Global Impact of NFPA Standards

Pro Board Educational Conference 2020
Donald P. Bliss
January 23-25, 2020
Today's discussion:

- The global fire problem
- Impact on the fire service
- Standards and accreditation as a solution
- Trends, challenges and barriers to success
The Global Fire Problem

- **300,000** fire deaths annually
- **Fourth** largest cause of accidental injury
- **95%** of fire deaths are in low- and middle-income countries
- **Burn injury risk** highest in low-income and informal settlements
- World Bank describes fires as “**small, chronic disasters**”
Urbanization

Cities around the world are growing rapidly.

1.4 MILLION
people/week

Up to 1.4 million people per week are moving into urban areas around the globe.

1 BILLION
new dwellings

To support these growing populations, nearly 1 billion new dwelling units will be built by 2050.

Source: The World Bank
Forest Fires in Europe
Number of forest fires in selected European countries in 2016

- Portugal: 13,261 fires
- Spain: 8,817 fires
- Sweden: 5,454 fires
- Poland: 5,286 fires
- Italy: 4,793 fires
- France: 4,285 fires
- Finland: 933 fires
- Greece*: 777 fires
- Latvia: 641 fires
- Germany: 608 fires
- Bulgaria: 584 fires
- Hungary: 452 fires
- Norway: 345 fires
- Austria: 317 fires
- Romania: 174 fires

* Estimate

Source: European Commission
Water resources
Impact on the Fire Service

- Resource demands
- Incident management
- Training & professional development
- Proactive intervention:
  - Community risk reduction
  - Community resilience
  - Economic development
  - Prevention & mitigation strategies
Why NFPA Standards?

- Regularly updated
- Open, balanced, transparent process
- Focus is on safety
- Can be adopted, enforced & amended locally
Why do standards change?

- Catastrophic event
- New technology
- Research identifies a new problem or solution
- Society changes the acceptable level of risk
Global use of NFPA standards

- Adopted or accepted in 70+ countries
- Translated into at least 15 languages
- Best practice for global industries
- Fire service trending towards NFPA standards
Global challenges for NFPA standards

- Perception that standards are US-centric
- Translation
- Training
- Global participation in development process
- More research needed
- Increased speed of technological innovation
Incentives for accreditation

- Internal fire service motivation
- Economic competition
- Public image
- ARFF: FAA criteria
Barriers to accreditation

- Cost of implementation
- Lack of understanding of accreditation
- Local/regional conditions not addressed in the standards
- Need for recognition of prior training/certification
- Competition from other standards bodies
- Language
Global fire service challenges

- Climate change
- Natural and man-made disasters/cascading events
- War/civil disorder/terrorism/government collapse
- Urbanization
- Firefighting health risks
- Unsafe construction
- Robotics
- Rapid technology changes
- Dependence on IoT
Questions?

Donald P. Bliss

donaldpbliss@gmail.com

+1 603 677 2480