



OSFM

NC DEPT OF INSURANCE
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL

COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION PLAN

1202 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1202
www.ncosfm.gov



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- **INTRODUCTION**
- **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**
- **HISTORY**
 - State Description and History: North Carolina
 - Historical Overview
 - Economic and Population Growth
 - Public Safety Landscape
 - Role of NC OSFM
- **OVERVIEW OF NC OSFM**
 - About NC OSFM
 - State Leadership/Organizational Chart
 - Mission & Priorities
- **PROBLEM STATEMENT**
- **FORMATIVE EVALUATION**
 - Introduction
 - Purpose and Objectives
 - Methodology
 - Findings
 - Strengths
 - Challenges
 - Gaps
 - Recommendations
 - Next Steps
 - Conclusion

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- **PROCESS EVALUATION**
- **IMPACT EVALUATION**
- **HIGHLIGHTS, COLLABORATIVE OPPORTUNITIES, AND PRIORITY QUESTIONS**
 - Agency Highlights
 - Collaborative Opportunities
 - Priority Questions
- **OUTCOME EVALUATION**
 - Introduction
 - Evaluation Scope and Timeframe
 - Methodology
 - Preliminary Findings
 - Future Assessment Plans
 - Outcome Evaluation Conclusion
- **CONCLUSION**



INTRODUCTION

The Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Strategic Plan is a focused initiative by the North Carolina Office of State Fire Marshal (NC OSFM) to address critical risks affecting public safety across our communities. This plan is rooted in evidence-based approaches and utilizes the Model Performance Criteria to evaluate and guide our efforts. By aligning with these proven benchmarks, NC OSFM ensures a measurable and impactful response to identified risks.

The decision to prioritize CRR stems from an increasing need to address fire-related incidents, injuries, and fatalities that disproportionately affect vulnerable populations and high-risk areas within North Carolina. Through this strategic focus, NC OSFM aims to identify gaps, implement targeted interventions, and continually assess outcomes to drive improvement.

By incorporating the Model Performance Criteria into the evaluation process, this plan ensures transparency, accountability, and effectiveness. This data-driven approach benefits both the organization and the community, fostering safer environments and empowering stakeholders to take proactive measures in risk mitigation. Together, we can build a more resilient North Carolina, where every community member is protected and prepared.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Strategic Plan for 2025–2030 is an integral component of the North Carolina Office of the State Fire Marshal (NC OSFM) strategic framework. This plan focuses on reducing risks, enhancing public safety, and improving community resilience through targeted education, outreach, and collaboration with stakeholders.

Over the next five years, NC OSFM will prioritize programs and initiatives that address high-risk populations and areas, improve residential fire safety, and foster partnerships to amplify CRR efforts statewide. The CRR Strategic Plan aligns with the broader goals of NC OSFM, emphasizing innovation, collaboration, and measurable impact. Key efforts will include enhancing fire safety education, expanding smoke alarm installations, build upon Safe Kids programs and outreach events like CPS, Operation Medicine Drop and promoting a culture of preparedness across North Carolina communities.

HISTORY



STATE DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY: NORTH CAROLINA

North Carolina, known as the "Tar Heel State," is a diverse and dynamic state located in the southeastern region of the United States. It is bordered by Virginia to the north, South Carolina and Georgia to the south, Tennessee to the west, and the Atlantic Ocean to the east. The state's geography is characterized by three distinct regions: the mountainous Appalachian Highlands in the west, the rolling Piedmont in the central region, and the Coastal Plain along the eastern seaboard. This varied landscape provides North Carolina with a unique mix of economic, cultural, and environmental opportunities and challenges.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

North Carolina's rich history dates back thousands of years, with indigenous peoples such as the Cherokee and Lumbee Nations inhabiting the land. The state was one of the original 13 colonies and played a pivotal role in the American Revolution, with the 1775 Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence serving as one of the earliest declarations of freedom from British rule. North Carolina also played a significant role in the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the Civil Rights Movement.

