environment, the Emergency Management and Response - Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) found it disturbing that the "summary of selling policies" and "payment information" did not require validation that the buyer is a law enforcement procurement agent. In other words, it was quite clear that any bargain hunter could arrange for acquisition and shipment of these materials.

In the past 3 years there have been reports about individuals impersonating police, fire, and EMS personnel. Although few in number, these incidents should elicit concern because this is a tactic used by terrorists around the world. Furthermore, counterterrorism officials teach that impostors from extremist groups endeavor to penetrate organizations to conduct deception activities, which conceal a planned terrorist attack.

For these reasons, the EMR-ISAC offers a word of caution about the disposition of unwanted uniforms and equipment of first responders. All emergency response departments and those they protect are more vulnerable when sensitive uniforms and equipment can be obtained so easily in bulk over the Internet or elsewhere without a proper vetting process.

New Health and Safety Training Specialist Announced

The USFA is pleased to announce that John Brasko has accepted a position as Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Management/Firefighter Health & Safety Training Specialist.

Brasko will be responsible for EMS Management and Firefighter Health and Safety curriculum needs assessment, faculty recruitment, and selection; leadership, marketing, and advocacy regarding course deliveries, content, and criteria; development of training curriculum; and interactions with national, State, and local fire and EMS organizations representing Homeland Security, FEMA, and USFA. Brasko has worked for the USFA as a Fire Program Specialist in critical infrastructure protection. Previously, he worked as the State fire training director for the New Jersey State Division of Fire Safety.

A Focus on the National Incident Management System (NIMS)

As the first standardized management plan that unifies Federal, State, and local governments for incident response, NIMS established a consistent nationwide template for incident management processes, protocols, and procedures that all responders will use to coordinate and conduct response operations. It incorporated incident management best practices for exercises, qualifications and certifications, communications interoperability, doctrinal changes, training, publications, public affairs, equipping, evaluations, and incident management. NIMS activities also should strengthen the protection of the personnel, physical assets, and communication/cyber systems (i.e., critical infrastructures).

In late June, FEMA announced a new online course that will help first responders understand the underlying NIMS concepts and principles, and begin incorporating the system into their own plans and policies. Specialists at the USFA's Emergency Management Institute created the online course, which takes about 3 hours to complete. The course can be found at: www.training.fema.gov/EMIWEB/IS/is700.asp.

The recently announced NIMS Integration Center, called the NIC, is being established to provide strategic direction and oversight of NIMS. The NIC was established by Secretary Ridge with FEMA as the lead to assure the all-hazards approach is an integral part of response training. The NIC will develop and facilitate national standards for NIMS education and training and refine the system over time. The coordination and integration efforts of the center also should enhance the protection of the critical infrastructures of emergency responders at all levels. For more information, the NIMS Integration Center can be contacted at 202-646-4223 or by visiting the following link: www.fema.gov/preparedness/nims.

National Preparedness Month Slated for September

In September 2004, Homeland Security will sponsor *National Preparedness Month* in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education, American Red Cross, and National Association of Broadcasters. Those local communities planning to conduct preparedness activities for their citizens during this month may seek the counsel and participation of their emergency managers and first responders. The USFA's

Emergency Management and Response - Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) offers suggestions for information sharing and/or program involvement:

Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP) Familiarization. Inform citizens of specific ways they can contribute to protecting municipal and first responder critical infrastructures. Provide examples of the local critical infrastructures and key resources, and request their vigilance and reporting of suspicious activities at or near these locations. Encourage participation in Community Emergency Response Teams or Citizen Corps.

Storm Ready. Inform residents of Storm Ready, a National Weather Service nationwide community preparedness program that uses a grassroots approach to help communities develop plans to handle severe weather. The program encourages communities to take a proactive approach to improving local hazardous weather operations by providing emergency managers with guidelines on how to improve their hazardous weather capabilities. Information is available at: www.stormready.noaa.gov.

Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD's). A recent survey by the National Organization on Disabilities found that approximately 60 percent of people with disabilities have no plans and don't know what to do or who to call in the event of a disaster. Communities should be encouraged to contact their regional VOAD's for ideas to help the disabled for all-hazards incidents. Information is available at: www.nvoad.org.

Elder Action Global Logistical Emergency System (EAGLES). In this program sponsored by the Administration on Aging, well elders are paired with frail elders, with the well elders trained to help their peers with special needs. Under the plan, local senior centers would be converted into treatment centers. EAGLES participants, retired professionals, and trained individuals would assist and assess new as well as existing clients in an area affected by disaster. More information is available at: www.aoa.gov.

Special Reports Use National Fire Incident Reporting Data to Study Nightclub Fires in the U.S.

FEMA and the USFA have issued a special report, part of the Topical Fire Research Series, examining the incidence of nightclub fires in the U.S. and the characteristics that may make these relatively rare fires so potentially deadly.

