



Coffee Break Training - Fire Protection Series

Administration: Public Protection Classification, Part 1

No. FP-2014-52 December 30, 2014

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.

In addition to the fire department evaluation, the grading process also evaluates the emergency communication systems (formerly Fire Alarms) and the water supply systems serving the community. The community's risk-reduction efforts are also reviewed.

In December 2012, the Insurance Services Office updated the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS) with changes focusing on areas that have a proven effect on fire suppression and prevention, as well as revisions that align the schedule's requirements with those of nationally accepted standards. The schedule now recognizes proactive efforts to reduce fire risk and frequency (also known as community risk reduction). The updated schedule has a total of 105.5 available credit points. Prior to this update, the 1980 edition of the FSRS (with minor revisions in 2003) was in effect and had a total of 100 available credit points.

The following components are evaluated when the Insurance Services Office completes a community's grading.

Emergency Communication (Formerly Fire Alarms)

A community's communications infrastructure is key to effective fire mitigation. The Insurance Services Office evaluates the capability of the emergency communication systems to effectively handle receipt and dispatch of alarms to fire departments. As part of this analysis, the communications facilities, the performance of alarm receipt and processing, the training and certification of telecommunicators, and the dispatch circuits are evaluated. This section has a total of 10 available credit points.

Fire Department

The Insurance Services Office assesses a fire department's ability to launch an effective initial attack on structure fires on the initial alarm. As part of the evaluation process, staffing levels, training, certifications, station locations, fire apparatus equipment, and pumping capacity are some of the items that are reviewed. This section effectively has a total of 50 available credit points. The Insurance Services Office has evaluated more than 47,000 fire response jurisdictions throughout the United States.

Water Supply and Community Risk Reduction will follow in Public Protection Classification, Part 2.

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



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