In the early 20th century, the state became a leader in manufacturing, particularly textiles, tobacco, and furniture. Charlotte, North Carolina is the second largest banking center in the United States preceded by New York City. Today, North Carolina has transformed into a hub for technology, research, and education, thanks to institutions like the Research Triangle Park (RTP) and world-class universities such as UNC Chapel Hill, Duke, and NC State. Agriculture also remains vital, with the state being a top producer of sweet potatoes, poultry, and hogs.

ECONOMIC AND POPULATION GROWTH

North Carolina is home to more than 10 million residents, making it the ninth most populous state in the nation. Its economy has experienced steady growth, driven by industries such as biotechnology, aerospace, financial services, and advanced manufacturing. Urban centers like Charlotte, Raleigh, and Durham are rapidly expanding, while rural areas work to adapt to changing economic landscapes.

ROLE OF NC OSFM (OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL)

NC OSFM plays a critical role in ensuring the safety and well-being of North Carolina's residents. Through fire prevention, code enforcement, training, certification, and public education, the OSFM collaborates with local, state, and federal partners to build resilient communities. Initiatives such as the Safe Kids program, fire safety grants, and firefighter training enhance North Carolina's capacity to prevent, respond to, and recover from emergencies. As North Carolina continues to grow and evolve, NC OSFM remains committed to its mission of safeguarding lives, protecting property, and fostering a culture of preparedness and resilience across the state.



