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Prevention & Control

Department of Public Safety

Fire and Life Safety Journal

Fall 2025

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Fire Suppression Complaints Review

Based on the recommendation from the 2025 Sunset Review of the Fire Suppression Registration and Inspection Program issued by the Colorado Office of Policy, Research, and Regulatory Reform, we would like to make the public aware of the status of the disciplinary activities resulting from complaints made related to the Colorado Fire Suppression Registration and Inspection Program. The full list of complaints and their dispositions can be viewed on the Division's [website](#).





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Another Update: Colorado's Wildfire Resiliency Code



By Christopher Brunette,
MS, FM, FLSS Chief

Back in June, I asked that you complete a survey to help DFPC better understand how many jurisdictions are anticipating relying on DFPC, at least in part, to support Colorado Wildfire Resiliency Code enforcement within your communities, as required by 24-33.5-1237(2)(d), C.R.S.. We have had numerous agencies fill out the survey and the information provided will aid us in submitting an updated request to the Joint Budget Committee (JBC). DFPC is committed to getting the staff and resources in place to aid local jurisdictions in the enforcement of the Colorado Wildfire Resiliency Code and it is our intent to begin these discussions with the JBC in the very near future. We appreciate your assistance in gathering the information needed to renew our request and we will be sure to keep you apprised of the outcomes from the discussions.

As a reminder, the Colorado Wildfire Resiliency Code Board (the Board) in the Division of Fire Prevention and Control was established by Senate Bill 23-166 to enhance community safety and resiliency from wildfires through the adoption of codes and standards.



Since October of 2023 the Board has been developing a model Wildfire Resiliency Code for Colorado. All governing bodies in the state of Colorado with jurisdiction in an area within the wildland-urban interface are required to adopt codes that meet or exceed the standards set forth in the model code following its completion and adoption by the Board. The Board adopted the 2025 Colorado Wildfire Resiliency Code on July 1, 2025 and local governing bodies are required to make their adoption no later than April 1, 2026. Following their adoption, the adopting governing body must begin enforcing the code no later than 3 months after the adoption.

In order to assist local governing bodies with their adoption of this code and in setting up the enforcement means and mechanisms within their jurisdiction, DFPC applied for a Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant through FEMA. It was announced prior to the federal shutdown that DFPC had been awarded this grant, which will allow us to hire two dedicated employees through September 30, 2028, to provide this assistance to local governing bodies. The hiring process has been ongoing, and we hope to have these two positions filled by the start of the new year. The program will feature a modular, role-based curriculum tailored to different audiences—from elected officials to building inspectors. Training modules will cover the entire implementation lifecycle, including methods for code adoption, establishing fee structures, training a plan review workforce, and creating inspection and close-out processes. This training will be supplemented by a toolkit of practical job aids, such as model ordinances and inspection checklists, to provide lasting support.

If you are in need of these services or have any questions about these two positions, please contact us at cdps_dfpc_credadmin@state.co.us. We are looking forward to providing these services to your organization and your community.



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Recent Fire and Life Safety Rulemaking

8 CCR 1507-31 (BUILDING, FIRE, AND LIFE SAFETY CODE ENFORCEMENT AND CERTIFICATION OF INSPECTORS FOR HEALTH FACILITIES LICENSED BY THE STATE OF COLORADO)

DFPC filed notice of rulemaking on August 1st and held multiple townhall style meetings to review the changes being proposed for the rules, which included:

- Addressing the Division's need to raise fees related to inspections and plan reviews, which is necessary in order for the Division to defray the anticipated costs of the program.
- Adding the ability of the Division and other Authorities Having Jurisdiction to allow the use of Special Inspectors to perform certain inspections when necessary. It also further clarified the duties, roles, and expectations of the special inspector.
- Further clarifying the roles of local building departments, fire departments, and the Division as they relate to licensed healthcare facilities in Colorado.
- Further clarifying the Division's permit application process and adds a section for mandatory reporting of certain occurrences to the Division and other Authorities Having Jurisdiction.
- Updating the title of building inspectors that have been certified by the Division to perform delegated inspection services from "third party inspector" to "delegated building inspector."

An initial hearing was held on September 17th and a continuation hearing was held on October 31st. The updated rules have been signed and will go into effect on December 30th.



8 CCR 1507-101 (BUILDING AND FIRE CODE ADOPTION AND CERTIFICATION OF INSPECTORS FOR FIRE & LIFE SAFETY PROGRAMS ADMINISTERED BY THE STATE OF COLORADO)

DFPC filed notice of rulemaking on September 29th, receiving and considering public comments until the hearing, which was held on November 1st. The proposed changes included:

- Adopting a minimum Code for Mobile Food Establishments, as required by Colorado House Bill 25-1295.
- Adopting the 2025 Colorado Wildfire Resiliency Code to replace the Division's adoption of the International Wildland-Urban Interface Code.
- Setting the minimum Fire Inspector certification level necessary to conduct fire safety inspections of Mobile Food Establishments, as required by Colorado House Bill 25-1295 and further clarifies the work allowed to be conducted by the different levels of Fire Inspector.

