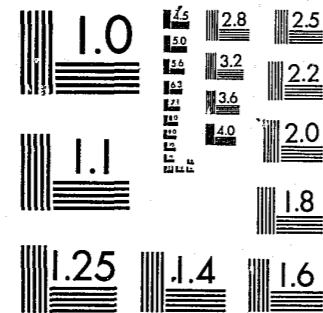


National Criminal Justice Reference Service



This microfiche was produced from documents received for inclusion in the NCJRS data base. Since NCJRS cannot exercise control over the physical condition of the documents submitted, the individual frame quality will vary. The resolution chart on this frame may be used to evaluate the document quality.



MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS-1963-A

Microfilming procedures used to create this fiche comply with the standards set forth in 41CFR 101-11.504.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the author(s) and do not represent the official position or policies of the U. S. Department of Justice.

National Institute of Justice
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D. C. 20531

DATE FILMED

9/04/81

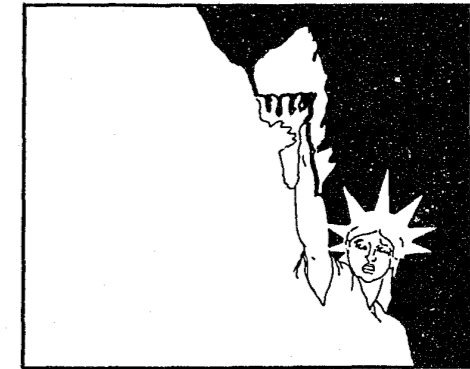
FA-1
April 1980



federal emergency
management agency
U.S. fire administration



OFFICE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROGRAMS
LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE



ARSON TASK FORCE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

71018

6777

ARSON TASK FORCE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
ANTI-ARSON IMPLEMENTATION KITS

The research and studies forming the basis for this document were conducted pursuant to a contract FF79-5A-A-00601 with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The statements and conclusions contained herein are those of the contractor and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Government in general or FEMA in particular. Neither the U.S. Government or FEMA makes any warrantee expressed or implied or assumes any responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the information herein.

Through reimbursable agreement #79TAAXA005, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, U.S. Department of Justice, is funding the printing of this manual to augment its financial support of the U.S. Fire Administration/Law Enforcement Assistance Administration Arson Task Force Assistance Program.

NCJRS

MAY 28 1980

ACQUISITIONS

ARSON IMPLEMENTATION KITS - A User's Overview

Arson is primarily a local problem. The principal role of the Federal Government is to provide assistance to State and local agencies to support their arson prevention and control programs. Effective arson prevention and control requires local action and involvement, with state support whenever possible. Programs must be developed that are sensitive to the characteristics of the local arson problem and that are compatible with available community resources.

These Arson Implementation Kits provide general models for building various aspects of a local arson program. The kits are derived from a number of actual programs that have been successfully used in both large and small communities. The models are general enough that there should be no problem in tailoring a program to meet local circumstances.

These kits provide basic, how-to-do-it information on applying ideas that have proven successful in fighting arson. If you have been considering starting an arson program in your community, the kits should be helpful in orienting your thinking. If your arson program is already well established, you may find some new ideas to incorporate into your existing program. These kits are intended to aid the development of local arson programs. They are not meant to be the final word on arson—either individually or collectively—but should assist you in getting started now on your own arson program. We encourage you to refer to other sources of arson information.

The kits are designed so that they may be used independently of each other to encourage easy adaptation. The topics selected were chosen because they have the greatest potential for immediate application in communities that are just beginning to respond to the arson problem. While the task force approach is key to the development of an arson program (and at least one of the task force kits should be read by everyone), a community can get a program started without beginning with a task force. The importance of public education in arson prevention and control cannot be overemphasized, so perhaps that may be a good way to begin in your community.

The topics covered by the kits are:

- Municipal Task Forces
- Public Education Program
- Tipster/Hotline Program
- Juvenile Counseling Program
- Early Warning Systems
- Management of Training Programs
- State Task Forces
- Rural Arson Problem
- Federal Arson Programs

Below we list the individual kits with a brief summary of each. We should emphasize that the attack on arson blurs traditional role assignments and that each of the kits will have some applicability to your anti-arson efforts.

Municipal Arson Task Forces

This kit should be read by everybody—it emphasizes the need for a coordinated approach to the arson problem. It outlines the major steps in organizing a municipal task force.

Public Education Program

This is another must kit. Discusses the overall strategy for a public education campaign (to complement the more detailed material in the "Arson News Media Kit" by the Hartford Insurance Company).

Tipster/Hotline Program

This program can serve as the integral part of your awareness campaign. It also offers an opportunity for citizen access to agencies investigating arson.

Juvenile Counseling Program

This kit discusses the basics in setting up a program to counsel juvenile firesetters. It also provides some insight into the motivation of arsonists.

Early Warning Systems

This kit discusses the development of an arson data system to predict arson targets so that preventive activities may concentrate on the most likely targets. It provides good insight into the value of gathering and using data on arson.

Management of Training Programs

This kit discusses an approach to arson detection and investigation training that focuses on providing the individual team members—firefighters, chief suppression officers, and investigators—with differing levels of training.

State Task Forces

This kit develops the application of the task force approach to statewide organizations. State task forces can be very helpful by coordinating the attack on arson statewide.

Rural Arson Problem

This kit develops the task force approach for small and rural communities. In these cases, the task force acts to help pool needed resources, as well as to provide the coordination for an effective arson program.

In closing, we would like to emphasize the statement by Gordon Vickery, Administrator, U.S. Fire Administration: "Arson has been studied to death. Our responsibility now is to act—coordinated actions which will reduce arson's devastation to our cities and our people. . . . Let's get on with it!"

These kits were prepared by the Office of Planning and Education, United States Fire Administration, Federal Emergency Management Agency and EMMA, inc.

Municipal Task Forces



ANTI-ARSON



MUNICIPAL TASK FORCES

1. Determine Task Force Structure And Areas of Responsibility
2. Obtain Commitment From Top People
3. Get Specific Person Assigned To Task Force From Each Group
4. Schedule An Initial Series Of Meetings To Organize The Task Force
5. Specific Action Items For The Task Force
6. Some Final Thoughts

BUILDING A MUNICIPAL ARSON TASK FORCE

1. Determine Task Force Structure and Areas of Responsibility

The first step is to identify those agencies and groups in your community which have key responsibilities and interests in solving the arson problem. Each community is organized differently so you will have to determine the appropriate parties for your community. To provide some guidance, the organization of a typical Arson Task Force is presented below:

<u>Member</u>	<u>Responsibilities</u>
Mayor's Office	Provides executive direction, executive guidance and policy
Fire Department	Arson investigation, prevention activity, recordkeeping, information analysis and trends, public education and awareness
Police Department	Investigative assistance, prevention assistance, lab analysis, records and information, training assistance, and patrol assistance
Prosecutor's Office	Criminal prosecution advice, fraud investigation and prosecution
City Council Public Safety Committee	Policy direction and impetus, ordinance review, policy development, and on-going policy change as related to arson, public education and awareness
Insurance Industry	Material and technical assistance, insurance-arson prevention, incentive award programs for apprehension and prosecution, and industry-wide insurance information
Sheriff's Office	Investigative assistance, communication and information exchange in unincorporated areas adjacent to the city
Chamber of Commerce	Business and communication participation, business trends, community awareness

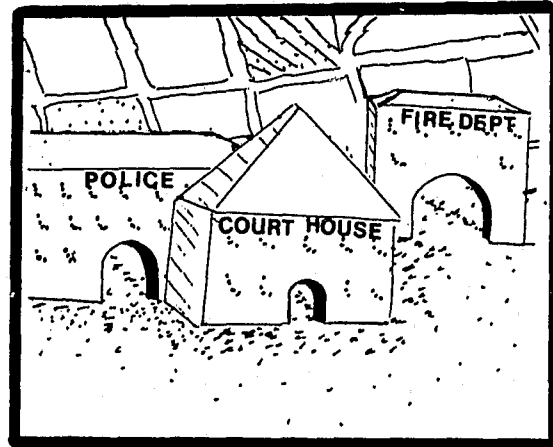
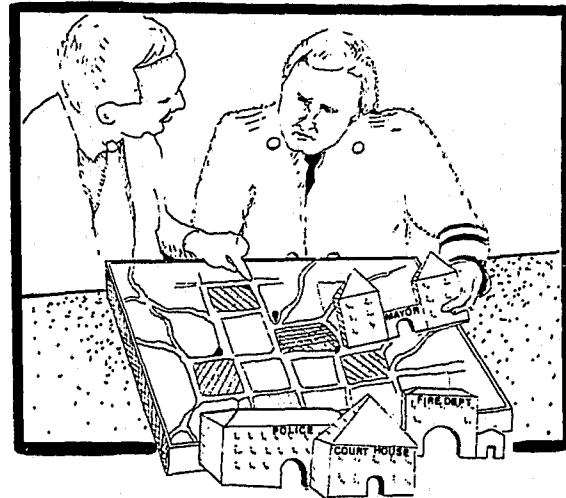
The task force concept is flexible and should be adjusted to fit the specifics of your community. Arson task forces have been successful in a variety of different cities, including San Francisco, Seattle, Dallas, and Winston-Salem.

The essential job of the arson task force is to provide the conceptual framework and coordination necessary to establish a system for the prevention and control of arson. Usually the mayor/city manager acts as task force chairperson and is responsible for providing overall executive direction and guidance.

The important thing is to ensure that all the key roles have been identified so that progress can occur from the initial task force meeting. The responsibilities and jurisdictional roles will be developed from that point on.

2. Obtain Commitment From Top People

It is vitally important to have the approval, if not the actual involvement, of the top person in each organizational element involved in the task force.



Involve the Press

Once a problem has been publicly discussed it is much easier to get high level attention. It is never too early to involve the media. You could begin by preparing a press report on some recent arson fire locally and then do an article on the arson problem in general (see the overview of the U.S. Fire Administration's Report to Congress on Arson).

Start with the Private Sector

Since the insurance industry usually is active in arson prevention, it may be useful to start there before approaching the mayor and the other government agencies. In Seattle, the Washington Insurance Council was very active in the fight against arson and provided task force assistance.

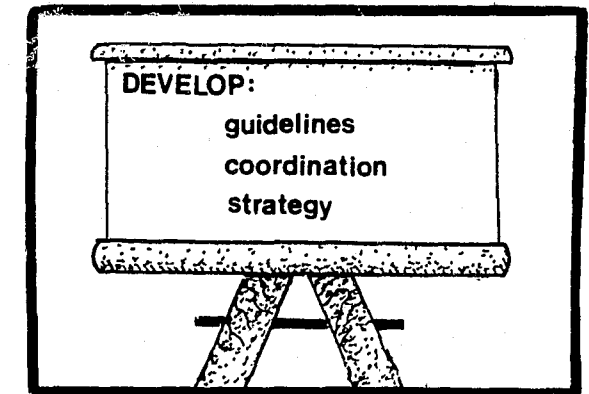
Develop An Effective Presentation

In your presentation to these individuals be prepared to describe the seriousness of the arson problem and its multiple affects on the community, and the need for an organized effort to control arson.

2.

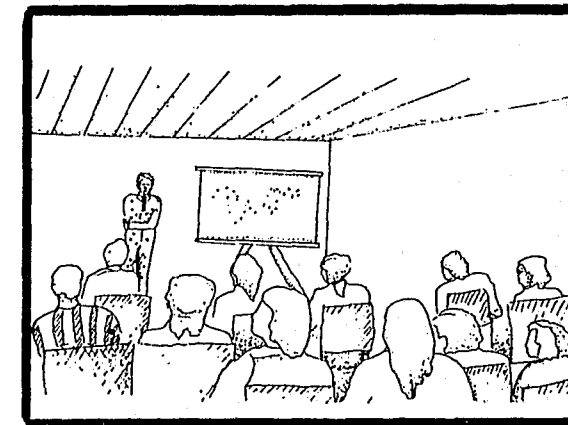
3. Get Each Agency To Assign A Specific Person

After obtaining the general commitment to the task force concept from the top individuals, be sure that a specific person—with appropriate authority and expertise—is assigned by each agency to participate in the task force. Responsibilities and task force organization will be decided during meetings, therefore it is essential to have the participation and involvement of a person with decision-making authority who can make resource commitments.



4. Schedule An Initial Series Of Meetings To Organize The Task Force

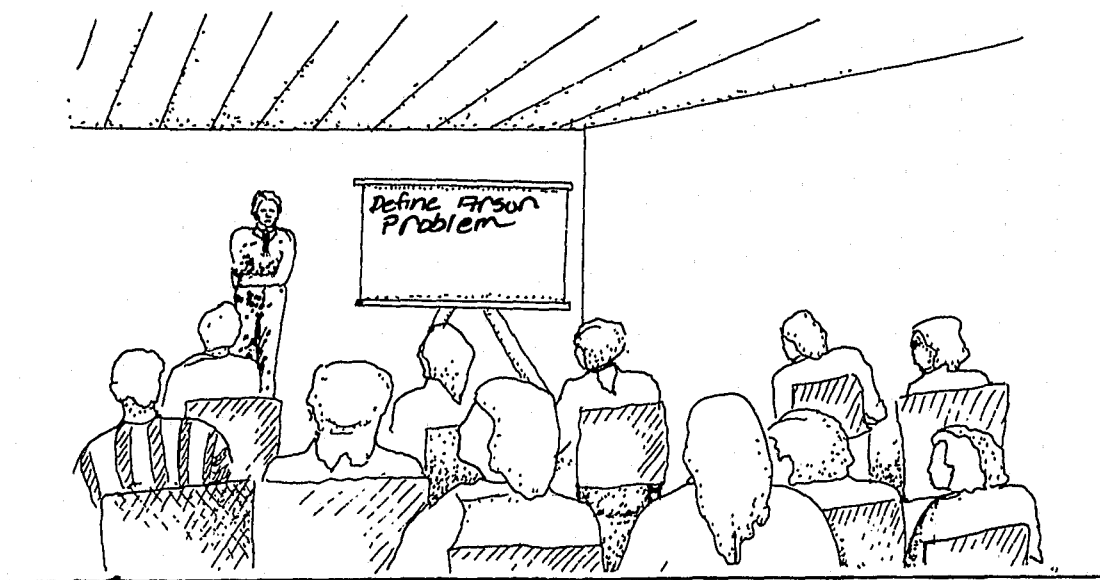
When all the agencies have assigned representatives, a series of meetings should be scheduled to begin the process of organizing the task force.



The task force functions in two ways: it provides a forum for setting community policy on arson, and it acts as an operational force to implement specific programs and ideas. One approach to task force organization which has proved effective is to form subcommittees, or working groups, for each major problem area. For each group the general assignment would be:

- 1) Identify and define the problem.
- 2) Determine what is presently being done.
- 3) Develop specific recommendations, with a priority ranking, for improvement.
- 4) Establish appropriate measures of success and recommend short-range objectives and long-term goals.

3.



Depending on your community, the operational force head may be within the fire department, prosecutor's office, police department, or sheriff's office.

The task force operates as a coalition. The process of organizing is obviously political and will depend on the forces within your community. It requires the active support of the executive and legislative branches in order to be successful in preventing and controlling arson.

The entire task force then would review the recommendations from each working group and establish priorities, objectives, and goals for the task force in a consistent fashion. Responsibility for implementing selected programs would then be assigned. This approach ensures that all programs are contributing to the task force goals through a comprehensive strategy.