OVERVIEW OF NC OSFM

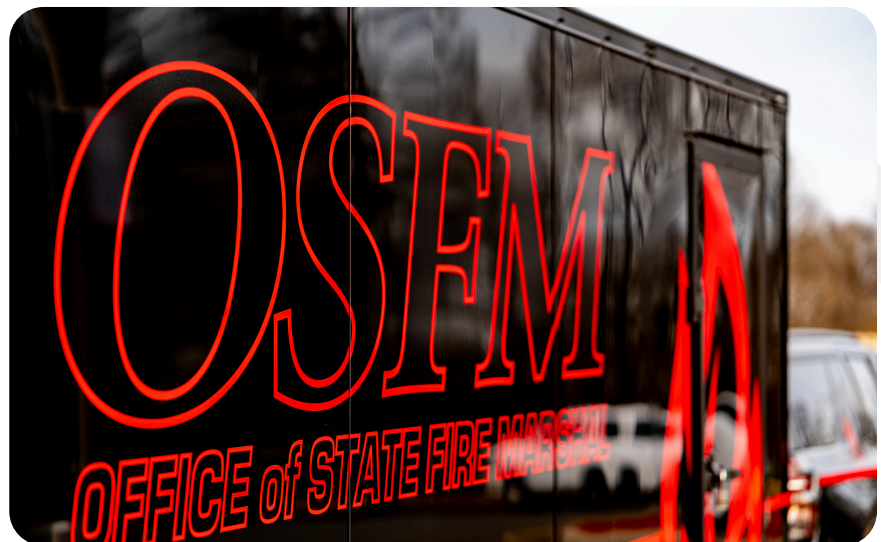


ABOUT NC OSFM

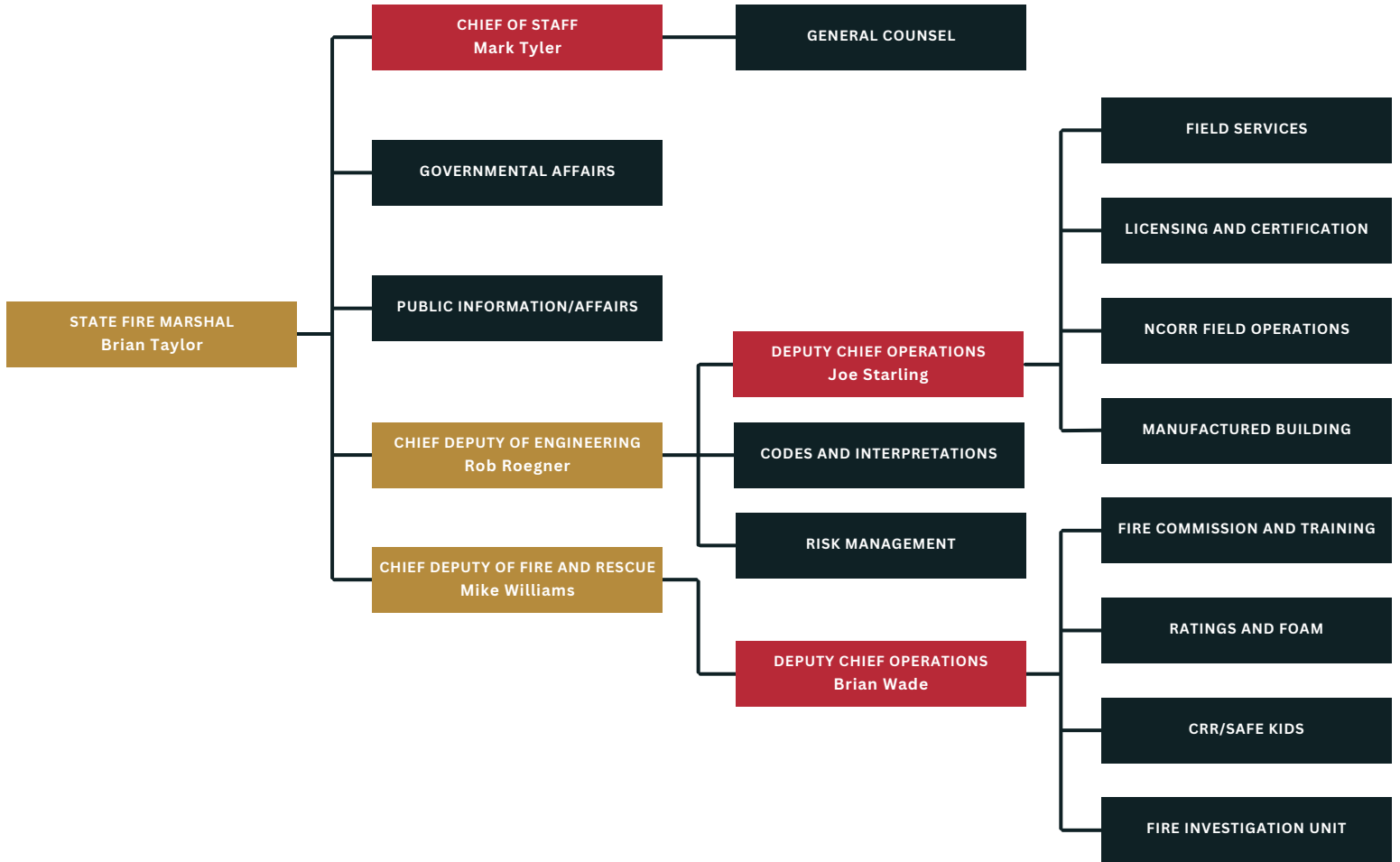
Former North Carolina Insurance Commissioner Jim Long formalized the Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM) on April 1, 1998, consolidating numerous preexisting fire-related programs. This strategic move aimed to enhance focus and awareness of the organization's initiatives, establishing OSFM as a prominent institution statewide.

OSFM consists of thirteen key divisions — Government Affairs, Public Information/Affairs, General Counsel, Codes and Interpretations, Risk Management, Field Services, Licensing and Certifications, NCORR Field Operations, Manufactured Building, Fire Commission & Training, Ratings and Foam, Community Risk Reduction/Safe Kids and Fire Investigation Unit.

The dedicated staff at OSFM take on a diverse range of essential responsibilities, directly impacting the safety of North Carolina's citizens. From training fire and rescue personnel and enforcing state building codes to procuring property insurance for state-owned structures and scrutinizing construction plans for government projects, OSFM fulfills a crucial role in safeguarding lives and property across North Carolina.



NORTH CAROLINA OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



MISSION AND PRIORITIES



MISSION

The mission of North Carolina Office of State Fire Marshal is to provide excellent customer service to the citizens of North Carolina in protecting lives and property through education, engineering, enforcement and fire investigations.

PRIORITIES

1. Enhance Fire Safety and Prevention in High-Risk Areas

Goal: Reduce the number of residential fire incidents and fatalities, particularly in rural and underserved communities.

