



The Vulnerability Assessment Program 1

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Learning Objective: The student will be able to explain the importance of the Vulnerability Assessment Program (VAP) in identifying risk factors leading to firefighter injuries and line-of-duty deaths (LODDs).

The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF), in conjunction with Honeywell and the U.S. Fire Administration, has developed and released the VAP, an online assessment tool that provides fire departments with a systematic process to evaluate risks and ultimately reduce the threat of firefighter injuries and deaths.

When completed, departments will have a customized report identifying vulnerability areas linked to firefighter risks. Each report contains suggestions for “risk-reduction alternatives” specific to identified gaps in services, policies or equipment and, when they exist, provides pertinent industry standards and guidelines to address the identified concerns.

Fire departments can then use this analysis to develop operational and strategic plans to implement the risk-reduction recommendations necessary to minimize or eliminate preventable injuries and LODDs. The VAP has many advantages over traditional fire department evaluations; it is online and private, secure, customizable, easy to use and free. For the entirety of its four-year development, virtually every fire service organization with a stake in preventing firefighter injuries and LODDs participated in this process.

The VAP is composed of 412 primary yes/no questions. Questions were developed by Subject Matter Experts based on the six known root causes identified in a study of more than 3,000 LODD reports. These include ineffective decision-making, ineffective policies and procedures, ineffective leadership, lack of personal responsibility, lack of preparedness, and extraordinary and unpredictable events. In addition, 26 contributing factors were also identified.

The goal of the VAP is not to achieve a perfect score, but to learn where your department falls on a ranking scale of low risk — medium risk — high risk. Resources will be assigned to each risk level and delivered in your final report. Again, the VAP is free and confidential for each department that registers. It takes, on average, about eight hours to complete, and parts may be assigned to others with more subject matter knowledge within an organization.

The NFFF urges every fire department in the U.S. to register and complete the VAP. It's easy to register at www.fireVAP.org. If you would like to know more about the VAP, its history and requirements, please visit the website and read the FAQs.



Major incidents, while infrequent, can result in dangerous threats to first responders.