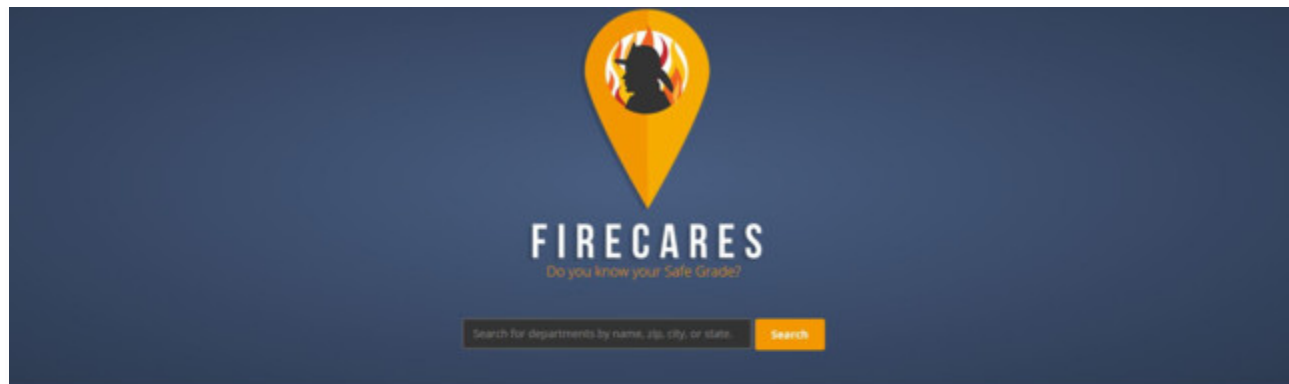




Fire Service Organizations Develop System to Assess Risk, Grade Communities

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ABOUT FIRECARES

If fire department resources are deployed to match the risk levels inherent to hazards in the community, it has been scientifically demonstrated that the community will be far less vulnerable to negative outcomes in **firefighter injury and death**, **civilian injury and death** and **property loss**. FireCARES analyzes massive amounts of fire department and community data to identify whether resources are appropriately deployed to match a community's risk level. See the [access policy](#) for more details about access to the system and the list data available in FireCARES.



The Fire-Community Assessment/Response Evaluation System (FireCARES) integrates local data into scientific models to assist with community risk assessment and best firefighting practices.

Photo credit: FireCARES.org

May 19-- A collaborative effort between several fire service organizations developed a new interactive online tool with the goal of improving both public and firefighter safety by building better departments to serve their communities.

The Fire-Community Assessment/Response Evaluation System (**FireCARES**), which launched in April, relies heavily on encouraging fire departments across the country to input data that will then be integrated inside scientific models to assist with community risk assessment and best firefighting practices.

"FireCARES includes more than a decade of research on structure fires and related injuries and death, as well as community building footprints, housing and mobile home units, public health and census data, and vulnerable

populations," the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) said in a release. "This data 'tells the story' of a fire department's risk environment, resource capacity and overall capability to respond to emergency incidents."

The system's goal is to compile massive amounts of data which will provide answers that civic leaders and fire departments have never had, delivering scoring metrics to help officials match department resources and capabilities to hazards and risks in their communities.

FireCARES will provide three scores for each community dependent on the available data: the Community Risk Score, the Fire Department Performance Score, and the Safe Grade.

Factors such as dense populations, condensed inner-city cores with a high number of vacant buildings, and aging and/or socio-economically challenged populations can give a city a high-risk grade for fire. Coupled with insufficient resources, the scenario will likely lead to an overall poor Safe Grade.

The tool was an effort of the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency, Commission on Fire Accreditation International, the International Association of Fire Fighters, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the Metropolitan Fire Chiefs, Underwriters Laboratory, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, Urban Institute, University of Texas at Austin and other partners. The work was funded by an Assistance to Firefighter Grant.

The FireCARES team says it is essential that departments input as much relevant and timely data as they have available and to know and understand their community's Safe Grade.

"FireCARES is a cutting-edge tool designed to improve public safety and firefighter safety in every community throughout this country," IAFF General President Harold Schaitberger said in the release. "It is a game changer and showcases what a collaborative effort within our industry can accomplish with the goal of preventing injuries and saving lives and property."

The data will be stored in a cloud service, making it easily accessible by officials to produce analyses, comparative reports and other pertinent information for a community. Having this real-time access will help jurisdictions evaluate resources, analyze outcomes and conduct long-term planning.

"The overarching goal of FireCARES is to assist in making sound decisions based on quantifiable data that will provide for safe, effective, and efficient emergency response services," said Chief Otto Drozd III, president of the Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association.