The updated rules have been signed and will go into effect on December 30th.

For questions regarding Fire & Life Safety rulemaking, please contact us at cdps_dfpc_flsadmin@state.co.us.



Fire Prevention Week 2025

DFPC Partners with Local Fire Departments to Promote Lithium-Ion Battery Safety

By Todd Jilbert, Fire Inspector | Acute Healthcare Unit

Fire Prevention Week 2025 highlighted one of the fastest-emerging fire safety concerns facing communities today: the safe use and disposal of lithium-ion batteries. These power sources are now embedded in nearly every aspect of modern life – from smartphones and tablets to household tools, electric bikes, and mobility devices. With their widespread use comes increasing responsibility, which is why this year’s National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) theme, “Charge into Fire Safety: Lithium-Ion Batteries in Your Home,” focused on equipping the public with the knowledge they need to stay safe.

To help advance this mission, the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control (DFPC) partnered with local fire agencies across the state, including Durango Fire & Rescue and South Adams County Fire Department, to host educational outreach events on Saturday, October 11th. These events were designed to meet community members where they are – in high-traffic public spaces such as Main Street corridors and fire station open houses – ensuring every resident had the opportunity to learn how to protect their home and family from battery-related fire hazards.

DFPC staff joined local firefighters and first responders, Sheriff’s offices, the American Red Cross, and the NFPA in providing hands-on demonstrations, interactive learning stations, and take-home resources. Participants were able to speak directly with experts about the safest ways to charge devices, recognize early warning signs of battery failure, and properly dispose of damaged or expired lithium-ion batteries through approved recycling programs. Many attendees noted that they had lithium-ion batteries in their homes but were unaware of the potential dangers or the steps they could take to reduce risk.





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“The partnership between South Adams Fire and DFPC during our recent event showed the strength of collaboration between local and state fire prevention teams working toward a common goal—keeping our communities safe,” said Maria Carabajal of South Adams Fire. “Lithium-ion batteries are here to stay, and our mission is to ensure they’re used responsibly and recycled safely.”

At the South Adams County event, at Station 28, families explored displays demonstrating how battery fires can start when devices are charged in unsafe conditions or when equipment becomes damaged. DFPC staff walked visitors through real-world examples of battery malfunctions and explained how proper storage and disposal dramatically reduce the chance of fire. Information on recycling drop-off locations, state and local resources, and product safety alerts were provided to all participants.

Meanwhile in Durango, DFPC and Durango Fire & Rescue co-hosted a large-scale Fire Prevention Week gathering in the heart of downtown. The event coincided and shared the streets with Durango’s final Farmer’s Market of the season, and the Apple Days Festival. Crowds were drawn in by one of DFPC’s new Fire Safety Simulator Trailers – a mobile learning environment that brings interactive safety education directly to communities. The trailer served as an anchor for battery safety demonstrations, allowing visitors to learn firsthand how quickly a fire can develop and how early recognition and action save lives.



“The partnership between DFPC and Durango Fire & Rescue during Fire Prevention Week really highlighted what we can accomplish together,” said Fire Marshal Stephen Rinaldi. “By combining our outreach efforts with our fire and life safety expertise, we’re able to connect with more people, which helps prevent emergencies before they happen. The fire prevention event held on Main St. in Durango on Oct 11th involved personnel from both DF&R and from the DFPC Fire Prevention, CRR, and Investigation Branches. Durango Fire & Rescue utilized one of the new DFPC Fire Safety Simulator Trailers as the perfect backdrop for delivering this year’s theme of ‘Charge into Fire Safety’.” Additionally, Fire Marshal Rinaldi stated, “I highly recommend that all fire departments and districts work to partner with DFPC and to benefit from the awesome resources they have to offer.”





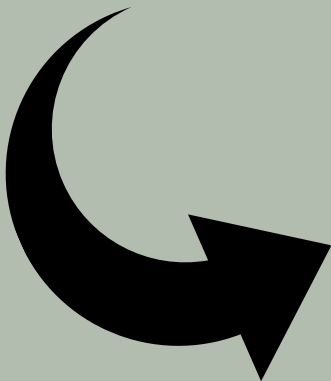
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Across both events, DFPC's involvement strengthened local outreach efforts and helped reinforce a consistent, statewide message about battery safety. These partnerships are an essential part of Colorado's proactive approach to reducing preventable fires. With lithium-ion related incidents steadily increasing nationwide, coordinated education and community engagement play a critical role in keeping residents informed and prepared.