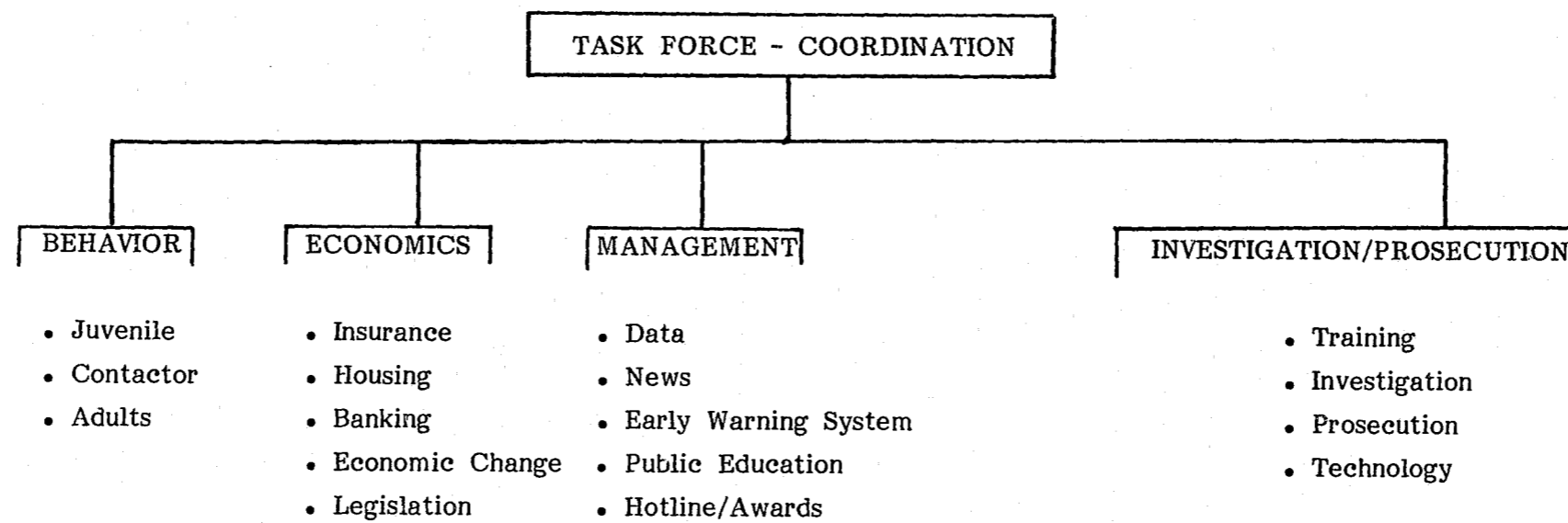
The two major functional areas are arson prevention and control. Figure 1 shows one approach to organizing the major working areas in an arson program. Not all the functions listed in Figure 1 may be appropriate to your community, but most of them do occur in successful programs.

5. Specific Action Items For The Task Force

In addition to organizing, there are some specific action items for the task force to begin work on during initial meetings.

- 1) Define the local arson problem in detail

Using the immediately available statistics, a report should be prepared on the arson problem in your community. It is important to have quantitative information about arson in order to evaluate the prevention and control efforts. It should show the magnitude of the local arson problem in terms of: number and types of fires, frequency of incidents, deaths and injuries, property losses, and arrests and convictions.



PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

CONTROL ACTIVITIES

FIGURE 1 ARSON TASK FORCE WORKING AREAS

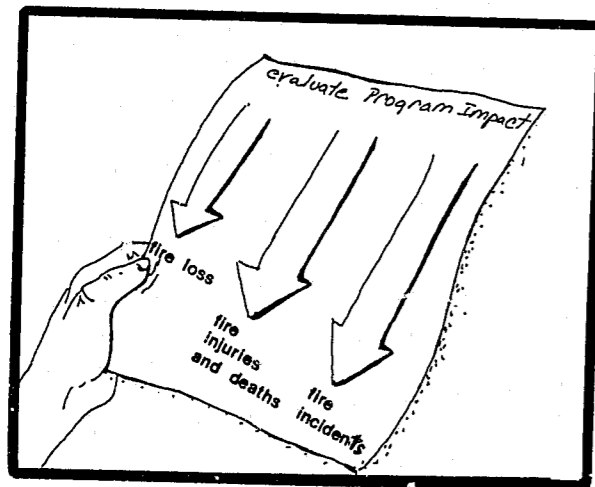
In New Haven, for example, the arson problem had escalated from 1973 to 1976 to the point where nearly a third of all building fires had suspicious origins. Only after a grand jury report on arson was released and the data reviewed did the magnitude of the problem become apparent.

2) Develop a comprehensive arson strategy

By developing long-term goals and short-range objectives for arson prevention and control activities, a framework is established for making sound decisions about future steps.

As an example, the initial recommendations in the first report of Seattle's Arson Task Force included the following:

- Expand the fire department's Arson Investigation Unit
- Detail detectives from the police department to the Arson Investigation Unit. Individual tours would be from 6 to 12 months.



- Operationally the police detectives would serve under the Fire Chief while remaining under the administrative control of the Police Chief

- The police detectives would maintain regular contacts with the police department's Criminal Investigation Unit

- Arson investigative skills would be improved by a new arson training program

3) Begin the process of public education on arson

It is essential to have community-wide involvement and awareness in order to control arson. The importance of publicity and public education in preventing arson cannot be overemphasized. Begin by announcing the formation of the task force in the local media. Then concentrate on publicizing the organizational activities of the task force.

Seattle's program featured a quote by Fire Chief Frank Hanson: "If you start a fire in Seattle, you stand a good chance of getting caught. If you're caught, you stand an even better chance of going to jail." Subsequent arrests and convictions were publicized with a referral to the quote to emphasize Seattle's commitment to stopping arson.

4) Mobilize all available resources

Since arson is a local problem, existing budgets and local resources should be allocated to start the task force and to provide continuing support. Efforts should be initiated, however, to solicit financial and/or technical assistance through state and federal agencies, such as HUD, LEAA, or USFA. (See the kit on Federal programs for additional information.) Assign responsibilities for identifying appropriate programs and determining their application procedures.

You may find that the increased cooperation between agencies resulting from the task force defining responsibilities will increase available resources. This occurs when the cooperating agencies become more aware of each others' services and how to request and utilize them.

5) Begin the process of task force education

Task force members should become familiar with the details of other successful arson control efforts across the country. A good way to start is by reviewing the other USFA material listed under Additional Information at the end of this kit.



6. Some Final Thoughts

By now, your task force should be functioning and responding to local circumstances. The most important, long-term, operational goal is to maintain a spirit of cooperation and involvement. One way to help maintain commitment is to make sure that the "glory" is shared; for example, press releases should come from the Arson Task Force as a whole.

As arson prevention and control receives more attention, there will be an increasing potential for problems between agencies. This is why a clear delineation of agency responsibilities and a prioritization of tasks must occur at the task force level. The Arson Task Force can prevent the occurrence of counterproductive competition among agencies for the finite resources which are available to combat arson.

As your program begins to have impact, evaluation of the data will show a decline in your arson problems and this positive feedback will be helpful. In reviewing data, remember that the task force should set short-range objectives that can be achieved as well as long term goals that are well beyond your immediate grasp. These goals and objectives can then be periodically reviewed and adjusted to current circumstances.

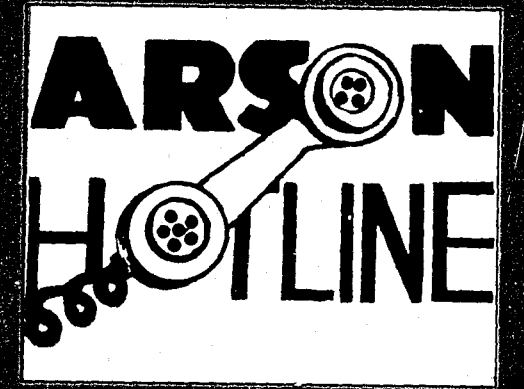
Additional Information

See the U.S. Fire Administration's "Arson Resource Directory," "Report to the Congress - ARSON the Federal Roles in Arson Prevention and Control," and their magazine "Arson Resource Bulletin." For information on these publications write:

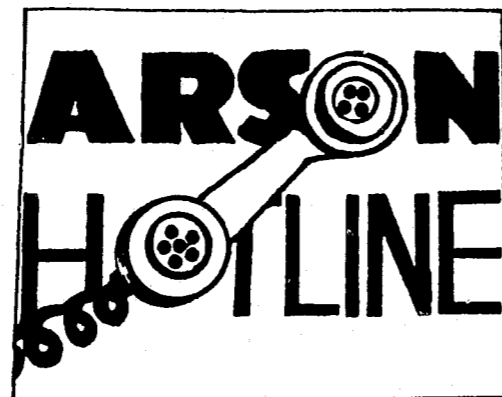
U.S. Fire Administration
Office of Planning and
Education
Federal Emergency
Management Agency
Washington, D.C. 20472

The U.S. Fire Administration also has a program of technical assistance for Arson Task Forces.

**Tipster
Programs**



ANTI-ARSON



TIPSTER/HOTLINE PROGRAMS

1. Form A Management Committee
2. Determine The Program's Name, Purpose, and Goal
3. Establish Working Procedures For The Program
4. Arrange For Funding Sources And Budget Monitoring
5. Determine Award Criteria
6. Some Final Thoughts

A well designed arson awards program is an effective, low cost tool to increase public awareness of arson and to provide citizens with anonymous access to the agencies responsible for arson investigation. It utilizes a telephone hotline for receiving calls and a vigorous advertising campaign for promoting the program.

Each of these steps is discussed later in more detail.

In discussing the awards program approach you can note the following important points:

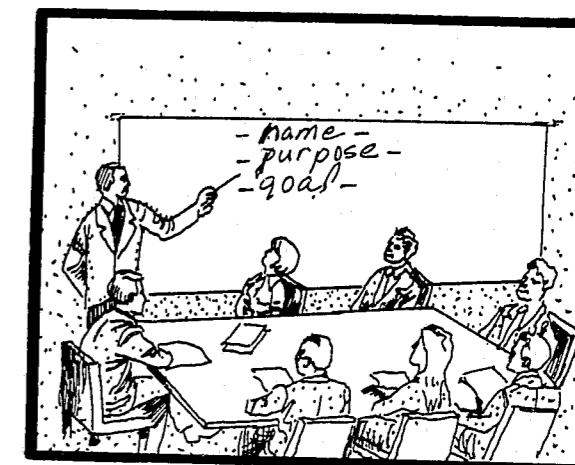
1. Form A Management Committee

One key ingredient in a successful awards program is a committee to manage the program. The committee can be chosen from interested groups such as fire and policy officials, city leaders, business and industrial representatives, insurance representatives, and community and civic leaders. Begin by contacting fire and police officials who currently are involved in dealing with arson problems; then expand the search to include the insurance industry and other community leaders. The program should be included under the fire department's operations.

Developing an effective awards program in your community should not be difficult or time consuming. The main responsibilities of the committee in establishing the program are:

- 1) Determine the program's name, purpose, and goals.
- 2) Establish working procedures for the program.
- 3) Arrange for funding sources and monitoring of the program's budget.
- 4) Determine award criteria and processes.
- 5) Arrange for promoting and publicizing success of the award program. (It is important to emphasize that promotion is a key ingredient of program success.)

- Awards programs help prevent arson by making the public—and potential arsonists—aware of arson control efforts. The value of such publicity in preventing arson is immense.
- Awards programs are inexpensive and easy to run—large reward funds are not necessary since less than half of the "tipsters" even request rewards.
- Awards programs aid arson investigations by making it possible for information to be passed easily and anonymously directly to the investigating agencies.
- Existing successful awards programs can be easily adapted to your community's needs. Programs can vary from operator answered hotlines to use of simple telephone answering machines.



2. Determine The Program's Name, Purpose, and Goal

The program's name should be readily identifiable and tie in with the local traditions of the area. The program is essentially an awareness, or outreach effort, and the name should be thought of as a key element in advertising your program. Perhaps the municipal motto can be used in the program. In Dallas, for example, the program is called "Burn An Arsonist For Cold Cash."

As with all new programs, the award committee should be careful in defining programmatic goals. Over-zealousness often leads to adopting unrealistic goals. This, in turn, can result in funding cuts when the goals cannot be met. The watchword here is: achievable goals, modestly stated.

3. Establish Working Procedures For The Program

After the program's name has been decided, the management committee should proceed in developing the other components of the program.

Establish A 24-Hour Hotline

The second component of a successful award program is the establishment of a 24-hour arson telephone hotline. This allows citizens to report information which may indicate a potential arson or to give eye witness accounts of an arsonist in action. Most of the successful programs thus far have stressed anonymity for the person giving the "tip." The information obtained is designed to be used as nothing more than an investigative tool, or a "hot tip" for authorities to followup.

The chief operational decision for the committee will be deciding on the mechanisms for handling hotline calls. The choices range from automatic telephone answering machines to trained operators. The use of trained operators, skilled in the effective questioning and surveying of callers, can be a program asset, but the choice will depend on local circumstances—available resources and expected volume of calls. Both approaches have their merits and have achieved success. In any case, program success depends primarily on a successful public relations campaign.

Once a call is received, the information is given to the responsible investigator. The caller will either be assigned a code number or choose a code name, and all subsequent discussions or awards will be handled under that code designation.



Cash awards typically are granted on the basis of the actual value of the information to the investigator or investigation. Usually, the award should be made only after arrest and conviction of an arsonist takes place. The number and amount of awards are dependent on the cash fund originally set aside, the value of the "tip" as judged by the award committee and the investigator on the case, and the perceived seriousness of the particular arson incident at hand.

The Riverside, California WeTIP effort is an excellent example of a successful working program. The WeTIP operators are professionally trained and answer the hotline by saying, "Thank you for calling WeTIP, please do not give your name; a code name and number will be assigned to you." Under their system, citizens of Riverside may call the toll free number, provide detailed information, and collect an award of up to \$500, if the suspect is convicted. The rewards are handled by use of the code name and number at a pre-arranged, designated post office box. Tremendous public acceptance and success of the program has resulted.

Use Arson Posters

The third component of a successful award program is the use of arson posters at the scene of suspicious fires. Once an investigator has determined that a fire has been intentionally set, an arson poster is placed at the scene of the blaze. This poster clearly states that arson is suspected in this blaze and that information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible may result in a cash award to the "tipper." The case number, name of the investigator, and responsible investigation agency may also be identified on this poster. Finally, the arson hotline telephone number appears in bold numbers, and assures citizens that the "tips" provided will remain confidential. Posters should be attention getters and emphasize the positive benefits of the program to the citizen. An example of such a poster appears on the following page.



Use Witness Anonymous Columns

A fourth component of the award program is the use of a witness anonymous column in the local press. Such a column describes a current case of arson, and requests that any available information be reported through the hotline or directly to the appropriate investigator.

Depending on the interest and commitment of the local press, options for site pictures, case reviews, and general stories on the neighborhood in question are possible. The hotline number should be clearly and boldly advertised in all witness anonymous columns, along with cash award information for potential "tipsters."

**your City of Phoenix Arson Task Force
has determined this fire was caused by**

ARSON

\$5,000 award fund

**Awards are being offered from a \$5,000
fund by the Independent Insurance
Agents of Phoenix for information
leading to the arrest and criminal
conviction of person(s) responsible
for this fire!**

**CALL
ARSON WATCH**
Phone
26-Arson
262-7766

Build A Strong Promotional Campaign

The best-intended community program will fail if word of its value does not reach the general public. Getting your message to the public requires a public awareness and interest campaign composed of a variety of outreach mechanisms, such as:

- Feature stories in print media on the awards program start-up, and reports on achievements of the program.
- News and feature stories on TV and radio stations in the area, emphasizing the positive value to the community of the award program.
- Speeches and presentations by city, business, and community leaders explaining the value of the program.
- An organizationally-focused marketing program, designed to solicit the financial and programmatic support of community organizations.
- A series of promotional brochures, posters, and exhibits which highlights the awards program's purpose and goals, and describes recent achievement.

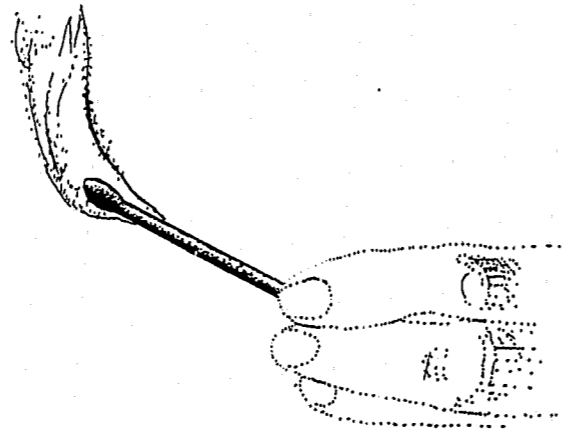
The Riverside WeTIP program, as well as other programs in Anchorage, Alaska; Des Moines, Iowa; and Dallas, Texas; have successfully used this approach for outreach.

4. Arrange For Funding Sources And Budget Monitoring

An immediate concern for establishing a successful award program is to obtain and monitor seed and operational capital.

