



The Adventures of Reminder Man and Other Ways to Battle the Evil Forces of Fire

Executive Summary

This case study summarizes a presentation at the National Symposium on Model Performance in Fire Prevention in May 2012.

The main goal for this new program in Layton City (Utah) was to bring about a change in firesetting behavior among the elementary age children throughout the city and reduce the number of JFS intervention referrals from the schools and parents. The *Adventures of Reminder Man* program was developed and delivered by members of the high school Fire Corps, under the supervision of the Fire Department. Requests for juvenile firesetter intervention have decreased 71% since the program's inception.

Overview

The objectives for the Reminder Man program include:

- Revive education in the schools program
- Reduce the number of juvenile firesetter intervention requests, while also working to:
 - Provide a program that is informational and entertaining
 - Develop a program that will span five years, allowing children to learn new information each year in elementary school
 - Provide students with an Activity Book developed by the Fire Department and High School Fire Corps designed to be taken home, with more challenging sections to be completed together with their family
 - Partner with U. S. Forest Service (which participated in some presentations, local businesses (which donated props for presentations and, the local newspaper (which printed the Activity Books at reduced cost)

Formative Evaluation (qualitative or quantitative risk assessment)

A review of juvenile firesetter records revealed a 71% increase in JFS intervention requests over a four-year period for children aged 6–12 (elementary school age). While the program's primary goal was the reduction of juvenile firesetter referrals, the Layton City Fire Department also wanted to include both fire and injury prevention.

Process Evaluation (analysis of the program's development and early implementation)

We recruited Fire Corps members from the two high schools. With our Fire Prevention Specialist, students wrote a script around characters they developed (Reminder Man, the hero, and Phoebe Fire, the villain) and prepared props for the presentations. The scripts were evaluated by professional teachers to ensure the material was age appropriate. Dress rehearsals were attended by department members to ensure topics were in accordance with NFPA 1035 and current fire and life safety practices.

Schools were contacted to schedule assemblies. Of our 16 elementary local schools, 15 agreed to participate and received presentations. Department engine crews were scheduled to be present for the last 10–15 minutes to reinforce messages taught by the Fire Corps.

Impact Evaluation (identification of measurable changes that are cognitive gains or behavior changes that reduced risk)

After each presentation we e-mailed an evaluation survey using Survey Monkey to each teacher in the schools to evaluate the program. Responses' back from the teachers were mostly positive but we did learn:

- After first year, we learned that the 6th graders were a little too old for this type of program
- We also learned that it was difficult to reach the kindergarten classes due to their schedule not matching the Fire Corps students' schedule.
- We piloted a Junior Fire Corps program in 2012 taught by sixth graders to the kindergarten, Head Start and pre-schools. This program is still evolving.
- The one school that did not allow us to schedule the first year subsequently allowed us to teach in their school due to peer pressure from the other principals who support this program in the area
- We received approximately 20 phone calls from parents commenting on the program and how they worked on the activities together.

Outcome Evaluation (longer term documentation that supports reduction of injury, death or economic losses)

- There has been a 72% decrease in the number of JFS intervention referrals over the past four years
- The number of fire incidents in the city has decreased 18.5% since beginning this program

It is hard to pinpoint exactly whether this program was the reason for the 18.5% decrease in fire incidents, but it is also hard to argue that it isn't. Our statistics showed a slow incline in the number of fires occurring each year prior to beginning this program and beginning in the year that we began this program we show a decline in the number of fires that we are called to respond to.

Recommendations for Others

It is critically important to identify committed participants and to secure the support of high school administrators.

The success of this program is due in part to our being a “Full Service Prevention Program.” It takes a combination of code enforcement, plans reviews, fire investigations, juvenile firesetter interventions, and public education programs to succeed and affect changes in fire and life safety behaviors.

For More Information

Contact: Dean Hunt, Fire Marshal, Layton City Fire Department, 530 N 2200 W, Layton Utah 84041, 801-336-3940, dhunt@laytoncity.org.

To see an expanded version of this case study that was presented at the 2012 National Symposium on Model Performance in Fire Prevention hosted by Vision 2020, click <http://strategicfire.org/page.cfm/go/2012-Model-Performance>.