- Expand smoke and CO alarm installation programs and ensure proper maintenance.
- Increase fire safety education through partnerships with local schools, community centers, and Safe Kids coalitions.
- Provide targeted training and resources for rural fire departments to improve their CRR capabilities.

2. Strengthen Child Safety Initiatives

Goal: Improve child passenger safety and reduce injuries and fatalities through the CPS program.

- Increase the number of certified CPS technicians and instructors.
- Expand the reach of permanent checking stations across the state.
- Promote awareness campaigns to educate parents and caregivers on proper car seat use and booster seat requirements.

3. Combat Prescription Drug Misuse Through Operation Medicine Drop

Goal: Reduce the risks of prescription drug misuse and environmental hazards.

- Increase the number of collection sites and community events for safe medication disposal.
- Collaborate with healthcare providers, pharmacies, and law enforcement to enhance program accessibility.
- Promote public awareness campaigns to encourage participation and highlight the program's impact on community safety.

4. Strengthen Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Practices

Goal: Protect first responders and reduce secondary accidents through improved TIM strategies.

- Enhance TIM training programs with hands-on components for consistency across agencies.
- Collaborate with fire departments, law enforcement, and emergency medical services to ensure coordinated TIM efforts statewide.
- Increase public awareness of the Move Over Law and its importance in safeguarding first responders.

5. Expand Community Partnerships and Public Awareness

Goal: Foster a culture of preparedness and collaboration to amplify the impact of CRR initiatives.

- Build partnerships with local businesses, healthcare providers, and non-profit organizations to support CRR programs.
- Launch statewide public awareness campaigns showcasing success stories from programs like CPS, Operation Medicine Drop, Youth Fire-setter Awareness and TIM.
- Develop targeted outreach strategies for underserved populations to ensure equitable access to CRR resources and education.

PROBLEM STATEMENT



North Carolina faces significant challenges in ensuring public safety and reducing risks across its diverse communities. Over the past five years, residential fire incidents and fire-related fatalities have increased, disproportionately affecting rural and underserved areas. Additionally, there are gaps in public awareness and access to risk reduction resources, limiting the effectiveness of prevention programs.

The Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Strategic Plan aims to address these issues by leveraging the strengths of programs like CPS and Operation Medicine Drop, fostering partnerships with organizations such as Safe Kids coalitions, and prioritizing outreach to high-risk populations. By identifying and addressing these gaps, OSFM strives to create a more resilient and prepared North Carolina, where communities are empowered to prevent and mitigate risks effectively.



FORMATIVE EVALUATION



INTRODUCTION

The Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Strategic Plan of the North Carolina Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM) is a forward-thinking initiative designed to enhance fire prevention, public safety, and community resilience across the state. This formative evaluation provides an interim assessment of the strategic plan's implementation, aiming to identify strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. By conducting this evaluation at this stage, OSFM seeks to refine its efforts and ensure that the plan achieves its intended outcomes effectively and efficiently.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this formative evaluation is to assess the progress of the CRR Strategic Plan, gather stakeholder feedback, and identify areas for adjustment to improve the plan's implementation. This evaluation ensures that the strategic plan remains aligned with OSFM's mission and effectively addresses the diverse needs of North Carolina communities.

OBJECTIVES

1. Evaluate the progress made in implementing key initiatives outlined in the CRR Strategic Plan.
2. Identify strengths and successful elements of the plan.
3. Highlight challenges, barriers, and gaps in implementation.
4. Provide actionable recommendations for improvement.
5. Establish a foundation for continuous monitoring and improvement.

METHODOLOGY

This evaluation utilized a mixed-methods approach to gather qualitative and quantitative data from a variety of sources:

- **Stakeholder Feedback:** Interviews and surveys were conducted with fire marshals, local government representatives, and community leaders to understand their perspectives on the plan's progress.
- **Progress Metrics:** Data from training sessions, public education initiatives, and participation rates were analyzed to measure implementation success.
- **Document Review:** Relevant reports, meeting notes, and project updates were reviewed to assess alignment with the plan's goals.