A sponsoring city should recognize the fund-raising potential available through local business and industrial organizations, civic and community coalitions and groups, and private foundations. A number of possible funding sources are available for non-profit causes such as the development of an arson award program. When investigating funding approaches, it is helpful to recognize that some organizations may be more willing to provide the actual award money, while others would rather provide operational funds.

Hand-in-hand with this funding, however, comes the responsibility for monitoring and reporting on funds allocated and spent. The managing committee should constantly be on the lookout for new or innovative approaches for reducing operational costs, while at the same time upgrading and further publicizing program ventures.



4.

A review of the following general operational budget categories may provide assistance in the design of your awards program budget:

- Personnel - may utilize existing positions
- Equipment - hotline, telephone answering machine
- Printing Costs - may be donated
- Overhead - may be absorbed within existing organization
- Awards - may be donated

Your program may or may not require funds for all of these expenditures, but your committee should consider these and other possible costs before soliciting funds from potential contributors. A constantly shifting budget will result in the lack of faith and continued support by most contributors.

5. Determine Award Criteria

The number and amount of awards you make will, to a large degree, be dependent on the capital available. In most cities, the awards are drawn from a pool of \$5,000 and are awarded on a "merit" basis. The amount of each award is determined by the committee, after a review of the investigator's evaluation of the importance of the "tip." At the discretion of your committee, however, you may wish to place a maximum on the number or dollar value of awards.

Generally, to safeguard the identity of the award-citizen, awards are funneled through the investigator handling the case by means of a blind post office box. Only the code name and number of the awardee will be referenced in the post office arrangements.



In planning the award program, you should allow at least 3-4 months before assuming that the public is aware of the program; and, therefore, you should expect the first award to be made only after 9-10 months. Timing of the awards will be dependent on the speed of the criminal justice process.



5.

6. Some Final Thoughts

While public acceptance and participation strategies were discussed earlier, the need for constant notice of the award program's value should not be overlooked. A person experienced in public relations should be included on the committee, and that individual's expertise should be utilized throughout the start-up and operational phases of the program. Among the approaches such an individual might explore are:

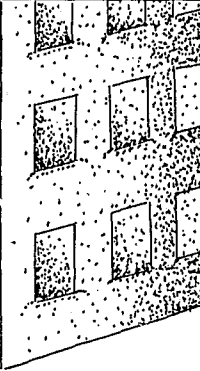
- Expanded use of public service announcements.
- Mention of the program by key political and business representatives.
- Advertising—especially donated or free—on buses, taxis, billboards, mailouts, bank statement stuffers, utility bill enclosures, etc.
- Lobbying on crime prevention strategies as a means of highlighting program successes and strengthening funding drives.
- Presentations to local area groups and agencies to mobilize support (financial and otherwise) for the program.

Additional Information

If you would like additional information on award programs nationwide, contact the U.S. Fire Administration for the Arson Resource Directory and the Independent Insurance Agents Association of your area.

Early Warning Systems

insurance rates	
4 yr.	fire
3 yr.	\$ 200,000.
2 yr.	\$ 100,000
1 yr.	\$ 50,000



ANTI-ARSON

insurance rates
4 yr. fire
3 yr. \$ 200,000.
2 yr. \$ 100,000
1 yr. \$ 50,000

EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

1. Background - The Early Warning Concept
2. Overview of Arson Data Systems
3. Develop A Support Group
4. Establish Supporting Projects
5. Begin By Developing A Fire Incidence File
6. Develop An Arson Information Management System
7. Develop And Analyse The Data For An Early Warning System
8. Use The Early Warning System As A Prevention Tool
9. Develop Resources For Your Early Warning System
10. Some Final Thoughts

DEVELOPING AN EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

1. Background - The Early Warning Concept

Successful arson programs always involve both prevention and control activities. While the importance of public awareness and public education efforts in preventing arson cannot be over emphasized, many cities with high arson rates, another method for arson prevention is also useful. The basic approach is to identify potential arson targets before the arsonist strikes and then increase prevention activity on these high risk targets to minimize the probability of arson occurring.

The target identification process should take into consideration potential economic and social factors which are likely to be related to arson motivation or which may be useful as an indicator of potential arson. In New Haven, Connecticut, for example, an accumulation of unpaid taxes and reports of housing code violations can indicate a property with a high probability of becoming an arson target. Such a target can then receive special arson prevention attention—such as surveillance or code enforcement programs—to minimize the possibility of a successful arson attempt.

However, collecting, storing, and analyzing the needed information is no simple task. Information which might prove useful in analyzing the local arson problem is probably scattered in a number of city and private agencies. Developing an effective Arson Early Warning System requires a major coordination effort among many agencies; this coordination is best provided by an Arson Task Force.

A computer system usually is necessary in order to minimize the data handling problems. Such a system, however, need not be overly expensive, and in many cases existing data processing capabilities may be used.



2. Overview of Arson Data Systems

There are three major data tools for assisting in the prevention and control of arson. They are:

Fire Incident File

Based on the reports used for the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS), this file contains the basic data about all fires as filed by the responding unit. It is used as a general tool in managing the overall fire problem.

Arson Information Management System (AIMS)

Based on the reports of the Arson Investigation Unit, this file contains additional data beyond the incident reports about arson fires. For example, this file includes information on building owners, witnesses, etc. It is used as a general tool for analyzing the arson problem and managing the resources against arson.

Arson Early Warning System (AEWS)

Based on an analysis of a city's arson problem, this system monitors key "trigger variables" (such as amount of unpaid taxes) on all buildings. When a key variable exceeds a trigger level (for example, New Haven, Connecticut, uses \$1,000 of unpaid taxes), the building is placed on an "At-Risk" list, for further analysis and possible arson prevention activity.

These three systems should be developed in the order presented above, with each system building on the previous step. These systems usually function independently of each other and have their individual uses.

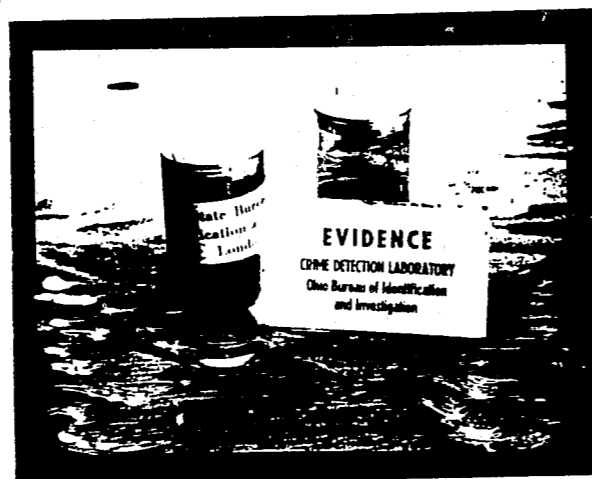
An Arson Early Warning System should be thought of as a long term project for an existing Arson Task Force. It takes time to collect the data, analyze a city's arson problem, develop a predictive scheme, and then begin to produce results. It is worth the effort, however; and in addition, the data systems built during development of the early warning system can have an immediate impact on your arson program.



3. Develop A Support Group

The first step in developing an arson early warning system is to obtain the support of a coalition in your city—preferably members of an existing Arson Task Force. Since each city administration differs in its organizational structure, you must determine the responsible parties in your own case.

The highly successful New Haven, Connecticut program may provide you with some ideas for selecting program participants. On the following page are members and their associated responsibilities for New Haven's support coalition:



2.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUPPORT COALITION

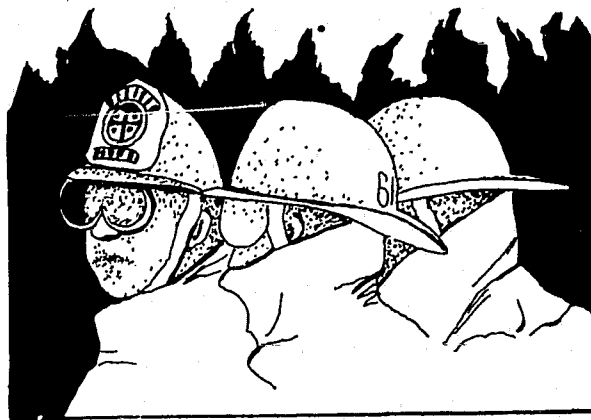
<u>Member</u>	<u>Responsibilities</u>
Mayor's Office	Provides executive direction, guidance, and policy formation. Provides high visibility of program.
Fire Department	Collects information on fire incidents. Trains firefighters to recognize potential arson and to preserve arson evidence. Investigates arson. Develops and maintains computerized data systems.
Police Department	Trains specialists in arson investigation techniques. Collects data on crimes against property (vandalism, robberies, etc.).
Prosecutor's Office	Assists in evaluating investigation techniques for use in prosecution. Encourages thorough analysis of arson cases.
Department of Housing Conservation and Code Enforcement	Maintains records of multiple or increasing disrepair or maintenance problems or complaints.
Building Department	Maintains records of building inspections, code violations, and orders for demolition.
Commercial Records Office	Maintains information on changes in property ownership, particularly purchase by buyers whose other buildings have a history of suspicious fires.
Department of Health	Monitors persistent, increasing, or unusual reports of health standards violations.
Tax Collector's Office	Monitors information on persistent, increasing, or sudden tax arrears.
Tax Assessor's Office	Assigns assessed value of building structures and has tax records.
Insurance Companies	Maintains information on levels of building insurance and monitors sudden increases in carried insurance.
Mortgage Holders	Maintains information on the size and balance of mortgage loans, payment delinquencies, and increased leveraging approvals.

3.

4. Establish Supporting Projects

The development of an arson data base will require proper administrative and working procedures. Before the data collection and analysis effort can begin, a number of interrelated, supporting projects must be undertaken:

- A Municipal Arson Task Force must be organized.
- An Arson Investigation Unit must be organized.
- Fire incident reports must be designed and tested to assure computer-compatible coding of information.
- Training in the proper use of incident reports is necessary.
- Fireground tactics should be reviewed to ensure that protection of possible arson evidence is an active consideration.
- Firefighters must be trained to recognize the arson problem and to act appropriately.
- Liaison must be established with appropriate technical resources for developing a computerized system for data handling and analysis.



5. Begin by Developing a Fire Incident File

The first step in developing the data system is to develop a Fire Incident File. This file would contain data on all fires such as time, place, brief description of the property, suspected origin, known or suspected accelerant, or other specific fire-related variables needed by the NFIRS (National Fire Incident Reporting System).

By routinely compiling and entering this data into a computer-based retrievable system, a fire or arson investigator can get computer printouts that describe the overall problem, specific aspects of it, or even individual incidents.

6. Develop An Arson Information Management System

This system would concentrate specifically on arson-related fires and expand on the information contained in the Fire Incident File. Using the information developed by the Arson Investigation Unit, this system would contain additional details such as witnesses' names, building owners, and insurance coverage. The data system would be designed for easy accessibility by arson investigators.

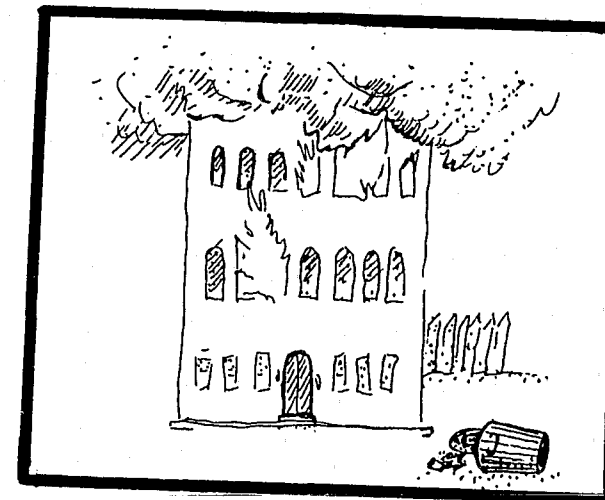
The utility of the Arson Information Management System can be shown by an example of one of the capabilities of New Haven's system—name inquiry. The system user enters a surname, and the computer will generate a list showing every occurrence of that name (with first name or initials) in the data bank, along with key identifiers showing the alarm number and the relation of that name to each incident. This immediately identifies a person who has been connected with a number of arson fires. This is just one example of the value of an Arson Information Management System.

7. Develop and Analyse The Data For An Early Warning System

Because each city differs, the circumstances involved in cases of arson in each city will likely differ. In order to develop an arson early warning system, you must first analyze recent arson cases to determine the relevant factors and the likely target areas within the city. The list below may serve as a starting point for identifying relevant factors. Other factors, or variables, may surface later as your arson case research continues.

List of Relevant Factors

- Age of perpetrator (juvenile, adult)
- Time of the incident
- Type of accelerant used
- Place of the incident
- Suspected origin
- Number of previous fires at site
- Name of building's owner
- Other buildings owned by that owner which were also involved in arson incidents
- Housing code violations



- Recent increases in insurance coverage
- Recent property tax arrearages
- High or increasing vacancy rates
- Average income of tenants
- Maintenance/repair complaints at the site
- Recent leveraging of funds
- Recent changes of building ownership
- Robberies
- Health code violations
- Vandalism incidents

Identification of Trigger Variables

After gathering data on these factors for both a selected group of arson targets and a control group of buildings not involved in arson incidents, an analysis of the variables can begin to identify a trigger variable(s). A comparative analysis of the data for both groups will show that certain variables for the arson group almost always have unusually high or low values. A further analysis is performed to determine which of these variables is most useful in predicting whether a building is likely to be in the arson group. The selected trigger variables can then be monitored for all the buildings in your city. When a trigger variable reaches a critical value, for example unpaid back taxes exceeding \$750, the building is identified as "At-Risk" for arson.

The identification of the trigger variables is the key to arson early warning systems, since it is not cost effective to collect extensive data on every building in your city. After a building has been identified as "At-Risk", a more extensive data collection effort may be in order.

New Haven's system, known as the Arson Early Warning System (AEWS), uses two key trigger variables:

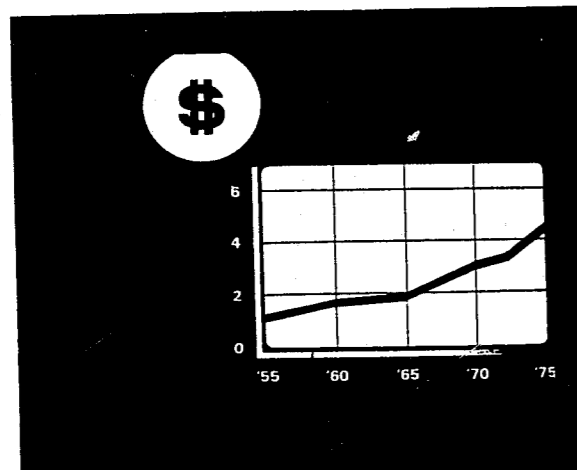
- Unpaid back taxes exceed \$1,000
- Previous incident of a suspicious fire

When either of these two variables is triggered two additional factors are examined:

- Building code violations
- Lien claims against the building

Any triggered building is "At-Risk," but the list can be prioritized as to whether one, two, three or four variables indicate arson potential.

The analysis indicated above is sophisticated and requires the assistance of a professional statistician or operations researcher. By the time you are ready to begin this phase of your data analysis, manuals based on operating experience from New Haven and Boston should be available which should prove invaluable in guiding your efforts.



8. Use The Early Warning System As A Prevention Tool

A number of steps may be taken once a building has been classified "At-Risk" by the early warning system. Among these are:

- 1) The Arson Task Force may step up patrol and spot checks at designated locations.
- 2) The fire marshal can interview building owners and suggest improvements and changes necessary.
- 3) Housing rehabilitation specialists can interview the owner.
- 4) Banks, savings and loan institutions, and others in the financial community may notify their client-owners of the At-Risk designation and warn that the property is under close scrutiny. Also, they can give notice that additional loan applications will receive close scrutiny.
- 5) Insurance providers may serve notice that large claims will be fully investigated and carefully reviewed, and state that requests for increased coverage will be examined thoroughly.

By taking these and other similar steps, a city—in effect—puts the arsonist on notice: there is little to gain financially by arson in this city.

9. Develop Resources For Your Early Warning System

The primary need is for adequate leadership and commitment. Funding the development of an Arson Early Warning System will be the responsibility of your Arson Task Force. The funding issue should not be a major hurdle since most of the required resources probably already are available.