As DFPC continues expanding its public safety programs, events like these demonstrate the agency's commitment to advancing fire prevention, supporting local fire departments, and protecting the lives, property, and natural environment of Colorado communities.

Watch the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)
"Charge into Fire Safety™:
Lithium-Ion Batteries in
Your Home" Video



For more information about lithium-ion battery safety and recycling, visit:

- <https://www.nfpa.org/events/fire-prevention-week>
- <https://dfpc.colorado.gov>
- Or contact your local fire department.





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What It Takes to Become an ATF Canine Team

By Brian Eberle, Fire Investigator and K-9 Handler



There is no doubt that the dog's #1 notable characteristics is their ability to “sniff”. Humans have captured this almost unique ability to dogs and harnessed to benefit us. From hunting, to finding lost people, or being used to detect the most minute odors, dogs have made our lives easier and more productive. Bringing it a little closer to home, the fire service has tapped into the canine's nose to help us locate trace evidence post-fire scene. An ignitable liquid residue detection canine/accelerant detection canine, or “arson” dog (K9), have been around and used in the US Fire Service since the mid-1980's. Specifically here in Colorado, we've had at least one arson dog on duty since the mid-2000's.

Throughout the US, there are several programs that take dogs and train them to become an arson dog. The oldest and probably most recognized is the program put on by the National Canine Division through the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF). The ATF's program has been placing trained canines to local police and fire departments since 1984 and is the largest program in existence in the US. Currently, the ATF program has 70 K9's spread across the US, and Colorado is lucky enough to have added one of these amazing K9s to our ranks and is an available resource for the state. K9 Waffle joined the Division of Fire Prevention and Control's Fire Investigation Unit at the end of September and has been called upon already by many of our local partners. Using her amazing sense of smell, she is a prime example of why we use K9s. But how did she go from being a cute, little puppy to working in one of the hardest K9 jobs out there?

The ATF Accelerant Canine Program is one of the most rigorous training programs for dogs. The program is 6-weeks long, 7 days a week, and involves many long days and traveling many long miles. But the work starts long before the handlers arrive in Front Royal, Virginia for the 6-week training. By the time handlers arrive, the chosen dogs have gone through a rigorous selection and training process, only the best dogs are chosen to move onto becoming an arson dog. The ATF sources their K9s from several different vendors, breeders, and programs. The trainers will travel across multiple states, spend countless hours driving to find just the right dog. When the ATF receives a call from one of their many K9 partners, the process starts. From the initial phone call, the dogs are scrutinized. The quick screening questions before an ATF trainer even responds include things like: Is the dog food motivated, how old the dog is (most dogs won't start training till at least 1 year old and under 2), does the dog have any aggression? Once the dog has passed the initial screening, the real work happens. A trainer from the ATF will travel to the dog and run the dog through a series of behavior and environmental tests to determine the suitability of the dog to perform in the “real world”. These test and evaluations including seeing how the dog reacts around loud noises, in confined spaces, how it reacts around other animals, climbing stairs, and being exposed to all sorts of different surfaces...because after all, we ask a lot from our K9 partners and need to make sure they operate in all different environments.





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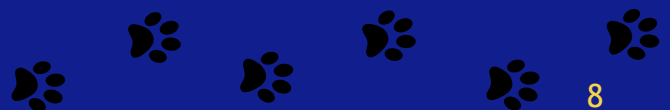
If the trainer thinks the dog is a good fit, the pup gets called up from the minors and heads to training camp. Once on site, the work isn't done, a separate trainer will then conduct an additional round of screenings and evaluations; it takes two trainers to sign off on the dog for them to enter the next phase of testing. Once the pup passes the scrutiny of two trainers, the medical staff does a full dive into the health and wellness of the dog- this is where most of the dogs will get washed from the program. Dogs that may have genetic issues, poor health, or are just not the top candidate, are eliminated from the program and go on to find great homes as amazing pets. All this work is happening behind the scenes and months before the dogs enter any official training. After the travel, the testing, poking and prodding, the top dogs enter the program and start the real work.

The trainers and staff begin the process of scent imprinting the dog, this is where the real magic takes place. During this process, the dog's brain is almost re-wired to recognize 6 different classes of odors as the smell of "food". To the dog, during this process, it learns that these smells mean they get to eat...and for a Labrador, there is very little things that are better than eating! Over the next 6 weeks the dogs are imprinted, tested in the real world, and receive both obedience and environmental training. At this point in the process, is when the weak link enters the program...the handlers.