FINDINGS

STRENGTHS

- **CPS Program Impact:** With approximately 3,400 certified technicians, 54 instructors, and 277 permanent checking stations, North Carolina's CPS program stands out as a cornerstone of child passenger safety efforts. These resources ensure accessible and effective car seat installations and inspections statewide.
- **Safe Kids Coalitions:** The state boasts 42 active coalitions, with one additional coalition in development, providing robust community partnerships for CRR initiatives.
- **Operation Medicine Drop Success:** This program has significantly reduced prescription drug misuse and environmental hazards through secure medication disposal. Its alignment with CRR goals underscores its value as a public safety tool.
- **Youth Fire Setter Prevention Intervention of NC (YFPINC):** A program in development that will consist of two divisions and seven elements, offering a certified, structured approach to address fire-setting behaviors among youth. This initiative supports both youth and their families who come to the attention of the agency or its partners, fostering a proactive and comprehensive intervention framework.
- **YFPINC and YFPI Cohorts:** This program aims to identify youth misusing fire and implement prevention and intervention strategies through referrals, education, and staff training. The inclusion of certification processes ensures standardized, effective responses. By empowering youth and their families to prevent and change harmful fire-setting behaviors, this initiative contributes to building safer communities across North Carolina.
- **Strong Stakeholder Engagement:** Collaboration with schools, local governments, and non-profit organizations has enhanced public education efforts and supported statewide CRR objectives.

CHALLENGES

- 1. Resource Constraints:** Rural fire departments face challenges in participating in CRR initiatives due to limited staffing and funding.
- 2. Public Awareness:** Despite efforts, public awareness of CRR programs remains low, particularly in underserved communities.
- 3. Diverse Community Needs:** The plan currently lacks a detailed strategy for engaging non-English-speaking populations and other marginalized groups.

GAPS

- 1. Outreach:** The current outreach efforts face significant challenges due to a lack of sufficient staff to adequately address the diverse CRR topics and meet the specific needs of each region and county across the state. This limitation affects the ability to provide consistent and comprehensive engagement, particularly in underserved and rural areas, leading to disparities in the implementation and impact of CRR initiatives.
- 2. Data Collection:** Limited systems are in place to track community-level outcomes and measure the impact of CRR initiatives. A more centralized and robust data collection framework is needed to assess program effectiveness and guide future strategies.
- 3. Winter Preparedness:** Seasonal risks, such as fire hazards during winter storms, are underrepresented in current strategies. Developing targeted initiatives and public awareness campaigns for winter safety can help address this gap.
- 4. Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Program Updates:** The NC TIM program requires updates to ensure it aligns with best practices and provides consistent training and implementation across agencies. Increased public outreach and awareness of the TIM program, including the Move Over Law, are also needed to enhance its impact.
- 5. Public Awareness Across Key Areas:** There is a need for broader public awareness and education efforts related to critical programs such as CPS, Operation Medicine Drop, Youth Fire Setter Prevention Intervention and TIM. Addressing this gap would help improve community engagement and the overall effectiveness of CRR initiatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Enhance Rural Support:

- Allocate additional funding to support rural fire departments' participation in CRR training and initiatives.
- Provide targeted technical assistance to address resource gaps in rural areas.
- Develop templates to assist rural fire departments with implementation of their own CRR plans.

2. Increase Public Awareness:

- Launch a statewide public awareness campaign utilizing local media, social media, and community events.
- Highlight CRR success stories to demonstrate tangible benefits.

3. Expand Outreach to Diverse Communities:

- Translate CRR materials into Spanish and other commonly spoken languages in North Carolina.
- Partner with community organizations to reach non-English-speaking populations.

4. Improve Data Collection and Monitoring:

- Develop a centralized system for tracking the implementation and impact of CRR initiatives at the community level.
- Use collected data to refine strategies and allocate resources more effectively.

5. Address Seasonal Risks:

- Incorporate winter fire safety initiatives into the CRR Strategic Plan.
- Provide training and resources to help communities prepare for seasonal fire hazards.