Most cities already have data processing capabilities and the early warning system should not be a major drain on existing computer resources. Additional personnel should not be required—members of the arson squad will be involved in most of the work. The data analysis can utilize assistance from local colleges and universities without incurring excessive costs.

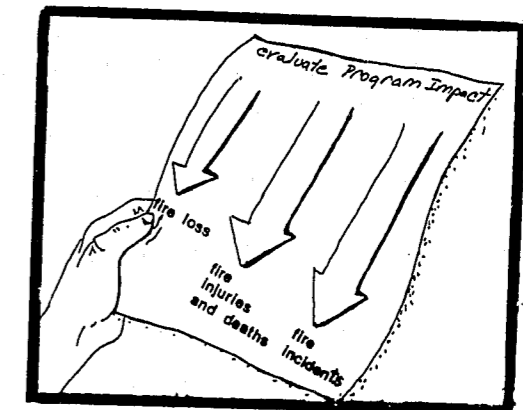
10. Some Final Thoughts

An Arson Early Warning System is an effective arson prevention technique. As equally important as prevention is the enhanced understanding of the arson problem which emerges from the data analysis. This understanding can assist in the management and allocation of resources in arson prevention and control activities by identifying problem areas. A deeper understanding of the motivation of arsonists should also emerge which may suggest changes in laws to assist in arson prevention.

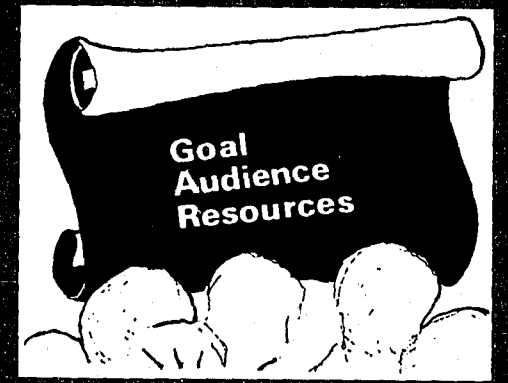
Additional Information

For additional information see the U.S. Fire Administration's "Arson Resource Directory," and the "Report on the Arson Information Management Systems Conference" (available from the U.S. Fire Administration), dated May, 1979. Manuals from the New Haven and Boston programs will be available, when published, from the U.S. Fire Administration—watch for the announcement in the Arson Resource Bulletin.

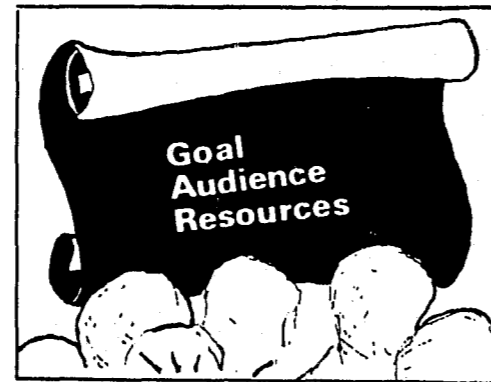
For a free copy of the "National Fire Incident Reporting System Handbook" contact the National Fire Data Center, U.S. Fire Administration.



**Public
Education
Programs**



ANTI-ARSON



PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS

1. Outreach Essential To Arson Prevention And Control
2. Public Education Role In Arson Task Forces
3. Planning the Arson Public Education Campaign
4. Public Education Strategies For Informing And Increasing Awareness
5. Public Education Strategies For Involving The Public
6. Specific Examples From Successful Public Education Campaigns
7. Some Final Thoughts

1. Outreach Essential to Arson Prevention and Control

To achieve a reduction in the frequency of arson incidents in a community, an arson program must include both prevention and control activities. A strong public education campaign has proven to be one of the most effective prevention activities.

Public education campaigns should have two major objectives: 1) inform the public about the arson problem, and 2) encourage their active involvement in preventing and controlling arson. The first objective involves focusing attention on arson to create a public awareness of the problem; it also requires educating the public about the crime of arson and its impact on their community. The second objective involves making suggestions and providing opportunities for public involvement in anti-arson activities.

To accomplish these goals, a carefully designed public education campaign is necessary. Although designing and implementing a campaign is best accomplished working in an Arson Task Force, all anti-arson activity has publicity value and can help prevent arson.



2. Public Education Role in Arson Task Forces

To successfully deal with arson, a task force approach is necessary to provide the needed coordination among the different forces involved in reducing arson. (See the kits on municipal, statewide, and rural task forces.) As part of the task force's overall strategy to combat arson, public education will create an awareness of arson, educate the public about arson and its impact, and mobilize community resources against arson.

Public awareness publicity can and should begin immediately, even before formal organization of the task force. Then the public education campaign can be based on the organizational activity of the task force. Once the task force is operational, the public education effort should focus on task force activities.

Be sure that the task force organization includes establishing a single source for public information releases. A public education campaign depends on good media relations, and clearly defining lines of communication with all concerned parties is a necessary first step.

While public education campaigns need to be tailored to local circumstances, the following is offered to illustrate the overall role of public education in a successful arson task force:

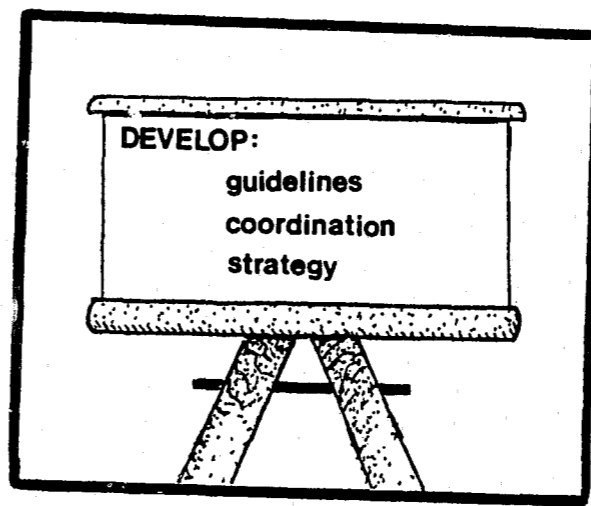
1.

<u>PHASE</u>	<u>PUBLIC EDUCATION OBJECTIVE</u>
Prior to Task Force Organizing	<p>Awareness publicity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - national arson problem - recent arson fires - successful arson programs nearby
Task Force Organizing	<p>Information and awareness publicity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - kickoff event announcing task force formation - organizational activity - local arson problem awareness publicity
Task Force Operational	<p>Information publicity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - task force activities - arson fires - arson investigation - arson prosecution <p>Educational publicity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - local arson problem - arson problem <p>Involvement opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - hotline - awards program - lobbying information

3. Planning The Arson Public Education Campaign

In developing a public education campaign, there are five major planning questions to be considered:

- 1) Identification - Identify in as much detail as possible the objectives of the campaign. Initially, most campaigns will address the community at large, but as details of the local arson problem emerge, more specific needs can be identified. For example, if juvenile firesetting was found to be a local problem, part of the public education effort would be directed at reducing juvenile caused fires.
- 2) Selection - Select the appropriate target audience for achieving your objective. Review the possible approaches for reaching the target audience and select the best approach considering both cost and effectiveness.
- 3) Message Design - Design the message so that it appeals to the positive motivations of the target population.
- 4) Implementation - Implement the plan and activate the campaign.



Message content should always emphasize the positive value of the program and appeal to a beneficial reason for action by the target audience. Emphasize that in the final analysis the individual citizen "pays" for all arson fires through higher insurance rates.

Equally important as message content is the choice of the delivery mechanism. Matching the delivery mechanism to the target audience is essential to an effective campaign. If your target is a low income group of center city residents, radio and television may be the most effective media since they are usually the ones with the most exposure in that sector of the population. Newspapers, on the other hand, may be more effective for reaching the business and higher income target populations. The middle income population usually receives exposure from all media.

- 5) Evaluation - Include in your planning a method of evaluating the impact of the campaign. Identify appropriate measures of the problem and collect before and after data so that the impact of your campaign can be estimated.

Public education should involve all aspects of the arson task force. It is important to review existing data in planning the campaign, so that resources are properly assigned to problem areas in your community. Part of the task force effort should include data collection and analysis and that information can be very helpful in choosing public education objectives and estimating the impact of a campaign.

Planning Example

Careful consideration of your problem is necessary to ensure that your target population receives the desired message. One example of a unique approach that Detroit used for combatting school fires should illustrate the range of approaches to be considered.

After analyzing its fire data, the Detroit Fire Department found that intentionally set fires in schools were a serious problem. To combat school fires, the fire department, with the cooperation of school officials, identified those students recognized as leaders. These student leaders were invited to attend arson public education training sessions with the fire department. The leaders then carried the message back to their peers. There was an immediate decline in the frequency of fires and false alarms in the schools. The decline continued and such incidents are ... longer a major problem.

A similar approach was used in a rural community in the South experiencing problems with wildland fires. Community leaders were identified, informed about the arson problem, requested to contact their neighbors, and the leaders carried the impetus of the effort from there. Again, the approach proved successful.

4. Public Education Strategies for Informing and Increasing Awareness

Begin by developing a slogan and a symbol for your program. Your slogan and symbol should be used throughout your public education campaign so that the public can easily identify your program. Two examples of successful slogans are:

- "Burn An Arsonist for Cold Cash" (Dallas)
- "Arrest Arson" (Seattle)

As an example of a symbol, Seattle held a contest to name the "arson rat," and "Sinder Sid" was chosen. (Due to the contest and the fact that "Stop Sinder Sid" t-shirts were printed and sold, a large portion of the juvenile population was made aware of arson.)

There are several methods for informing the public and making them aware of the arson problem. You should consider the following for your campaign:

News Media (TV, radio and press)

Fires are news and arson is "better" news. Activities of the task force aimed at combatting arson should also be thought of as news events and publicized through press releases and, where appropriate, press conferences. An initial press conference should be held announcing the formation of your arson task force. An arson public education effort should also assist media coverage of fires and arson investigations.

Advertising Campaign

Using your anti-arson slogan, possibly in conjunction with an awards program, plan a community advertising campaign to increase public awareness. Consider the use of:



4.

- Public Service Announcements (PSA) on local radio and television stations
- Signs, billboards and posters - on buses, at burnt buildings, at schools, on firefighting equipment, etc.
- Newspaper ads
- Throwaway flyers at grocery stores, in bank statements, in utility bills, etc.
- Bumper stickers

Speakers Bureau

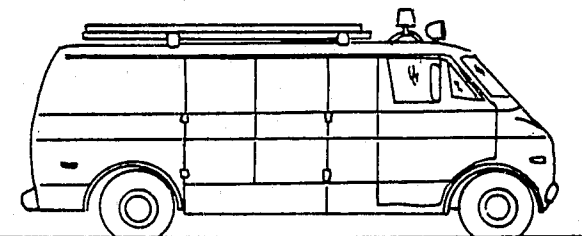
The task force should offer speakers on arson topics to local civic groups, business meetings, and other community gatherings.

School Programs

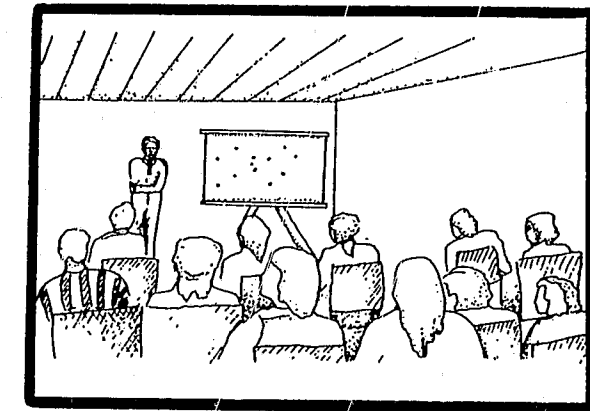
As an education effort on arson and fire make presentations at local schools. Separate attention should be given to educating teachers about arson.

Arson Van

Exploit the publicity value of an arson van and/or a trained arson investigation unit.



5.



Prosecution Outreach

Part of your program should be aimed at attorneys, prosecutors, and judges to increase their awareness of the arson problem.

The above suggestions are merely a starting point. An excellent discussion of the operational steps involved in conducting a campaign can be found in the "Arson News Media Kit" by the Hartford Insurance Company. This media kit includes sample news releases, posters, and public service announcements. Further information is available at the U. S. Fire Administration Booth.

5. Public Education Strategies for Involving The Public

In addition to informing the public, your campaign should solicit their help in combatting arson. In practice these two objectives will blend together in the elements of your campaign. Suggested strategies for public involvement include:

Hotline Program

This program gives the public access to the agencies responsible for arson investigation and encourages the public to submit information about recent arson cases that may lead to an arrest. It is usually used in conjunction with an awards program (see below) and can provide the central theme to your advertising campaign.

Awards Program

This program offers a financial incentive for arson tips (rewards) and awards for good citizenship that assists arson control. (See the kit on an Arson Tipster Program.)

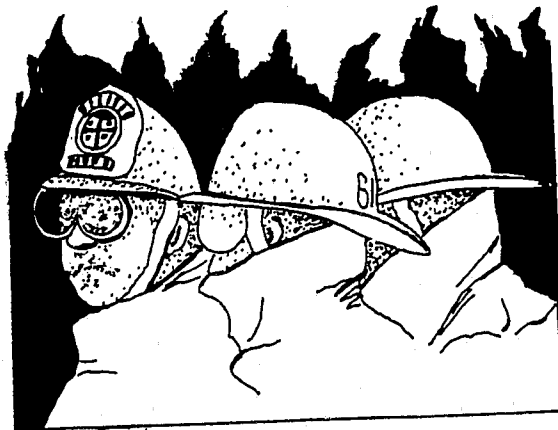


Lobbying Opportunities

Actively solicit expressions of public interest on arson related matters such as the need for improved laws, increased staffing, or better training. Another possibility is asking interested civic groups to contribute to the purchase of arson equipment such as a sniffer for detecting accelerants.

Neighborhood Arson Watch

In neighborhoods experiencing a high rate of arson, consider organizing residents to provide neighborhood surveillance and note suspicious circumstances.



6. Specific Examples From Successful Public Education Campaigns

Press Conferences

A strategy used in San Francisco is to have the fire chief call a press/news conference each time there is a major arson fire. The chief explains the property loss and human suffering caused by the fire and the impact on the community. The press conference is supported by press releases containing the latest arson statistics—number of incidents to date, total dollar loss, injury rate, etc.

6.

**your City of Phoenix Arson Task Force
has determined this fire was caused by**

ARSON

\$5,000 award fund

**Awards are being offered from a \$5,000
fund by the Independent Insurance
Agents of Phoenix for information
leading to the arrest and criminal
conviction of person(s) responsible
for this fire!**

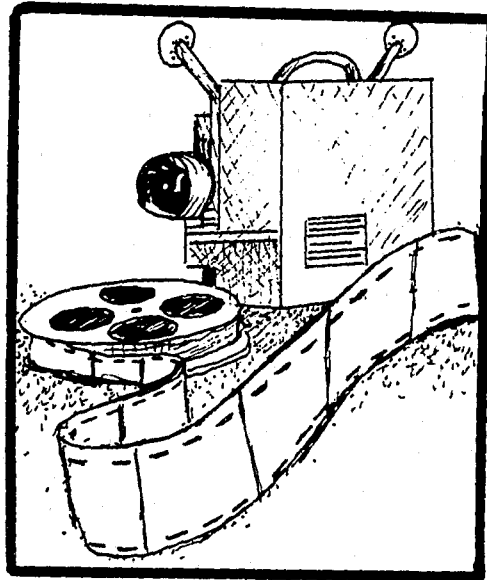
**CALL
ARSON WATCH**

Phone

26-Arson
262-7766

"Code Red" Program

The Seattle Fire Department had great success with this program of fire and arson education. When a residential fire occurs, they hold a fire awareness or fire prevention meeting in the local neighborhood. The meeting, to be effective, must be held as soon after their neighbor's fire as possible—the next day or evening is best. The meeting would be held at a volunteered residence and the combat fire company would attend the meeting. The fire truck would be there with lights and sirens—hence the name "Code Red." (The fire company is on duty and available by radio.) The meeting is moderated by a fire department official and following a discussion of the recent fire by the responding company (the use of fire service technical jargon is encouraged) a short fire prevention presentation is made. In some cases, the fire scene is visited depending on the nature of the fire. If arson is suspected some general discussion of the arson problem is made without discussing the specifics of the present case.