As a handler, the process seems no less intensive. It all starts with an application and then a waiting period. If your application is selected, based upon the overall needs of the ATF's Arson Canine program, the handler is contacted, and an interview is set up with one or more of the program's chiefs to help determine fit and to make sure both the handler and the agency realize what they are getting into.

Unlike other working dogs, arson dogs are 100% food reward-which means they only get to eat when they work. There are no days off, no vacations away from the dog, or just not training because you don't want to do it; with an arson dog, if you don't train, the dog doesn't get to eat. So the "I's" are dotted and the "T's" are crossed between the ATF and the agency and the handler receives the orders to attend K9 school. In my case, I gave the family hugs and began a 3-day drive across the country to Virginia.

I arrived in Virginia on a Sunday night and started class the next day. The first day is like any other training. You go through the usual introductions and class overview, with one caveat...you get to see the name of 8 dogs, knowing one will be selected for you to work with for the next 6-8 years. The instructors and trainers have a knack for reading people and having worked with the dogs for at least a couple of months, they go through the secret process of pairing handler and dog. The first week flies by as we start to see the dogs work in action and are slowly introduced to the process of what it takes to become a handler, and by the end of week one, handlers are paired with their new partners. The excitement of learning about your new partner slowly fades as the seriousness of the training starts to come into light. Yeah, it is exciting and fun, but in just a few short weeks, handler and dog need to form a tight bond and will be tested on 6 different categories to ultimately determine whether you and your new partner become a certified accelerant detection K9 team. We work day in day out, without any day off, learning how to read the dog and understand the subtleties of when a dog is in odor or just being a dog and screwing around.





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The trainers start with simple drills to show us how well the dogs know what they are doing and tell us how not to screw them up. We work on little drills to build team confidants and ultimately work to the point where we mimic the real world as much as possible...and even though it is as real as they can make it, we still have a little safety net of the instructors watching over to make sure we are correctly working the dog and identifying the small patch of burned material in a house fire as the correct location of where a drop or two of accelerant was placed. All this training culminates in a 2-day test where we kick off the training wheels and must perform as a team. The dogs rely on us to correctly guide them; we rely on them to sniff out the microscopic amount of odor, and somehow, together we must find the correct spot of where the accelerant is. After these two days, a sigh of relief can be had before graduation and the ride home...to where the real work begins.

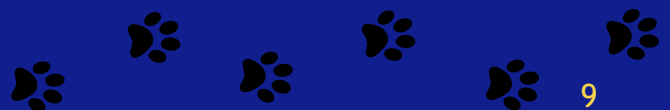
Our arson dogs are by far one of the hardest detection disciplines in the K9 world. There are no visible (or even recognizable) clues often to give us the reassurance that our K9 partner has correctly alerted on the right spot. In fact, there aren't even field tests to give us the initial confirmation that the dog was right. We collect the sample, seal it, and send it off to a laboratory where the sample will undergo a 24-hour test using a Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry machine which will ultimately reveal not only if the dog was right, but also identify one of the 6 categories of accelerants was used. These dogs are products of nature and nurture. Through evolution they have fine tuned their sense of smell, and through rigorous, daily training, we fine tune their unique ability to help us solve cases of arson. The exceptional partnership we have with our K9 counterparts is one of science, evolution and friendship; and can only exist when there is a trust and understanding between man and beast.



DFPC K9 Waffle
Accelerant Detection Canine



DFPC K9 Ash
Therapy/Accelerant Detection Canine





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Crusher Fines as an Accessible Surface

By Chris Nay, Building Inspector Field Training Officer,
Building Codes Branch



Crusher fines paths for accessibility and egress have been in use and approved for use for many years. Unfortunately, if they are not typically designed, constructed and maintained properly, so they can become non-accessible and unusable in a short amount of time.

ICC A117.1–2017 section 302 states that floor surfaces shall be stable, firm, and slip resistant. Most crusher fines paths will meet this requirement immediately after completion and through final inspection. After rain, snow and ice removal, and everyday use, most paths no longer meet the requirements for an accessible path. In the past, the inspectors have required the owner to submit a signed letter acknowledging that the path needs to be maintained regularly to remain accessible and agree to provide that maintenance. Once that letter was received, the path would be approved.

Starting on January 1, 2026, all crusher fines paths that are included on school projects will be required to submit to the DFPC Chief Building Official (CBO) for a modification approval. Engineer designed and stamped drawings complying with ASTM F1951 will need to be submitted for plan review. The owner's acknowledgement letter will be required to be submitted to the plan reviewer prior to the permit being issued. Special Inspections will be required, per 2021 IBC 1703.4.

