



2021 Fireground Civilian Rescue Research

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For more than forty years, the central data source for evaluation of the nation's fire problem has been the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS). The United States Fire Administration uses this data to prioritize and inform prevention interventions. This practice is reinforced as the data continues to demonstrate the success of prevention with a steady decrease in the frequency of fire events.

For the same period, using the same data set, the trend in severity of fire events with regard to the loss of life and property per incident is increasing. What is realized in this divergence is that prevention success is pre-event. Even with great preventative efforts, fires still occur, and it is possible our nation's fire problem is operations.



Traditional fire service inputs and metrics are quantitative and negative; number of fires, property lost or damaged, number of injuries and fatalities. An unintended result of this methodology is a myopic data set with analysis limited to loss relationships. Demonstrating a reduction in civilian fire deaths is only that; it cannot conclusively show more lives are actively being saved.

To date, the American fire service has not officially collected the number of or means of which civilians are rescued at fires. The result of this information gap is a service unable to quantify if or how, presence, actions, or operations result in saving lives. For the fire service to deliberately improve outcomes and not just reduce loss, the mission (saving lives) must match the metrics (lives saved). Until then, the operational impact of the American fire service will remain unknown.

The purpose of this graduate research project is to demonstrate the scope and value of fireground civilian rescue reporting using qualitative survey methods. The results will support an improved understanding of fireground operational influence on outcomes. A clearer vision of the nation's fire problem for the future includes the knowledge of both the parameters of our problem (loss) and the dimensions of our success (saves).

From January 1, 2021, through March 31, 2021, reports of fireground civilian rescues from news outlets, press releases and social networks will be actively collected, categorized and confirmed. Organizations responsible for rescues will be directly contacted, informed of the research project, provided a rescue reporting procedure template, and directed to complete a Firefighter Rescue Survey (FFRS). The FFRS is an online, qualitative research tool for collection and classification of data from the first-hand reports of those directly involved in fireground civilian rescues.

Final report will present with a three-month period of parallel collections from the U.S. Fire Administration. To report fireground civilian rescues or more information about the research project see contact information below.