Awareness Week

Work with the mayor and declare an "Arson Awareness Week." During this week intensify your public education campaign to ensure public awareness of arson and of the city's campaign to control arson. Part of the prevention value of public education occurs when potential arsonists are reached with the news that arson crimes are being extensively investigated and prosecuted.

7. Some Final Thoughts

The importance of public education campaigns cannot be overemphasized. Recognize also, that like coordination, there is usually a public education aspect to all the activities of the task force. Good internal task force communications are necessary so that all program elements have input into public education planning.

Media cooperation is an intrinsic part of successful public education campaigns. Good media relations depend on having an identified source for arson news and a working relationship with media people. See the section, "Becoming the News Source on Arson," in Hartford Insurance's "Arson News Media Kit."

Additional Information

See the U.S. Fire Administration's, "Arson Resource Directory" for additional information and be sure to get a copy of Hartford Insurance's "Arson News Media Kit."

**Juvenile
Counseling
Programs**



ANTI-ARSON



JUVENILE COUNSELING PROGRAMS

1. Some Background On Juvenile Firesetters And Counseling
2. Approaches To Juvenile Counseling
3. Starting A Juvenile Counseling Program
4. Some Final Thoughts

COUNSELING THE JUVENILE FIRESETTER: THE FIREFIGHTER AS COUNSELOR

1. Some Background on Juvenile Firesetters and Counseling

Kids and Fire

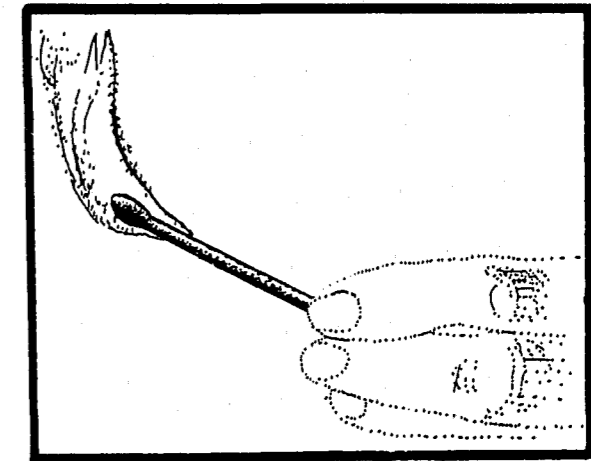
Not all kids who set fires are juvenile delinquents; not all of them have serious "mental problems." But some are, and some do. For some, setting a fire is an expression of a natural curiosity about fire; for others, it is a malicious, deliberately destructive, act.

You probably know both kinds of kids in your own community. And maybe you have wished that you could do something to help—not only to prevent juvenile-set fires in the first place, but to straighten out those kids who do it. But what exactly can you do? If you get involved with the juvenile, will you be making trouble for yourself with the parents? And would it do any good, anyway?

Two Groups

First, let's look at the juvenile fire-setter. Kids who set fires can be roughly divided into two groups. The two groups generally differ as to the motive, method, and meaning of the firesetting act.

The first group primarily involves "curiosity" firesetters. Their fires characteristically are set in or near their own homes, by the child acting alone, and usually using matches, candles, or other simple devices. If the fire gets out of control, the child usually panics, tries to extinguish the blaze, and calls for help. Of course, a fire set by a young child can be just as devastating as any other fire, but this is not the "curiosity" firesetter's intent. Often, the child is simply ignorant of the effects of fire and does not foresee the consequences.



The other group of juveniles may include some "curiosity" types, but this is not the dominant motivating factor. The firesetters in this group begin to look more like adult firesetters: their motives may be revenge or excitement; they may employ means more sophisticated than the matches and candles of younger children; and the fires more often are set away from home, on other people's property. Frequently, among teenagers, the fires are set by a pair or a group: peer pressure and social status in the teenage group become important motivating factors. By this age, also, serious psychological/emotional problems may be manifested in firesetting behavior.

How Can These Kids Be Helped?

Clearly, the eight year old who has set a fire in the backyard to "see what it will do" requires a different kind of help than the gang of 16 year olds which ignites gasoline poured all over the school principal's office because its members "hate school." In the first case, some basic fire education and an opportunity to learn about fire in a safe and supervised setting may be all that is required to satisfy the child's natural curiosity and to instill responsible fire-related behavior.

In the second case, however, simple education isn't going to be of much use because the firesetting here is not an end in itself but rather an expression of a deeper problem. The firesetting thus can be viewed as symptom or indicator of some other problem which the juvenile is experiencing. It is this underlying problem (or problems) which must be addressed if real help is to be given.

The Firefighter As Counselor

But what can be done? Firefighters are not social workers or psychiatrists! That's true, and they should not be expected to take on the responsibilities of these trained professionals. Yet the firefighter is uniquely suited to working with young people and well may be the greatest untapped community resource for helping kids in trouble. The Dallas Fire Department/Police Department Coordinated Counselor Program says this of its firefighters:

Firefighters . . . are stable, mature, community oriented family men and women with a strong concern for the well-being of young people. There is already a long-standing relationship between firefighters and kids due to the toy repair programs, work with physically handicapped, and mentally retarded, as well as the fire prevention programs presented in schools. Many firefighters regularly work with Boy Scouts, church groups, and young people's civic activities. All of these many advantages are pre-existent, plus the fact that firefighters are easily accessible, being located in all areas of the city. . .



2. Approaches to Juvenile Counseling

Existing Programs

Several communities across the country already have developed and are operating programs specifically aimed at counseling the juvenile firesetter, among them: Los Angeles County, California; Mesa, Arizona; Upper Arlington, Ohio; and Seattle, Washington. And Dallas, Texas uses firefighter-counselors to work with juvenile first offenders of all types—including those whose offenses are not fire-related. All of these communities report that the results are well worth the effort in preventing fires and helping juveniles.

A Counseling Program: What You Can Do

To give you some ideas about what can be done to help kids in trouble, let's look briefly at the five existing programs which were mentioned earlier.

1) Los Angeles County, California (population 2,800,000*)

The Los Angeles County Fire Department, under a grant from the U.S. Fire Administration and with the assistance of several clinical psychologists, has written a very detailed training manual for interviewing and counseling juvenile firesetters under seven years of age. Basically, it teaches fire service personnel:

- How to recognize problems in young children which may lead to recurrent firesetting.
- How to interview firesetting youngsters and their families.
- Methods and strategies for educating "curiosity" firesetters and their families.
- How to identify children who need to be referred to other agencies.
- Ways to refer children and their families for professional health assistance.

Los Angeles' program combined with an in-school education effort, has reduced the number of incidents of juvenile firesetting from 169 to 20 in one year. The Los Angeles program, packaged by USFA, has been adopted by a number of local fire departments in Washington, Tennessee, Oregon, Georgia, and other states.

*All population figures are from the 1970 Census and latest available estimates.

2) Mesa, Arizona (population 62,583)

Mesa's program deals primarily with younger juveniles who are first offenders. It provides a brief, structured, educationally-oriented counseling service. Usually the juvenile visits the firehouse once a week for three weeks.

During the first visit, the Fire Prevention Officer interviews the parents, the child, and then the parents and child together. At this time, standardized information about the child, and the family and home situation is collected, using forms developed for the program. It is explained to the parents that if the child shows signs of needing professional counseling or treatment that he or she will be referred to appropriate professionals for consultation. Homework, designed to raise the child's fire-consciousness, is assigned.

On the second visit, the Officer has a short discussion of the previous week's activities with both the parents and child. The Officer checks the child's homework and shows a slide presentation, "Fire, Friend or Foe?". The child is assigned the homework of making a fire prevention poster to be prominently placed in the school or other community location.



At the final meeting, the child "graduates," receiving an official certificate and a photograph of him/herself with the Fire Chief and Fire Prevention Officer. If the child is not ready to graduate, the parents will have been notified that additional help is recommended. No referrals are made without the parents' consent.

The program has been well publicized locally and often parents will contact the Fire Prevention Officer when they become worried about their child's fire-related behavior, even before the child has actually gotten into trouble. Thus the program serves a preventative as well as a treatment function.

The Mesa program was developed with the assistance of a certified social worker who is available to the program on a consulting basis.

3) Upper Arlington, Ohio
(population 38,600)

Before the present program was begun in 1963, firefighters would talk with juvenile firesetters, but usually in an authoritarian, punitive way designed to "put the fear of the Lord" (or, at least, of the fire department!) into the kids. The results showed that this approach clearly was not having the desired effect.

The new program emphasizes understanding and helping, and takes a three-step approach:

- Fire Prevention Bureau Interviews - The parents and child are interviewed separately and together. Information on the family and home life is collected. One or more talks are held with the child about his or her perceptions of the firesetting incident, and with the child and parents about the consequences of the firesetting.
- Medical Examination - Some of the juveniles are also referred to their family physician for medical examination.
- Psychological Counseling - The child and/or the parents may be referred for mental health assistance.

The program reports a repeater rate of only 3% (from a total of 360 juveniles in the program to date).

The Upper Arlington program also includes a vigorous in-school educational program, starting at the pre-school level.



4) Seattle, Washington
(population 490,000)

The program in Seattle takes a two-pronged approach: publicity and referral. Publicity is aided by professional athletes from the city's football, baseball, and soccer teams who donate their appearances in radio and television public service announcements aimed at reducing youthful arson. During Arson Week, they also appear along with fire department personnel, in school areas where arson is prevalent.

The referral part of the program makes use of a city-wide professional family counseling organization. The referral service is publicized in local newspapers and parents whose children have a firesetting problem are asked to call the fire department's arson unit. The arson unit screens all calls and, where appropriate, refers the family to the counseling service. The counseling organization reports a 95% success rate with its young firesetting clients.

5) Dallas, Texas
(population 859,000)

Dallas' program differs from the others discussed here in that it is not limited to juveniles whose offense is firesetting. Rather, it includes young first offenders who have been caught committing a variety of illegal acts.

The firefighter-counselors work as part of the Youth Service Program, which was established by the Police Department. It was designed to provide both immediate direct treatment by a staff of professional counselors, and longer term follow-up assistance to the juvenile.

It is in the follow-up stage that the firefighters—on a volunteer basis—become involved. The usual procedure is for a firefighter-counselor to be assigned one or two juvenile offenders, with whom he or she meets individually on a weekly basis at the fire station. The Youth Service Program provides professional training to the firefighter-counselors.

During their hour together, the firefighter and the youth may engage in some activity, work on the child's school or counseling homework, or just sit and talk. The important thing is that the firefighter takes a real interest in the young person as an individual: his or her ideas, problems, goals, and plans. In a sense, this program is similar in emphasis to the national Big Brother and Big Sister programs in which the young person gains an adult friend who can be counted on to be there and to listen.

The Dallas firefighter-counselors also keep records on the juveniles assigned to them, and coordinate with the Youth Service Program staff.



Some Common Elements

The five programs just discussed reflect a unique approach to dealing with juveniles. As different as these programs are, however, there are some similarities—some "common denominators." You might want to consider these in designing and implementing a juvenile counseling program in your community.

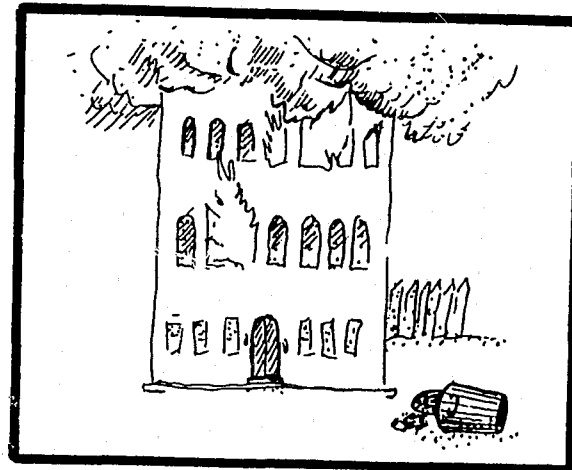
- The firefighter-counselor's role is that of helper. The firefighter-counselor is there to work with the youngster; not to lecture, criticize, instill fear, punish, or order him or her around.
- The firefighter-counselor does not do more than he or she is comfortable doing. The firefighter serves as an interested adult—someone the youngster can talk to, do things with, look up to. The counseling and helping which a firefighter does is not meant to take the place of professional mental health care, when that is what is required.
- The juvenile is treated as an individual. The programs are not "force fed" to each young person but rather are flexible enough to allow for the individual differences of both the juvenile and the firefighter. Actual counseling sessions are done on a one-to-one basis: one kid, one firefighter.
- Counseling sessions are held at the fire house. Most children are, from an early age, curious about firehouses and the work of firefighters. The fire house therefore, is apt to be an inherently interesting place to young persons. Further, it is one which probably does not have bad associations in their minds, as some other places in the community may have—such as the school, court room, probation office, and even the home.

- Cooperation of others. You don't have to do it all alone. The programs mentioned here make use of a wide range of other people and groups to help plan and carry out their activities.
- Publicity. All of the programs have high visibility in their communities. People know that the program is out there, know why and what it is trying to accomplish, and know how to gain access to it when they need it.

What You Can't Do

Knowing what firefighters can't do is just as important to the success of a program as knowing what can be done. The role of firefighter-counselors is definitely limited: they are not expected to take the place of professional psychologists, counselors, or psychiatrists when dealing with severely disturbed children; they are not expected to be police officers or judges when confronted with chronic law-breakers.

In situations such as these, you need to do two things: know your own and your program's limitations; know your community's resources for dealing with troubled youths, and put in place a mechanism for referring those juveniles on whom you feel that any further educational or counseling efforts on your part are going to be wasted.



6.

The referral process is a critical part of any counselor's job. Knowing when and how to do it, and being aware of the full range of services available in your community, are particularly important to the firefighter-counselor.

3. Starting A Juvenile Counseling Program

The following will serve as a brief outline of the major steps in developing and implementing a juvenile counseling program. Doubtlessly, you can think of many additional things which would need to be done in your particular situation. The need for careful and thorough preplanning cannot be over emphasized!

- 1) Put someone in charge. You need one person who can represent the juvenile counseling program. This becomes particularly important when you take your ideas into the community—community leaders need to have a clear line of communication to and from your program.
- 2) Decide the objectives of your program. Know exactly what you are trying to accomplish; state your objectives in terms of measurable results, such as: "reduce the incidence of juvenile-set fires," "reduce the rate of recidivism among juvenile firesetters." NOT: "help kids," "set a good example."



7.

- 3) Define the scope of your program. Will you work with juvenile firesetters only or with any youths referred to you? What ages? Girls as well as boys? Non-offenders (haven't been in trouble but parents are worried), first offenders, multiple offenders? How many kids are there in the community right now who are potential users of your program? (It may take some digging on your part to get a good answer to this question!) How often will you see each youngster, and for how long a time period? (The counseling programs reviewed here range from three weeks to six months.) How will you decide—and who will decide—when a youngster has been in the program long enough? What about "drop outs"? What about extensions beyond the usual time span of the program? You also need to define the emphasis of your program: is it to have a structured, educational approach or will it be more flexible and "free flowing"? Will there be pre-planned activities for the firefighter-counselor and the youngster, or will they spend their time together just talking?
- 4) Get community support. Talk with the mayor, the city government, the police chief, the directors of social service agencies, the administrators of city youth programs—everyone who is influential in your community. Before approaching these community leaders, spend some time getting together the facts and figures on the current status of the juvenile arson problem in your community. Depending on the state of past record keeping, this may or may not be a straightforward task. You may want to prepare simple charts and diagrams to accompany your presentation. If the data just aren't there, say so right up front—and make improved data collection an integral part of your proposed program.

5) Tie in with existing local programs, if feasible. Perhaps your people can augment the professional counseling staff of an existing youth program, as is the case of the fire department counselors in Dallas. Or perhaps the staff of a community mental health center (public or private) can advise and assist your program efforts. Define the formal and informal structural relationships your program will have with the existing organization.



6) Develop a referral system. Sooner or later, you will get a young person in your counseling program that you just can't handle. Let's face it: some kids need a lot more than just an understanding adult to straighten them out. When you come up against this situation it is important that you know where and how to seek help for the youngster. This means knowing the full range of your community's resources for dealing with troubled kids (school counselors; community mental health agencies; private psychologists, counselors, and psychiatrists; storefront and walk-in counseling centers; family doctors; etc.). It also means knowing something about their individual referral policies and procedures (including the possible need for parental consent and other legal requirements).