Occasionally a temporary crusher fines path will still be needed. Temporary paths will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, with final written approval from the CBO. Temporary crusher fines paths will only be allowed for 90 days or less from the approval date, with no extensions, unless an on-site inspection is conducted by a DFPC Building Inspector and the CBO approves.

The intent of the above change is to provide better and longer lasting accessible crusher fines paths along with bringing more awareness to the design, construction and maintenance of these paths. If you have any questions regarding this change, please contact the CBO, at CDPS_DFPC_construction@state.co.us.





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Note for Healthcare Facilities



It is that time of the year when you can anticipate receiving your annual Certificate of Compliance (CoC) fee invoices. There will be one invoice sent out for each unique licensed location. This fee is necessary to defray the costs related to the Fire and Life Safety Certificate of Compliance inspections performed by the Division.



New this year, there will be an additional fee of \$50 for each month when the invoice goes unpaid past the due date. These additional fees will be applied to all outstanding Certificate of Compliance Annual Fees until such time as the full balance, including all accrued additional fees, is paid in full. The right to collect these fees extends to all prior fiscal years where a balance remains outstanding.



Please be sure to pay your invoice by the due date to avoid this additional late fee. If you haven't received your invoice, but believe you should have, you can email us at cdps_dfpc_coc@state.co.us. Also, you can update your billing information, [here](#).



Fire Suppression System Contractors Renewal



All Fire Suppression System Contractor Registrations expire on December 31st of the registration year (12/31/2025).

Renewal Applications will be accepted on December 1st for the 2026 registration year (1/1/2026-12/31/2026). Applications submitted prior to January 1st will be processed and the approved registrations will be sent by email on January 1st.

Fees for Registration

New: \$100

Renewal (Up to and including 30 January): \$100

Renewal (30 January to 1 March additional fee due): \$125

Renewal (After 1 March - Out of Good Standing (OOGS)): \$125

In order to renew, please select the application link below or from the DFPC website: [Body Copy](#) and indicate on the application that it is a renewal. If you choose not to renew your application, you will no longer maintain your registration or certification.

Ready to renew? Click [HERE](#).

Please feel free to contact us with any questions at suppression@state.co.us.



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Community Risk Reduction Unit

All Fronts Covered: Home and Wildfire Preparedness for Families

By Kim Spuhler, CRR Unit Chief

I'm sitting at my desk at the end of October—Fire Prevention Month—sipping my honey-laden tea. I'm celebrating a successful month, even though my voice is nearly gone from all the teaching and talking. The DFPC CRR Team, Fire Prevention Branch, and our Operations Teams taught thousands of people across Colorado about fire prevention and preparedness. I'm humbled and thankful for all the fire departments we were honored to work alongside.

Building on What We Know

When I teach, I always ask kids if they've ever participated in a school fire drill. Their heads bob "yes," and they eagerly share how loud the alarms are. Then I ask, "Have you ever done a fire drill at home?"

That's when both adults and kids get a little squirmy and look down as they shake their heads, "no."

This isn't about shame—it's about awareness. Together, we talk about how home fire drills are both similar to and different from the ones at school:

How do you know that there may be a fire?

What do you gather (or don't) during a fire?

Where do you go to meet your family safely?





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Community Risk Reduction (CRR) is a strategic, data-driven process designed to prevent or lessen the impact of emergencies. With that in mind, here are some key fire statistics from the NFPA for 2023:



Table 1. Reported Fires in 2024 by Incident Type

Incident Type	Fires	Civilian Deaths	Civilian Injuries	Property Loss (In Millions) ¹
Structure Fire	470,500 (34%)	3,170 (81%)	10,335 (88%)	\$15,305 (83%)
Residential Structure Fire	351,000 (25%)	3,000 (77%)	9,330 (79%)	\$11,690 (63%)
Home structure fire	329,500 (23%)	2,920 (75%)	8,920 (75%)	\$11,386 (62%)
One- and two-family homes, including manufactured homes	253,500 (18%)	2,380 (60%)	6,630 (56%)	\$9,409 (51%)
Apartment or other multi-family housing	76,000 (9%)	340 (9%)	2,290 (19%)	\$1,977 (11%)
Other residential structure fire	21,500 (2%)	80 (2%)	410 (3%)	\$304 (2%)
Non-residential structure fire	119,500 (8%)	170 (4%)	1,020 (9%)	\$3,615 (20%)
Vehicle Fire	211,500 (15%)	510 (13%)	1,070 (9%)	\$2,792 (15%)
Highway vehicle fire	178,500 (13%)	450 (11%)	850 (7%)	\$2,164 (12%)
Other vehicle fire	33,000 (2%)	60 (2%)	220 (2%)	\$628 (3%)
Outside and Other Fire*	706,000 (51%)	240 (6%)	370 (3%)	\$989** (2%)
Fire outside, but no vehicle (outside storage, crops, timber, etc.)	79,500 (6%)	*	*	\$187 (1%)
Fire in brush, grass, or wildland (excluding crops and timber) with no dollar loss	302,000 (22%)	*	*	*
Outside rubbish fire	247,000 (18%)	*	*	*
All other fires	77,500 (6%)	*	*	\$252 (1%)
Total	1,388,000 (100%)	3,920 (100%)	11,780 (100%)	\$19,086** (100%)

* Casualty data is not reported for subcategories of outside and other fires. Property damage is not captured for brush, grass, or wildland fires with no loss or outside rubbish fires.