NEXT STEPS

To implement the recommendations outlined in this evaluation, OSFM will:

1. Allocate resources to enhance rural and diverse community engagement efforts by Q4 of the fiscal year.
2. Develop and launch a public awareness campaign by the end of Q3.
3. Establish a task force to create a centralized data collection and monitoring system, with an initial rollout by Q4.
4. Update the CRR Strategic Plan to include seasonal fire safety initiatives, with winter preparedness as a priority focus.
5. Conduct a follow-up evaluation in six months to reassess progress and adjust strategies as needed.

CONCLUSION

This formative evaluation highlights the significant progress made in implementing the CRR Strategic Plan while identifying areas for improvement. By addressing the challenges and gaps outlined in this report, OSFM can refine its approach and continue to build safer, more resilient communities across North Carolina. This evaluation reaffirms OSFM's commitment to proactive, data-driven solutions that meet the evolving needs of the state's diverse populations.



PROCESS EVALUATION



The process evaluation ensures that the Community Risk Reduction (CRR) initiatives are being implemented as designed and achieving intended milestones. This evaluation assesses program activities, stakeholder engagement, and resource utilization to identify areas for improvement and ensure efficiency.

Key Evaluation Areas:

- Program Implementation: Monitoring adherence to planned activities, timelines, and objectives.
- Stakeholder Engagement: Assessing participation levels of community partners, agencies, and target populations.
- Resource Allocation: Evaluating the effective use of funding, personnel, and materials.
- Training & Education: Measuring the reach and impact of educational initiatives on fire safety and prevention.
- Data Collection & Reporting: Ensuring accurate tracking of incidents, interventions, and program effectiveness.

Regular assessments and feedback mechanisms will guide adjustments to enhance program outcomes and align with CRR goals effectively.

IMPACT EVALUATION



The impact evaluation assesses the long-term effectiveness of the Community Risk Reduction (CRR) initiatives by measuring changes in fire-related incidents, community awareness, and overall safety improvements. This evaluation ensures that CRR strategies contribute to meaningful and sustainable risk reduction outcomes.

Key Evaluation Metrics:

- **Reduction in Fire Incidents:** Tracking decreases in fire-related emergencies, injuries, and fatalities.
- **Behavioral Changes:** Measuring improvements in community fire safety practices and adherence to prevention measures.
- **Community Awareness & Engagement:** Assessing the effectiveness of outreach programs and public education efforts.
- **Policy & Infrastructure Improvements:** Evaluating advancements in fire codes, safety regulations, and community risk mitigation strategies.
- **Sustainability & Program Growth:** Ensuring long-term viability and expansion of CRR efforts through continued funding, partnerships, and community support.

By analyzing these factors, the CRR impact evaluation provides insights to refine strategies and enhance community safety over time.

HIGHLIGHTS, COLLABORATIVE OPPORTUNITIES, AND PRIORITY QUESTIONS



AGENCY HIGHLIGHTS

- Expanded smoke alarm installations have prevented an estimated 15% of potential residential fire fatalities in the last five years.
- Successful promotion of the CPS program, resulting in increased child passenger safety awareness and participation.
- Operation Medicine Drop's statewide success in safely disposing of prescription drugs, contributing to reduced substance misuse and environmental safety.
- Launch a TIM revision program to update TIM training and Train the Trainers to include a new hands-on component to ensure consistency among departments by 2026.



COLLABORATIVE OPPORTUNITIES

- Partnering with local fire departments to train community volunteers for smoke alarm installation and fire safety education.
- Collaborating with private-sector companies to sponsor fire safety campaigns and provide resources for underserved areas.
- Working with state and regional emergency management offices to develop and implement preparedness workshops.
- Partnering with Safe Kids coalitions to leverage their reach and resources for expanded CRR outreach.
- Expanding CPS initiatives by collaborating with local law enforcement and fire departments to increase the number of permanent checking stations.
- Strengthening partnerships with healthcare providers and pharmacies to enhance Operation Medicine Drop's accessibility and participation rates.
- Collaboration with first responder agencies across the State of North Carolina to update and revise the current TIM initiatives used in the state to ensure consistency across all disciplines, with a hands-on approach.