And it means knowing how to make a referral. This can be a very touchy area with the young person and his or her family—especially if there already are problems in the family situation. Your common sense will go a long way in handling this sensitive situation, but the guidance of professional mental health workers who deal with this same problem in the course of their own work can be invaluable to you, especially when your program is just getting underway.

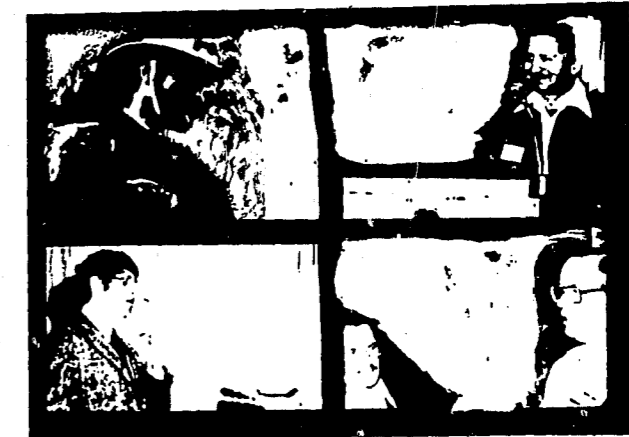
7) Formulate policies and procedures. After you have clarified the objectives and scope of your program and arranged a tie-in with an existing organization, it is time to set forth—in written form—the policies and procedures which you will follow to carry out the program. This need not be a lengthy, elaborate document, but it should be as thorough as you can make it at this stage of program development. The act of spelling out the guidelines for your program may, in itself, reveal areas where your planning needs more work. These initial policies and procedures can, of course, be modified as you gain experience in conducting your program.

8) Involve others. In addition to the community leaders mentioned above, there are other local people and groups which can be tapped to help plan, carry out, and fund your program. Who are they? Try:

- Parents
- Teachers
- School principals
- School counselors
- PTA organizations
- Scout leaders
- Church youth group leaders
- Camp directors
- YMCA/YWCA directors
- Probation officers
- Juvenile court judges
- Pediatricians
- "Hot line" and storefront counseling centers
- Mental health professionals
- Private foundations
- Federal agencies with juvenile programs
- And anyone else who works with juveniles

9) Determine which firefighters will participate. How many you need depends on your estimate of how many kids will be using your service. How many you get depends on who volunteers (and stays with the program once it is underway).

When recruiting volunteers, present the objectives of the program clearly, and the duties and responsibilities of the firefighter-counselor realistically. Staff persons from a community mental health agency—particularly if it is one with which you will have a future tie-in—can provide guidance in the selection process.



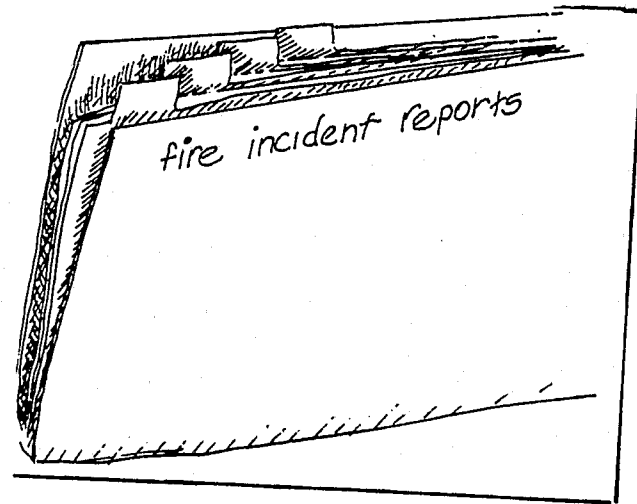
10) Get training. While you don't need an advanced degree in psychology to work with kids, you do need information about:

- Child development, and normal and abnormal juvenile behavior
- Establishing rapport with the juvenile and his or her family
- Interviewing techniques
- Listening skills
- Information gathering
- Referral process

A manual, "Interviewing and Counseling Juvenile Firesetters: The Child Under Seven Years of Age," covering these topics has been developed and is being distributed by the U.S. Fire Administration (see Additional Information, page 12). In addition a video tape entitled "Interviewing Juvenile Firesetters," has been developed for use in training workshops.

You should find that the above materials, plus the cooperation of local professionals, such as staff persons of a mental health agency, will provide excellent juvenile counseling training for your firefighters.

In field testing the manual and workshops, USFA found that professionals in the mental health field were interested in juvenile counseling and responded actively to the program. Be sure to contact local professionals—both for referrals and for training assistance.



11) Set up schedules. Decide where the counseling will take place. If it is to be at the firehouse, will it be during the firefighter's regular duty shift? Outside or inside? In a special room or any place the firefighter chooses? It is best to have only one juvenile in the fire house at a time. At first, you may have trouble setting schedules very far in advance, but as your "case load" stabilizes, you will be able to plan ahead on a more or less regular basis. Be sure that you have spelled out procedures for what the juvenile is to do if there is an alarm during the counseling session or if he or she arrives to find the firefighters out on a call. (The Dallas program, for example, instructs the child to go directly home.)

12) Keep good records. No one wants to get buried in paperwork, but it is essential that you build in recordkeeping procedures from the beginning of your program. Information kept specifically on fires known to have been set by juveniles, and on the firesetters themselves, can aid you in several ways:

- Facilitating the identification of future juvenile-set fires.
- Pinpointing types of individuals and groups who are likely targets of your educational efforts.

13) Publicize your program. One thing you really need to do—no matter how modest your program may be—is to get all of the publicity for it that you can. If your program is to be successful, you have to get out into the community and promote it, not just sit back and hope that some troubled youngster will drop by and ask for your help. How can you advertise?

- Giving you "feedback" on how the program is working and ideas on how it could be improved.
- Providing justification for the continuation of your program to the community and to present and potential funding sources.
- Providing needed data to any organization with which you have established a tie-in (police department, youth service program, mental health agency, etc.).
- Possibly furnishing data for studies (federal and otherwise) being done outside of your department.

- Radio and television "public service" announcements—they're free.
- Radio, television, and newspaper news or feature stories.
- Ads in newspapers—and don't overlook the shoppers' "throw away" papers, community weeklies, and other non-daily publications.
- Posters, especially in schools, teen centers, community service centers, social services offices, counseling centers. These could be made by the youngsters in your program, or as part of an existing in-school fire prevention program.
- Speakers—make your department's best speakers available to discuss your program with any interested group (PTAs, fraternal organizations, church groups, businesspersons clubs, etc.). Take the initiative and speak to the leaders of these groups personally; they will may become interested in inviting one of your people to address their group.

4. Some Final Thoughts

Offshoots

Most fire departments have some sort of program which they regularly take into the local schools. Your work with juveniles in the counseling program may give you some ideas on how to refurbish and improve your existing school program. Is your instruction suitable to the age group receiving it? Does it deal with those aspects of fire in which they are particularly interested? Is your school program reaching the kids who most need it? Could it be expanded into lower or higher grade levels? (The Upper Arlington program starts at the pre-school level.) Could you be making better use of visual aids—slides, films, flipcharts, transparencies, photographs, building models?

You don't have to limit your educational efforts to only the schools. What about:


- Day care centers
- Playgrounds: after school and summer programs
- YMCA/YWCA
- Church youth groups
- Summer camps
- Scouts
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters
- And anywhere else kids gather in groups!

Both your counseling program and your educational program—as well as the other community activities in which your department may be involved—will increase your visibility in the community. The more visible you are, the more likely you are to reach those kids who most need your help.

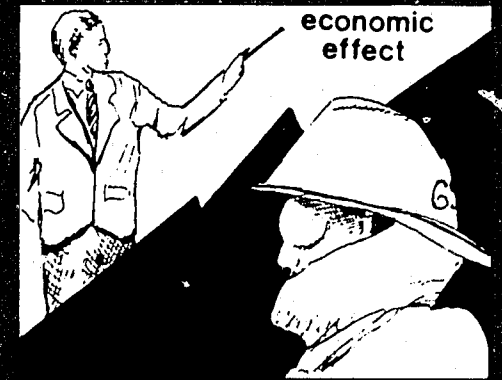


Additional Information

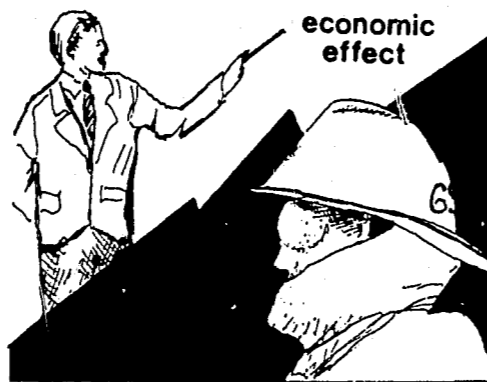
For further information on juvenile counseling see the U.S. Fire Administration's "Arson Resource Directory." To obtain copies of the manual "Interviewing and Counseling Juvenile Firesetters" or information on workshops, please contact:

 Office of Planning and Education
United States Fire Administration
Federal Emergency Management Agency
Washington, D.C. 20472

Management of Training Programs



ANTI-ARSON



MANAGEMENT OF TRAINING PROGRAMS

1. Design Your Training For Three Specific Groups
2. Structure Course for Target Audiences
3. Some Final Thoughts

Appendix - Course Outlines

COMPREHENSIVE ARSON TRAINING PROGRAM

1. Design Your Training For Three Specific Groups

Training is a fundamental to a successful arson detection and investigation program.

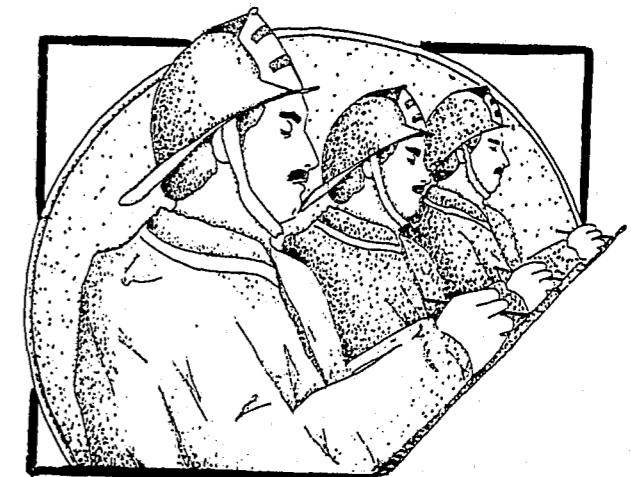
Because of local laws, budgetary constraints, and accessibility to state or national programs, the nature of arson training varies considerably across the nation. In many cases, arson investigators must satisfy local legal requirements.

Successful arson detection and investigation training programs have focused on three groups:

- Arson Investigators - responsible for arson investigation.
- Chief Suppression Officers - responsible for directing firefighting operations.
- Firefighters - all other firefighters.

By tailoring your arson training to each group, your program can provide the degree of expertise needed throughout the department. A well designed program will provide the needed training for effective arson detection and investigation and maximize the impact of limited training resources.

The Houston, Texas Fire Department has implemented this concept with great success as follows:



Arson Investigators

An intensive 472-hour program is required for all new investigative personnel. The program is approved by the Texas Commission of Law Enforcement Standards and Education, as well as by the Texas Commission of Fire Protection Personnel Standards and Education. Upon successful completion of this program, individuals are assigned to the arson bureau and are certified as peace officers and arson investigators.

Chief Suppression Officers

A 120-hour program is given to all chief suppression officers. This course is designed to give the suppression officers an insight into the arson problem, the difficulty in prosecution of arson cases, the recognition of fire causations, and the care and preservation of arson evidence.

Firefighters

A 12-hour program is given to all fire department personnel below the rank of chief officer. This program also is given to all recruits in the fire cadet training school. This course provides a basic introduction to arson detection and investigation.

Houston has found that since the time that these programs became operational, the arson bureau has received a tremendous amount of cooperation and assistance from the chief officers, as well as the firefighters, in the suppression division. As a result, the number of fires with unknown or undetermined origins has been reduced drastically, the fire scenes are being secured before the arson investigator arrives, and the care and preservation of evidence and chain of custody has been greatly improved.

2. Structure Course For Target Audiences

Arson detection and investigation should become an ongoing part of your training program. Course structure will have to be determined at the local level to be compatible with existing training programs and other local requirements. Depending on present practices, a separate course design for chief suppression officers and firefighters may not be needed. It also may be possible to reach firefighters as part of your regular, ongoing training sessions.

The following summarizes the general course requirements and should be useful as you design your own program.



2.

Arson Investigator Training

This should be an intensive, full-time course covering the most current and effective techniques of fire/arson investigation. It should include determination of fire origin, evidence collection and preservation, motivation of the fire setter, interviewing, interrogation, and providing testimony. The course should develop an in-depth understanding of the problems of arson detection and investigation and should satisfy all legal requirements of your jurisdiction for assignment to the arson squad.

The course length will vary depending on local requirements. The 472-hour Houston course, for example, includes the necessary material to become a peace officer in the state of Texas. The National Fire Academy offers an intensive course on fire/arson investigation that lasts approximately three weeks. The course outline and time allocations are presented in the Appendix.

Chief Suppression Officer Arson Training

This course should include an overview of the arson problem, the difficulties in prosecuting arson, a general discussion of arson investigation techniques, a strong emphasis on recognition of fire causation, and the care and preservation of arson evidence.

Again the course length can vary depending on how it is integrated into your program. As an example, the National Fire Academy offers a course in fire/arson detection lasting about a week that would be ideal for chief suppression officers. The course outline and time allocations are presented in the Appendix.

Firefighter Arson Training

Ideally, this should be a course which can be easily integrated into the training schedule of new recruits and can also serve as ongoing training for veteran firefighters. Its objective is to introduce the frontline firefighter to the arson problem and how to provide assistance in arson detection and investigation.

If circumstances permit, it would be useful to use the same course given the chief suppression officers. The Houston program, however, uses a twelve-hour course which is given to all new recruits in the fire cadet training school. As a guide the detailed course outline and time allocations are presented in the Appendix.

3. Some Final Thoughts

In your planning, don't overlook the value of continuing updates in arson training. Short courses reinforce previous information and provide training on the latest equipment and new technology.

Additional Information

For additional information on training and course structure, see the U.S. Fire Administration's "Arson Resource Directory." For information on the National Fire Academy's programs and admission procedures, write:

Arson Program Manager
National Fire Academy
Route 1, Box 10A
Emmitsburg, Maryland 21727



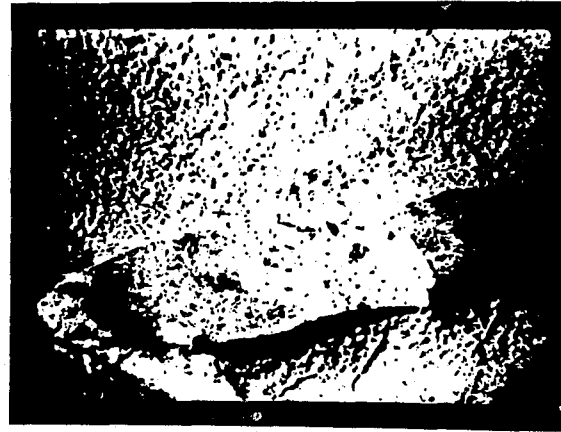
3.