** Includes \$550 million property loss estimates from California wildfires that occurred in 2024. Those property loss incidents were not used when calculating the percentage contributed to the total.

Note: Sums may not equal totals due to rounding errors.

Source: NFPA's 2024 survey of fire departments for the US fire experience and surveys of state fire authorities for large loss and catastrophic multiple-death fires.

Credit: NFPA.org Source:
<https://www.nfpa.org/education-and-research/research/nfpa-research/fire-statistical-reports/fire-loss-in-the-united-states>.

Please note that the report includes “structure fires,” which may not include “cooking fires,” “trash fires”, or other fires that did not extend into the occupancy.

Wildfire

With this data in mind, it's important to include wildfire preparedness as part of your home fire escape plan. Some may wonder why we talk about wildfires as winter approaches—but if you've lived in Colorado for any length of time, you know wildfires can happen any time of year. We don't have a fire season; we live in a year-round fire-prone environment.

The Marshall Fire, for example, was first reported around 11 a.m. on December 30, 2021. Fires—whether inside the home or in wildland areas—rarely happen at a convenient time.

We can build on what we learned as children about escaping fires in our homes by adding wildfire preparedness to our plans.

How do you know there may be a fire?

Sign up for your county's Reverse 911 or emergency alert system. You are not automatically enrolled, and it can take time for your information to process through the system—so don't wait until an emergency to register.

What do you gather (or not) during a fire?

Plan today for what your family would need. Keep a list of medications and copies of important documents in a secure, secondary location. Consider walking through your home with a video camera to document your belongings, including brand names and serial numbers—this can make a huge difference when filing insurance claims after either a home fire or wildfire.



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Where do you go to meet your family safely?

During wildfires, families are often apart when evacuation notices go out. Adults may be at work, kids at school, or on their way home. Communication can be difficult—cell towers may be overwhelmed or out of service, and power can be lost.

That's why today is the perfect day to talk with your family about two ways out of your neighborhood and where to meet if you're separated. Consider making a plan for trusted neighbors to pick up children, differently-abled adults, or pets if you can't get home. Most evacuations allow people to leave the area—but not to return once the order is issued. The more you plan ahead, the more first responders can focus on helping others in need.

It truly takes all of us to prevent, prepare for, and respond to fires.
With awareness, planning, and partnership, we can help keep our
communities—and our families—safe.

Stay safe Colorado!

Watch the DFPC
Community Risk
Reduction Week 2025
Highlights Video





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Fire Prevention Branch: Going Beyond the Inspection

By JT McLeod, Fire Prevention Branch Chief

In September of this year, I was selected to be the new Fire Prevention Branch Chief for the Fire and Life Safety Section. I am both humbled and excited to begin this adventure with DFPC. My observations so far truly reinforce why I have been wanting to work with this organization for the past couple of years.

The questions I have been asked since taking this position range from “what do you exactly do now?” to “what is the DFPC and what do they do?” After I chuckle for a second, I explain, specifically, the Fire and Life Safety Section and how each Branch works both independently and together to accomplish the overall mission of the DFPC which is “To serve and safeguard the people and protect the property, resources, environment, and quality of life in Colorado.”

When asked to write this article, I began to think a little deeper. I wanted to share exactly what the role of the Fire Prevention Branch was, thinking a little beyond our normal inspections and code compliance. While I was thinking about these details, I was reminded of a statement that was made at a recent Colorado Chapter of the International Code Council Meeting. The facilitator of the class we were attending stated “it should be an expectation for all code officials to verify safe and healthy environments in any facility, to ensure everyone visiting the building feels protected for their stay.”

The Prevention Branch accomplishes this by our usual compliance inspections and plans examination. This is somewhat of a given by nature of the work we perform.



However, it goes a little deeper than this. We also provide technical guidance to contractors, developers, local jurisdictions, and other stakeholders. This would include providing education on our inspections and compliance processes, while collaborating with both internal and external stakeholders. Personnel from our Branch currently attend multiple life safety conferences across the state, both as students and instructors. Many of our Unit Chiefs and Inspectors sit on various committees to ensure fire and life safety compliance in health care facilities, schools, assisted living facilities, and represent the state in various fire suppression system overviews.