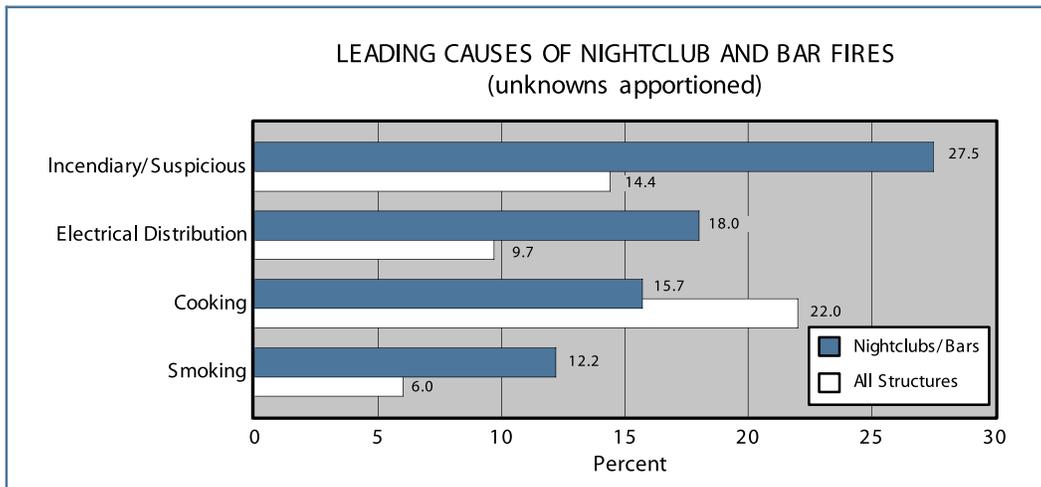
“This important issue of our Topical Fire Research Series was spurred by the tragic Rhode Island nightclub fire last year that killed 100 people,” said Michael D. Brown, Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response. “We wanted to determine what common issues might contribute to the death tolls of these fires and what role local inspections and safety codes might play.”

According to the report, *Nightclub Fires in the United States*, developed by USFA’S National Fire Data Center, there were more than 1,500 nightclub and bar fires that year, causing \$46 million in property damage. The report, which studied the year 2000, as it was the most recent year with complete data, noted that while these constitute only a small

percentage of all structure fires, they have the potential to cause high casualties due to maximum or overcapacity crowds on weekends or during live performances.

“This report points out that the most tragic nightclub fires are affected by a lack of highly visible exits or fire escapes, and that patrons trying to leave out of the same door they entered can compound the problem,” said U.S. Fire Administrator R. David Paulison. “This report also underscores the challenge nightclubs pose for fire prevention and public safety.”

A copy of the full report can be downloaded from: www.usfa.fema.gov/inside-usfa/nfdc/pubs/tfrs.shtm.



Source: NFIRS

FEMA Joins National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health in Study of Ambulance and Emergency Vehicle Accidents

The USFA has joined with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) in an ongoing study of ambulance and emergency medical vehicle crash data.

Vehicle crashes are the second leading cause of firefighter fatalities.

The NIOSH Evaluation of Emergency Services Vehicle Occupant Safety Project involves the review of data on ambulance crash statistics, hazard identification and task analysis, determination of appropriate crash testing methodologies, development of occupant restraint systems and modeling of ambulance crash scenarios. NIOSH expects to complete the analysis by the fall of 2004.

“This innovative partnership bolsters our efforts to protect the health and safety of firefighters and emergency responders,” said NIOSH Director John Howard, M.D. “This project reflects NIOSH’s commitment to enhance occupational safety through research and outreach.”

More information about this research initiative as well as other emergency vehicle projects can be found at: www.usfa.fema.gov/inside-usfa/research/vehicle.shtm.

NIOSH is part of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It is the Federal agency that conducts research and makes recommendations for preventing work-related injuries, illnesses, and deaths. More information on NIOSH is available at: www.cdc.gov/niosh.

Protecting Emergency Responders

Better planning, training, coordination, and management procedures are needed to protect emergency responders at the scene of terrorist attacks and catastrophes, according to a study released last week by the RAND Corporation and the NIOSH. The study proposes a new approach that would make protecting the health and safety of emergency responders—the foremost of a department’s critical infrastructures—a key priority in coordinating the overall response to all hazards.

The document titled, *Protecting Emergency Responders, Volume 3: Safety Management in Disaster and Terrorism Response*, indicates that each agency sending emergency responders to an incident currently takes responsibility for protecting its

own personnel. Because several departments from nearby communities often assist with their own protocols and procedures, coordinating efforts to protect all responders is difficult at best.

This report recommends the development of common standards and guidelines, use of disaster safety managers to lead coordination between agencies, inclusion of realistic safety and health issues in joint training and exercises, and the availability of expertise and assets to protect responder safety to prevent different departments from wasting valuable time trying to devise ways to protect personnel on a case-by-case basis at each emergency scene. The study can be obtained at: www.rand.org/publications/MG/MG170/MG170.sum.pdf

Homeland Security Hosts Sports Leaders to Discuss Security Issues

Homeland Security hosted representatives and security officials from professional and collegiate sport associations and venues during a one-day seminar in late July to discuss homeland security issues and security planning for high-profile sporting events taking place during the next several months.

The seminar was designed to help sports facility owners and operators better prevent, detect, and respond to terrorist threats and ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for all. It is part of efforts to bring State and local governments, communities, businesses, nonprofit organizations, the academic community, and citizens together to protect our Nation.

Sports organizations participating in the seminar include Arena Football League, International Association of Assembly Managers, Ladies Professional Golf Association, Little League Baseball, Major League Baseball, Major League Soccer, NASCAR, National Collegiate Athletic Association, National Basketball Association, National Football League, National Hockey League, National Thoroughbred Racing Association, Professional Golf Association, Special Olympics, U.S. Olympic Committee, U.S. Soccer Foundation, U.S. Tennis Association, and Women’s National Basketball Association.