APPENDIX

National Fire Academy Training Course

Fire/Arson Investigation

- 1) Introduction (2 hours)
- 2) Behavior of Fire (2 hours)
- 3) Building Construction and Fire Investigation (2 hours)
- 4) Determining Point of Origin (2 hours)
- 5) Accidental Fire Causes (6 hours)
- 6) Incendiary Fire Causes (6 hours)
- 7) Basics of Insurance and the Fire Investigator (1 hour)
- 8) Motivation of the Firesetter (4 hours)
- 9) Photography (1 hour)
- 10) Sketching (1 hour)
- 11) Test Number 1 (1 hour)
- 12) Fire Scene Investigation (4 hours)
- 13) Non-Residential Rural Fires (4 hours)
- 14) Wildland Fires (1 hour)
- 15) Vehicle Fires (2 hours)
- 16) Fatal Fires (2 hours)
- 17) Explosives and Explosions (4 hours)
- 18) Review of Test Number 1 and Review of First Week of Course (2 hours)
- 19) Incendiary Devices (2 hours)
- 20) Legal Aspects (6 hours)
- 21) Test Number 2 (1 hour)
- 22) Interviews and Interrogations (3 hours)
- 23) Evidence Collection and Preservation, Forensic Laboratory Service and Laboratory Equipment (2 hours)
- 24) Investigation Field Notes and Review of Report Writing (1 hour)
- 25) Explanation of On-Scene Activities (1 hour)
- 26) Review of Test Number 2 and Review of Course (4 hours)
- 27) On-Scene Application-Burning of Structure(s) (4 hours)
- 28) On-Scene Application-Scene Investigations (4 hours)
- 29) Developing Team Reports (4 hours)
- 30) Critique of Scene Activities and Team Reports (4 hours)
- 31) Final Examination (4 hours)



National Fire Academy Training Course

Fire/Arson Detection

- 1) Course Introduction (1 hour)
- 2) Behavior of Fire (1 hour)
- 3) Building Construction and Fire Scene Examinations (1 hour)
- 4) Motivation of the Firesetter (2 hours)
- 5) Determining Point of Origin (2 hours)
- 6) Accidental Fire Causes (4 hours)
- 7) Incendiary Fires and Fire Causes (2 hours)
- 8) Test 1 (1 hour)
- 9) Fatal Fires (1 hour)
- 10) Vehicle Fires (2 hours)
- 11) Evidence Collection and Preservation (1 hour)
- 12) Bomb Scene Procedures (1 hour)
- 13) Legal Aspects (1 hour)
- 14) Final Exam (1 hour)



Houston Fire Department
Arson Detection Training Course
For Firefighters

1) The Arson Problem (1 hour)

- Magnitude of the problem on the national and local level
- The effect of arson on the economy
- Loss of life and injury from arson
- Arson's effect on insurance rates
- Remedies and controls for arson
- Danger to the firefighters combatting arson and kindred crimes

2) Firefighter's Responsibility In The Detection of Arson (2 hours)

- Responsibility of preliminary investigation to determine origin and cause
- Material used in setting the fire
- Surveying the premises
- Use of photographs and sketches
- Means of entry for firefighters
- Burn patterns
- Fire behavior in explosions
- Inventory of contents, removal from the scene
- Fingerprints, footprints, tireprints
- Absence of normal fire causes (i.e., electrical, heating, etc.)
- Protecting the fire scene
- Witnesses at the scene
- Proving and corroborating the fire cause and origin
- Pitfalls for the firefighter to avoid
- Testifying in court
- Fire officer reports

3) Circumstantial Evidence In Arson Cases (2 hours)

- Evidence synonymous with facts
- Direct evidence
- Circumstantial evidence; relation to motive
- Declarations or facts indicative of guilt
- Preparation for commission of a crime
- Possession of fruits of a crime
- Landmark cases on circumstantial evidence
- Sufficiency of evidence
- Establishing corpus delicti through circumstantial evidence

4) Determining The Cause And Origin of Fire (2 hours)

- Point of origin
- Searching the fire scene for cause and origin
- Elements needed to cause a fire
- Vertical spread of fires
- Horizontal spread of fires
- Characteristics of fire spread in various structures
- Conduction, convection, radiation, flashover
- Multiple fires where cause is accidental

5) Bombings and Explosions (2 hours)

- Difference between flash fire, explosion and detonation
- Prohibited explosives
- Flammable gas explosions and effect on structures
- Improvised incendiary explosives and detonation
- Electric and non-electric triggering devices
- Blasting agents

6) Law of Arson, Criminal Mischief, and Other Property Damage Or Destruction (1 hour)

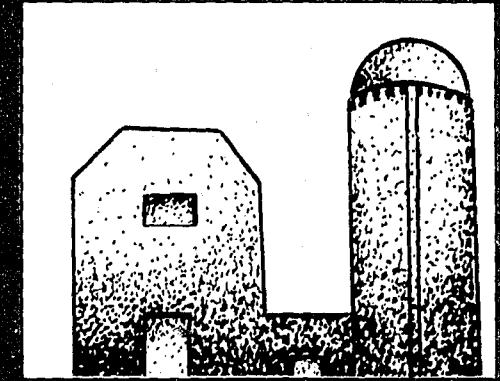
- Definition of arson
- Elements of the crime
- Corpus Delicti
- Definitions: house, intent, statute of limitations, punishments, criminal attempt, criminal instrument, disorderly conduct
- False alarms
- Chemical weapons

7) Arson Investigation (2 hours)

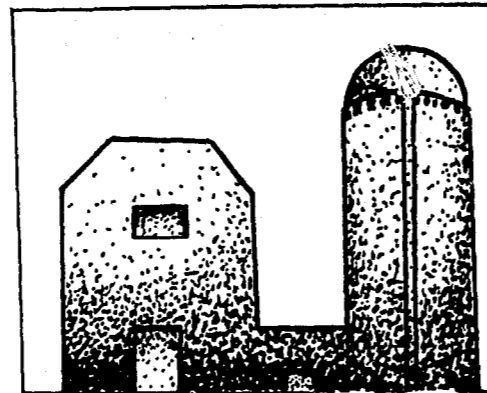
- Searching the fire scene
- Collecting evidence
- Polygraph and its use in arson
- Autopsy and the pathologist
- Interviewing witnesses
- Taking affidavits
- Interrogating suspects and taking confessions
- Report writing
- Presenting the case to the District Attorney

TOTAL CLASS TIME: 12 hours

**Rural and Small
Community
Programs**



ANTI-ARSON



RURAL ARSON PROGRAMS

1. Get Organized
2. Begin By Identifying Interested Jurisdictions
3. Decide On The Appropriate Task Force Group
4. Begin Organizing Your Task Force
5. Key Items For Action
6. Some Final Thoughts

1. Get Organized

The rural arson problem is different from the urban case in two major ways: 1) the types of arson fires differ, and 2) the level of available resources is significantly reduced. In the rural environment, arson fires frequently involve wildlands and crops in addition to involving dwelling units and other buildings. Usually fire protection in rural areas is provided by volunteer fire departments with very limited resources.

The critical need in attacking rural arson is obtaining the needed resources for addressing the problem. The arson task force approach is very useful, both in providing a mechanism for communities to pool their resources and in coordinating a common attack against arson.

A good way of increasing resources is to increase the number of people actively involved in task force projects. All appropriate elements of each community must be represented on the task force. For example, each community's fire department should have a representative on the task force.



Arson Detection and Investigation

Most rural fire and police departments lack the resources to conduct extensive arson investigations. The best approach is to concentrate on developing arson detection skills locally and then establish liaison with state agencies for conducting arson investigations.

Public Education

The value of public awareness in reducing the frequency of arson incidents is well established. The efforts of the arson task force can provide the base for developing an effective arson prevention education campaign.

Arson Data

Accurate data defining the arson problem is an important tool in managing arson prevention and control activities—particularly when resources are limited. The task force can develop common formats for data collection and develop a data system locally or interface with a state or regional system.

2. Decide On The Appropriate Task Force Group

After some initial inquiry it should be possible to identify the appropriate membership for your task force. The members will pool their resources and work together to combat arson. Several grouping options are possible:

Metro Arson Task Force

A grouping of rural or suburban communities bordering large cities. In this case they coordinate their arson efforts with the large city.

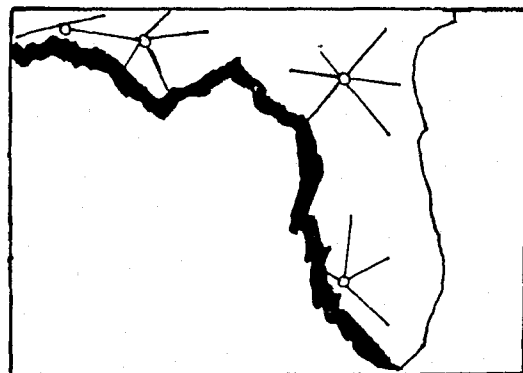
County Arson Task Force

A grouping of all rural or suburban jurisdictions within a county. In this case they utilize the existing government structure to combat arson.

Regional Arson Task Forces

An arbitrary grouping of interested jurisdictions.

Once it appears clear which situation applies in your case, hold an initial meeting of selected representatives from all potential jurisdictions. In some cases, task force organization may be possible at this stage, but it may be necessary to form an advance committee to visit the individual jurisdictions. The advance committee can explain the task force concept, arrange for an official commitment from each jurisdiction, and then schedule a task force organization meeting.



2.

3. Identify Interested Jurisdictions

The first step is to identify jurisdictions with an interest in joining forces against arson. In many rural areas, fire protection is handled by volunteer fire departments and perhaps several units are interested in combining efforts and developing an arson program. In this initial stage, consider the following four factors in evaluating potential partners:

- 1) Geography - ease of sharing program elements
- 2) Government - common political interests
- 3) Resources - availability
- 4) Enthusiasm - degree of interest

These four factors should be considered in connection with a potential arson program for the combined jurisdictions. The most important aspects of such a program would be improving local skills in arson detection, improving police and fire skills in arson investigation, and conducting a public education campaign against arson in your joined communities. It is impossible to give precise guidelines on evaluating potential partners—the essential thing is to have a practical, working situation.

The rural arson task force has proved useful in several places. Kings County, Washington has an active program working in concert with Seattle's Arson Task Force.

In Florida, the Pinellas County Arson Co-op (PARCO) was formed by four fire departments in 1973. The program has expanded to include several counties and the program has been very successful. PARCO holds an annual Fire and Arson Training Conference and succeeded in having appointed a regional State's Attorney for arson prosecution.

In Bloomington, Minnesota, the 140-member department is all volunteer. Their program emphasizes training firefighters in detection and preservation of incendiary evidence. When arson is suspected, a paid arson investigator is notified and the fire scene maintained until his arrival.

4. Begin Organizing Your Task Force

The steps in organizing your task force are the same as for a Municipal Arson Task Force:

- 1) Determine Structure and Areas of Responsibility
 - Who should be involved and their areas of interest
- 2) Obtain Commitment from Top People

- Use as talking points:

Need - arson is a local problem

Complete Solution - both prevention and control activities are necessary

Effectiveness - arson task forces work; it is worthwhile to pool resources to develop a local program



3.



- 3) Get Specific Person Assigned from Each Group

- 4) Organize Task Force

- Form working groups for each major problem area

These steps follow the kit on municipal task forces. The major difference is that the appropriate interest groups for each community or jurisdiction in the task force will have to be involved (for example, a representative of the fire department from each jurisdiction will be involved in the task force).

5. Key Items for Action

Initial areas for task force action, after organizing, are as follows:

• Arson Detection

It is very important that local fire protection units receive training in arson detection. Depending on your task force size and availability of state training, you may not need to develop your own training courses. If you are able to utilize a state training program, be sure that rural fires are covered in the curriculum.

• Arson Investigation

Having established a credible local capability in arson detection, most rural task forces will have to rely on a state agency for in-depth arson investigations. It's possible that another regional source for investigation assistance may be available such as a nearby city or county arson squad.

In either case, you will need to develop standard operating procedures for notifying the agency of your need and facilitating your cooperation with the investigation.

• Public Education

The need to inform the general public in your jurisdictions and to involve them in arson prevention and control activities cannot be overemphasized. Develop a program slogan and symbol and use them in a public education campaign. Some ideas for getting public attention are:



News media

- fire is news, arson is "better" news
- publicize all arson prevention and control activity as news events

Advertising (using your slogan and symbol)

- signs, billboards, and posters
- newspaper ads
- throwaway flyers at grocery stores, in bank statements, in utility bills, etc.

School programs

- visit local schools with programs for both teachers and students

Speakers bureau

- provide speakers for local meetings

(See also the kit on public education.)

• Data

Begin systematically gathering data on local fires and arson. In many cases, rural task forces may lack resources for local processing of data, but it should be reported to the state, on standard forms, for incorporation into the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS).

Data collection is helpful in defining the specifics of your local arson problem. At the local level, manual analysis can begin to show patterns and guide responses to the fire problem in general. More sophisticated analyses of local data should be available from the state.

6. Some Final Thoughts

Always contact the state fire marshal's office and any local county fire marshal or fire coordinator for possible assistance. These offices may know of other local groups interested in arson and they may be able to provide direct technical assistance for your efforts.

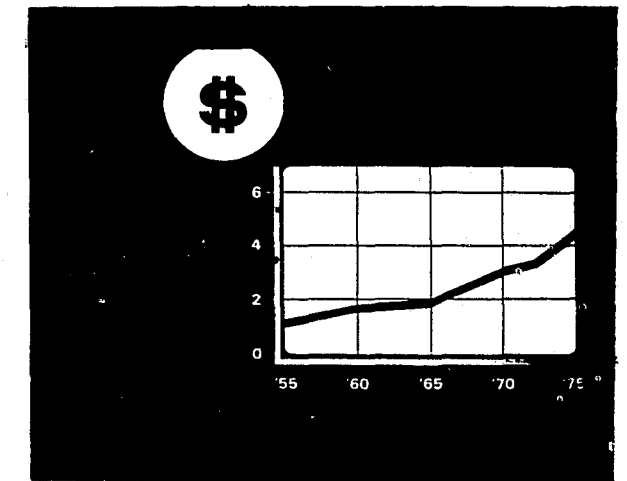
Choosing the right size for your task force may be a problem. Since each jurisdiction must have representatives from interested groups (fire department, police department, etc.) the number of jurisdictions should be as small as is consistent with forming a sufficient pool of resources. In actuality, even a small volunteer fire department can adopt some anti-arson measures, so action should not be postponed indefinitely while a task force is organizing.

Organization problems are simpler if the county task force approach can be used, since the existing county government structure can be utilized.

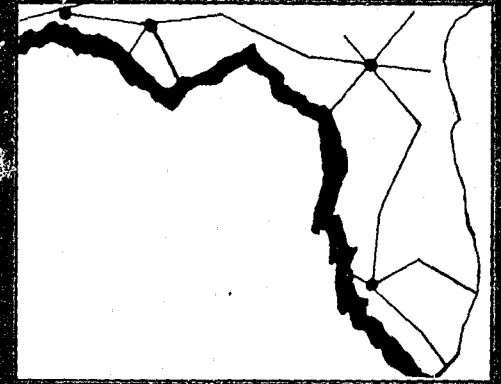
Additional Information

For additional information on rural arson task forces, see the U.S. Fire Administration's "Arson Resource Directory." Also the U.S. Fire Administration has a program of technical assistance for Arson Task Forces that would be helpful in starting your program. Write to:

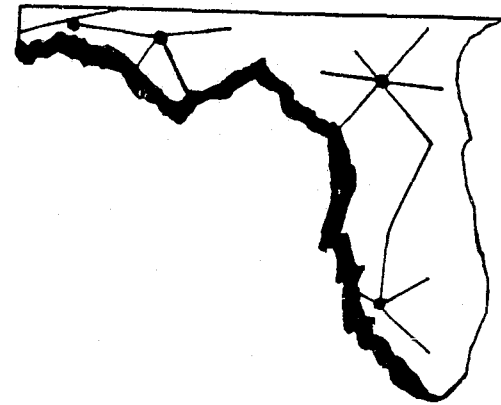
Office of Planning and Education
U.S. Fire Administration
Federal Emergency
Management Agency
Washington, D.C. 20472



**State
Task
Forces**



ANTI-ARSON



STATE TASK FORCES

1. Define Task Force Responsibilities
 2. Determine Task Force Membership
 3. Obtain Commitment For A Specific Person
 4. Hold Initial Meetings To Organize The Task Force
 5. Initial Assignments For The Force
 6. Funding A State Arson Task Force
 7. Define Task Force Goals
 8. Some Final Thoughts
- Appendix - Specific Objectives

BUILDING A STATE ARSON TASK FORCE

1. Define Task Force Responsibilities

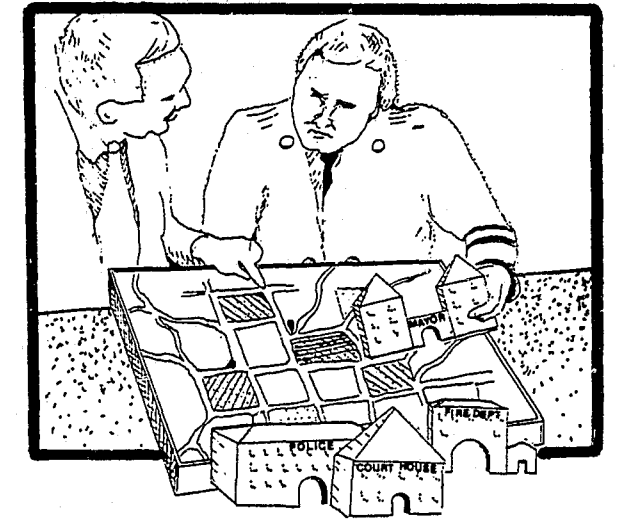
The basic job of a state arson task force is to develop a comprehensive strategy, mobilize resources, provide coordination, and serve as a policy forum to attack arson on a statewide basis. It assists local efforts to prevent and control arson by providing leadership and an active involvement in arson prevention and control activities throughout the state.