The overall goal is to work with our other teams within the Fire and Life Safety Section to identify risks, provide guidance and education, and ensure technical skills to achieve the overall goal of protecting life and property. The Fire Prevention Branch strives to share our knowledge and technical details, both internally and externally, to ensure the preservation of life and property.

JT McLeod has recently accepted the position of Fire Prevention Branch Chief for the DFPC Fire and Life Safety Section. He was recently the Fire Chief in Divide performing the duties of both Chief and Fire Marshal. Prior experience as a Division Chief of Fire and Life Safety for the Cimarron Hills Fire District, developing their Fire Prevention Division including Plan Reviews, Community Risk Reduction/Outreach, and Safety. JT has had the honor to serve in the Department of Defense as a Training Officer, Fire Inspector, Plans Examiner, and Life Safety Educator at both Fort Carson and the Air Force Academy. JT holds certifications as a Fire Officer III, Fire Inspector III/Plans Examiner, and Fire and Life Safety Educator II. He is excited for the upcoming collaboration opportunities and working with Fire and Life Safety Professionals across the state.



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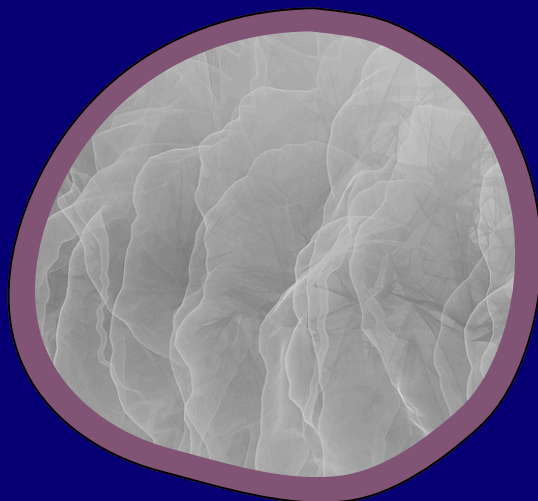
Carbon Monoxide Awareness Month: Protecting the Public and First Responders

By Chuck Altvater, CRR & Education Branch Chief



As the Northern Hemisphere slides into autumn and winter approaches, our attention shifts from the explosion of colors in fall foliage to conifers, elves, and visions of Santa. But November is also Carbon Monoxide (CO) Awareness Month, a time to highlight the very real dangers of this “Silent Killer,” which becomes a greater risk as we begin heating our homes.

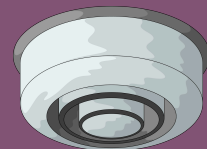
Each year, CO poisoning remains one of the most common, and most preventable, threats to both ordinary citizens and first responders alike. It is one of the leading causes of accidental poisoning deaths in the United States. Because CO is colorless, odorless, and tasteless, people often become seriously ill or even lose consciousness without realizing they’re being poisoned. Raising awareness as we enter the home-heating season helps reduce CO emergencies and protects both the public and emergency personnel.



What Is Carbon Monoxide and Why Is It Dangerous?

CO is a byproduct of the incomplete combustion of carbon-based fuels, including gas and liquid fuels such as propane and natural gas, as well as solid fuels like coal, charcoal, and wood. CO can accumulate in enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces, such as airtight homes or garages.

When inhaled, CO binds to hemoglobin in the blood, reducing oxygen delivery to cells. This can cause cardiac, neurological, and respiratory injury, and at high concentrations, it can lead quickly to death.





Acute vs. Chronic Exposure

Public awareness campaigns have been successful in recent years, highlighting acute CO exposure, which can cause symptoms such as headache, dizziness, nausea, confusion, chest pain, and loss of consciousness, and can rapidly become fatal.

However, the effects of chronic, low-level exposure are less well known. Repeated or seasonal low-level exposure can cause cardiac injury of unknown origin, memory and concentration problems, mood disorders, and neurological symptoms such as visual hallucinations.

While everyone is at risk, some groups are more vulnerable:

- People in older homes, where aging appliances are more likely to be damaged or improperly maintained.
- Residents of multi-unit buildings, where shared ventilation systems can spread CO from a central heating problem to multiple apartments.
- Low-income households, where maintenance may be deferred or where unvented combustion devices (such as propane heaters) are used for warmth.



Safety Steps for the Public:

- Install CO alarms in every home. UL-listed CO alarms alert to acute levels of CO, while low-level alarms can display concentrations as low as 10 parts per million (ppm).
- Have heating systems, chimneys, and fuel-burning appliances inspected annually by certified technicians.
- Maintain ventilation and never block vents or operate grills, camp stoves, or heaters indoors.