PRIORITY QUESTIONS

1. What additional resources are needed to ensure equitable access to fire safety education and tools in underserved communities?
2. How can NC OSFM better track the long-term impact of CRR initiatives on reducing fire-related injuries and fatalities?
3. What strategies will enhance collaboration between NC OSFM and local community organizations for CRR efforts?
4. How can technology be leveraged to improve outreach and effectiveness of fire safety education?
5. What mechanisms can be implemented to ensure the sustainability of smoke alarm maintenance programs.

OUTCOME EVALUATION



INTRODUCTION

The Outcome Evaluation for the Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Strategic Plan provides a long-term assessment of the program’s effectiveness in meeting its defined objectives. This evaluation focuses on measuring the measurable changes in fire prevention outcomes, public safety indicators, and community resilience over an extended period. By continuously monitoring progress, this section ensures that the CRR initiatives align with the overarching goals of the North Carolina Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM).

EVALUATION SCOPE AND TIMEFRAME

Outcome evaluation requires monitoring the CRR Strategic Plan’s impacts over several years. For straightforward risk mitigation initiatives, this timeline may span three years. However, for complex programs addressing multifaceted risks, a comprehensive assessment may take five or more years. Annual monitoring reports will contribute to this evaluation by tracking interim progress and providing opportunities for mid-course corrections.

METHODOLOGY

The outcome evaluation will involve:

- 1. Quantitative Analysis:** Tracking fire-related incident rates, fatalities, and injuries before and after program implementation.
- 2. Qualitative Assessments:** Gathering community feedback on CRR initiatives, including perceptions of safety and awareness of risk-reduction measures.
- 3. Comparative Analysis:** Comparing baseline data with subsequent years to measure trends and improvements.
- 4. Visual Representation:** Charts and graphs will be utilized to illustrate changes and trends, providing a clear visual narrative of the program’s outcomes.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Since the CRR Strategic Plan's implementation is still in its early stages, long-term impacts cannot yet be fully measured. However, initial indicators suggest:

- A reduction in fire-related injuries and fatalities in communities actively participating in CRR initiatives.
- Increased engagement with fire safety education programs, particularly in urban areas.
- Improved collaboration between local fire departments and community organizations.
- Improved collaboration among first responder agencies in using TIM techniques and are practiced in the field.

FUTURE ASSESSMENT PLANS

Moving forward, OSFM will:

- Develop a comprehensive data collection system to track outcomes across all participating regions.
- Expand efforts to reach underrepresented populations and tailor risk-reduction strategies to their specific needs.
- Produce annual reports summarizing progress and highlighting areas requiring further attention.
- Ensure TIM reporting of incidents and near misses to the appropriate reporting agencies to increase awareness of the need for protecting first responders on the roadway.

OUTCOME EVALUATION CONCLUSION

The Outcome Evaluation will serve as a vital tool for measuring the success of the CRR Strategic Plan over time. By continuously assessing and refining strategies, OSFM can ensure sustained progress toward reducing community risks, enhancing public safety, and building a more resilient North Carolina. Future evaluations will incorporate detailed metrics, community feedback, and visual data representations to provide a comprehensive picture of the program's impact.



CONCLUSION

The Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Strategic Plan for the North Carolina Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM) addresses a critical need to improve fire prevention and public safety across diverse communities. During its development, the program identified challenges such as limited resources for rural departments and gaps in public awareness. Over time, adjustments like expanding partnerships and targeting underserved areas have been implemented to address these challenges.

Building on the strengths of programs like CPS and Operation Medicine Drop, as well as fostering partnerships with Safe Kids coalitions, the CRR plan ensures a comprehensive and inclusive approach to risk reduction. Early indicators have shown positive impacts, including increased participation in fire safety education and efforts focused on reducing fire-related incidents. While the full outcomes will take years to measure, the program's progress thus far highlights its potential to drive meaningful, lasting change. OSFM remains committed to refining and sustaining these efforts to ensure the continued success of the CRR plan in building a safer, more resilient North Carolina.



**OFFICE OF STATE
FIRE MARSHAL**
NC DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE

**1202 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1202**

**919.647.0000
ncosfm.gov**