Usually, state arson task forces operate under a state charter or mandate, which stipulates mission, specific duties, responsibilities, and activities.

In general, State Task Forces are charged with the responsibilities of studying the nature and magnitude of the arson problem, of identifying causes of the arson problem, of assessing the state's present response to the arson problem, and of initiating development of an effective and comprehensive statewide strategy for arson prevention and control.

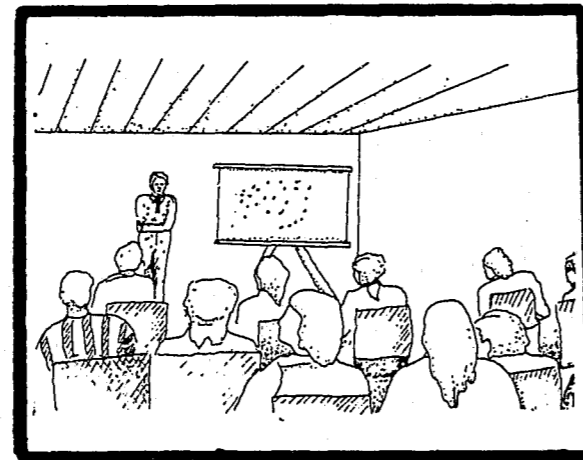
Specific responsibilities and activities, of course, must reflect the nature and extent of the arson problem in your state. Here is a general list of responsibilities which a typical state arson task force can be expected to assume:

- Fostering and improving communication, coordination, and cooperation among fire departments, law enforcement agencies, the insurance industry, and other public and private agencies and organizations involved in fire and arson prevention and control.
- Identifying those factors contributing to state arson problems.



- Promoting study and knowledge about control, detection, and prosecution of arson.
- Providing mechanisms for exchange of technical information about arson.
- Reviewing laws and legislative proposals, and making legislative recommendations concerning arson.
- Investigating sources of funding for arson-related programs, and offering recommendations for a coordinated allocation of resources.
- Assisting in defining arson control responsibilities among various agencies and organizations.
- Encouraging high professional standards for arson investigators and others concerned with prevention and control.

- Encouraging education and training of professionals concerned with arson investigation, detection, and prosecution.
- Serving as a liaison for the state with other states and the federal government in arson-related matters.
- Communicating to the public the extent, severity, and consequences of arson.
- Developing effective state arson information management systems.



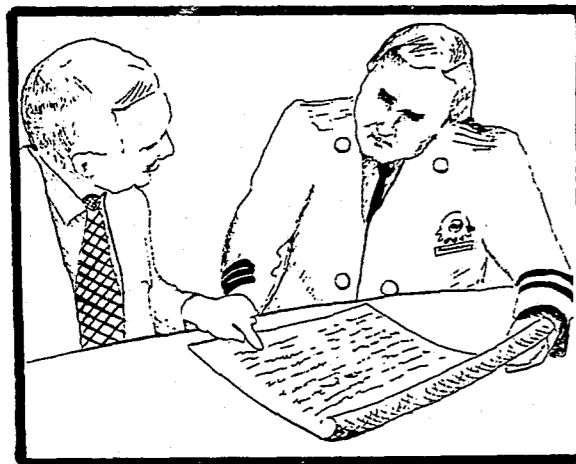
2. Determine Task Force Membership

To fully accomplish the tasks just described, active membership in the State Arson Task Force usually includes representatives from the following groups:

- The Governor's Office
- State Legislature
- State Fire Marshall
- Division of Criminal Justice
- Division of State Police or Public Safety
- Department of Insurance
- Division of Community Affairs
- Paid Fire Departments
- Volunteer Fire Departments
- State Fire Training Director
- Insurance Industry
- Mayors
- Police Departments
- County Prosecutors
- Public At Large

Of course, specific organizational circumstances in your state will dictate actual task force membership.

As an example, New Jersey's Arson Task Force membership is shown on the following page. In New Jersey, the Arson Task Force was organized by the Department of Law and Public Safety, under the direction of the Governor and Attorney General. The membership was provided staff support by the Division of Criminal Justice.



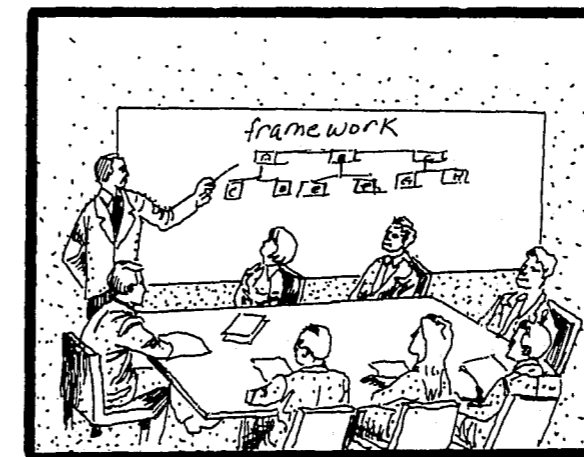
2.

3. Obtain Commitment For A Specific Person

After obtaining general commitment to the task force from the top individual in each organizational element, ask that a specific person, with appropriate authority and expertise, be assigned to participate in the task force. It is important to have the participation and involvement of people with the authority to make commitments and accept responsibilities.

4. Hold Initial Meetings To Organize The Task Force

When all member groups have been contacted, an initial series of meeting should be scheduled to organize the task force and get it moving. The essential task of the state arson task force is to provide the framework and coordination needed to establish a statewide strategy for the prevention and control of arson. The task force functions in two basic ways: It provides a forum for setting statewide policy on arson, and it acts as an operational force to implement specific approaches and programs.

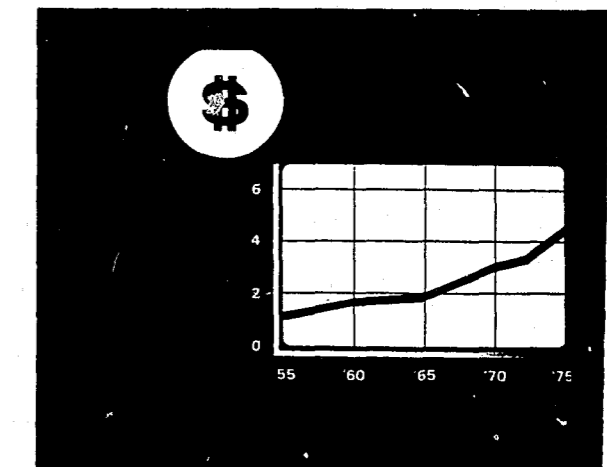


It is important for the state arson task force to get off to a "fast start." Lengthy, ongoing debates over organizational matters should be avoided.

One effective approach to State Task Force organization is to form subcommittees, or working groups, to address major policy areas. For each working group the general assignment would be:

Structure Working Groups

- 1) Identify and define the problem.
- 2) Determine what is presently being done.
- 3) Establish appropriate measures of success and recommend near-term objectives and long-term goals.
- 4) Develop specific recommendations, with a priority ranking, for improvement.



3.

NEW JERSEY
ARSON TASK FORCE

Members

Project Director
N.J. Fire Education and Training Planning Council

Deputy Director
N.J. Department of Community Affairs
Division of Housing and Urban Renewal

Deputy Attorney General
Division of Criminal Justice

Chief Investigator
Division of Criminal Justice

Chairman
N.J. Advisory Committee-Arson Prevention

Project Specialist
Department of Insurance

Consultant
United States Fire Administration
Office of Planning and Education

State Fire Marshal

Detective Sergeant
Uniform Crime Report Unit
N.J. State Police

Representative
N.J. Chiefs of Police Association

Chairperson
Department of Government Services
Rutgers University

Attorney in Charge
Organized Crime and Racketeering Section
United States Department of Justice

Battalion Chief
Newark Fire Department

Vice President
American Insurance Association

Supervisor, Arson Unit
N.J. State Police

Representative
N.J. Paid Fire Chiefs Association

Assistant Prosecutor
Union County Prosecutor's Office
Arson Task Force

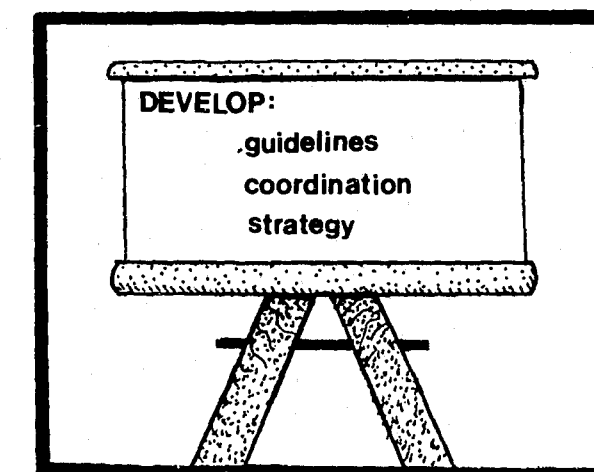
The task force as a whole would then review the recommendations from each working group, and establish a consistent set of priorities, objectives, and goals for the task force. Responsibility for implementing specific programs would then be assigned as appropriate.

Develop Statewide Strategy

It is helpful in developing a statewide strategy for arson to organize problems and programs into four major policy areas:

- Behavior
- Economics
- Management
- Investigation and Prosecution

The first three areas are concerned with prevention and fourth is concerned with control. This approach was developed by the U.S. Fire Administration in its "Report to the Congress—ARSON: The Federal Role in Arson Prevention and Control." (For example, the appendix presents a list of specific objectives for a statewide task force and the objectives are grouped into the four policy areas.



5. Initial Assignments For The Task Force

In addition to organizing, there are some specific items for the task force to begin work on during initial meetings.

- Define the statewide arson problem in detail. Using immediately available statistics, develop a report on the arson problem in the state. The report should describe the magnitude of the problem, suggest specific areas for task force activity, and highlight the quantity and quality of statewide arson data.

- Begin the process of public education. Start by announcing formation of the State Task Force in statewide news media.

- Identify and mobilize all available resources for funding and technical assistance.

6. Funding A State Arson Task Force

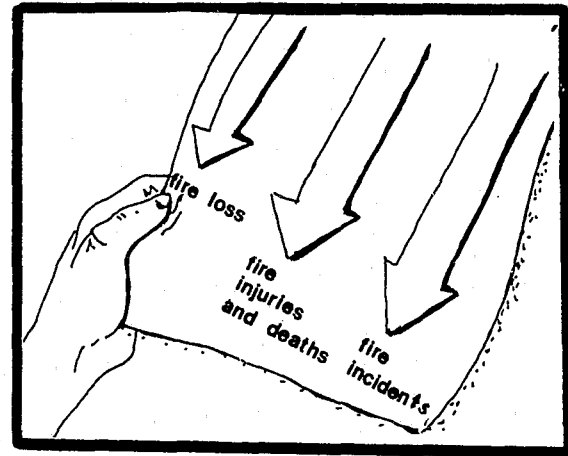
Most state arson task forces use existing resources and receive no additional public funds. Professional services are sometimes donated, usually by the insurance industry. Usually arson task force assignments can be handled by existing personnel within the scope of their current duties.

7. Define Task Force Goals

The purpose of a state arson task force, as this booklet has pointed out, is to develop a comprehensive statewide strategy for arson control and prevention. Any successful state arson task force effort must have long term goals and more specific short range objectives. Below we present typical long term goals and ongoing operational objectives, for successful statewide arson organizations. A detailed, comprehensive list of specific objectives for a statewide task force is presented in the appendix. These ideas are presented only to provide guidelines and not intended as a definitive listing of all possibilities. You should develop your program to respond to the problems of your state.

Long Term Goals include:

- Reducing the frequency of arson incidents (for example, a 25% reduction per year from the previous year, over a five year period).
- Reducing arson related deaths and injuries.



6.

Ongoing Operational Objectives:

- Promote the utilization of limited resources in the most effective manner.
- Foster cooperation among participating government agencies and private groups.
- Prevent fragmentation of anti-arson activities.
- Discourage duplication of effort and conflicting policies.

8. Some Final Thoughts

The State Arson Task Force has been proven to be a potent weapon in the fight against arson. State Task Forces have led the way to more effective organization and coordination of arson prevention and control efforts. It should be emphasized that the task force operates as a coalition, and must reflect statewide political realities. To be successful, the State Task Force will need the active support of both the Governor's Office and State Legislature.

Additional Information

See the U.S. Fire Administration's Arson Resource Directory.

APPENDIX

Specific Objectives for a statewide arson control and prevention effort may include most or all of the following, depending on the situation in your state:

I. BEHAVIOR

A. Juvenile Firesetter

- Develop a program for training juvenile counselors.

B. Adult Profiles

- Develop typical profiles of adult arsonists.

II. ECONOMICS

A. Housing

- Strengthen systematic housing code enforcement.
- Enforce landlord identity disclosure.
- Enforce corporate relationship disclosure.
- Establish a volunteer housing inspection program.
- Identify housing policies which have an impact on arson.

B. Insurance

- Recommend pre-insurance inspection of all investment residential and commercial property by both voluntary and involuntary underwriters.

- Recommend that the insurance industry use the broad evidence rule for determining actual cash value of investment residential and commercial properties.

- Recommend adoption of insurance regulations which would encourage re-investment of loss settlements into properties damaged by fire.

- Recommend adoption of legislation ensuring that municipalities will be reimbursed for costs incurred when it is necessary to demolish fire-damaged buildings.

- Recommend adoption of legislation requiring licensing of public adjusters.

III. MANAGEMENT

A. Data

- Develop a mandatory statewide fire incident reporting system.
- Require mandatory reporting of certain categories of fire losses by insurance companies.
- Develop an improved intelligence network.
- Develop a state arson information system.

7.

B. Public Education

- Develop programs to make the public more aware of the magnitude of the arson problem.
- Develop means and incentives for improved public cooperation with law enforcement and fire control authorities.

C. Task Force

- Establish a State Advisory Committee on Arson Control and Prevention, to coordinate long-term program efforts after the life of the state task force.
- Assign a state official, such as the state fire marshal, to serve as statewide arson control coordinator.

IV. INVESTIGATION/PROSECUTION

A. Training

- Adopt uniform statewide standards for arson detection and investigation training for fire service personnel.
- Adopt a uniform statewide fire and arson investigation training course and a certification program.
- Develop a statewide delivery system for arson training.
- Provide police officers in the state with training in arson detection and police responsibility on the fire scene.
- Provide fire service investigators with police training.

- Develop an arson investigator's manual.
- Develop a prosecutor's training program, with handbook, on arson investigation training.

B. Investigation

- Organize arson investigation units at the county level.
- Establish arson investigation units in large urban fire departments.
- Expand state arson investigation unit.
- Develop a statewide plan for effective arson detection, investigation, and prosecution.
- Prepare arson investigator's register.
- Develop guidelines for cooperation with Federal investigating agencies.
- Upgrade existing laboratory network.

C. Prosecution

- Early Case Review - so prosecutor is involved as case develops.
- Vertical - same prosecutor handles a case from its initial review through covert appearance.
- Feedback - mechanisms so final disposition of each case is known.

D. Technology

- Upgrade existing laboratory networks to handle arson.
- Obtain grants to ensure latest equipment is being used in arson investigations.

These state arson task force goals and objectives were developed from the recommendations of successful State Task Forces. The list is not meant to be definitive. Each state must develop its own unique arson control strategy, incorporating a broad spectrum of program goals.

END