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Safety Steps for the Public:

- Use generators and vehicles safely and always operate them at least 20 feet from windows, doors, and vents (both your own and your neighbors').
- Know the signs of CO poisoning. If multiple people or pets feel ill at the same time, leave immediately, get fresh air, and call 911. Do not re-enter until professionals identify and repair the source.

Safety Steps for First Responders for the Public:

- Use gas meters on every call, including EMS calls, during the home-heating season. Multi-gas meters should be carried on every response vehicle. Single-gas CO detectors, such as the one pictured, are also effective.
- Wear SCBA during overhaul and until monitoring confirms CO levels are zero. There is no safe level of CO exposure for civilians or responders.

The Fire Department's Role in Prevention

CO poisoning affects everyone, civilians and first responders alike, and fire departments are often the first line of defense when a CO incident occurs. Public education reduces the number of emergencies and saves lives before a response is ever needed. When fire departments educate the public about:

- Installing CO alarms in homes and businesses.
- The importance of regular inspection and maintenance of heating and cooking equipment.
- Recognizing the early signs and symptoms of CO poisoning.
- Knowing when and how to call for help.

They turn potential tragedies into preventable risks and reinforce their role as community educators, not just emergency responders. This message is most effective when it comes from a trusted local firefighter or medic.





Protecting Those Who Protect Others

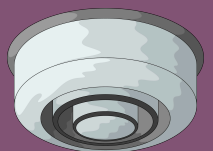
Fire departments must also educate their own members about:

- CO exposure risks at structure fires, vehicle fires, and wildland fires.
- CO buildup in enclosed spaces during the heating season
- Low-level exposure risks during overhaul and ventilation operations.
- The necessity of wearing SCBA whenever CO may be present.

By doing so, departments prevent line-of-duty deaths, work-related illness and injury, and long-term cardiac, respiratory, and neurological harm. Educating responders gives them the knowledge and tools to maintain long, healthy careers and healthy retirements, while staying ready to respond to the next call for service.

Conclusion

As temperatures drop and heating systems come to life, preventing Carbon Monoxide incidents begins long before an emergency call occurs. By educating the public, practicing prevention, and protecting themselves on every scene, fire departments safeguard both their communities and their own members. Just a few simple steps, such as installing and testing CO alarms, inspecting equipment, and using proper PPE, can make the difference between tragedy and safety.





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Save The Date:

Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Week
January 21, 2026
Virtual Panel at 12 p.m. MST

Join
Us



What is CRR Week?

CRR Week is a nationwide, grassroots initiative led by fire safety professionals committed to strengthening community safety. This dedicated week highlights the importance of Community Risk Reduction by encouraging fire departments across the country to showcase their CRR programs and reinforce the impact these efforts have on the fire service and the communities they serve.



What is the 2026 theme?

This year, we're celebrating Colorado's CRR efforts by hosting a virtual panel, bringing together our CRR family to share their work and discuss how it supports the 2026 CRR Week theme: "Emergency Response."

[More event details to come on our web page at dfpc.colorado.gov/crrweek.](https://dfpc.colorado.gov/crrweek)

We need your help!

We are currently seeking panelists to give a brief 5-minute presentation on their CRR program or initiative and how it connects to emergency response.

If you'd like an invitation to attend and/or are interested in presenting, please click the [Colorado CRR Week Interest Form.](#)



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About Us


The Fire & Life Safety Section (FLSS) is responsible for ensuring that all Public Schools, Charter Schools, Junior Colleges, State-Licensed Healthcare Facilities, Limited Gaming Facilities, and Waste Tire Facilities are constructed and/or maintained in accordance with the requirements of state statutes, regulations, adopted codes and, in the case of healthcare facilities, CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid) mandated requirements.


The Section also works to confirm that all suppression systems in the state are installed by registered professionals, inspected by certified inspectors, and are installed in accordance with the requirements of state statutes, regulations, and adopted codes. Lastly, the Section regulates and licenses persons dealing with fireworks and ensures that the sales of permissible fireworks in Colorado are being conducted in licensed retail facilities that are properly constructed and maintained for this activity. To accomplish this mission, the members of the FLSS perform building, fire, and life safety code plan reviews and inspections, help to develop other building and fire code professionals throughout Colorado by providing inspection and plan review education and training, and regulate licenses and certifications.

In addition to the above-stated enforcement activities, the Section is responsible for conducting Fire Origin and Cause Investigations when requested by a local jurisdiction and for providing assistance to local jurisdictions to assess the risks in their communities and develop and implement Community Risk Reduction initiatives to aid in reducing identified risks.


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