

## **Category 5: Community Risk Reduction Program**

This category represents the community risk reduction program for the organization and community served. The intent is to define, develop, execute and measure the program as it relates to enforcement, education, economic incentive, engineering technology and emergency response. The program is a direct output of the Community Risk Assessment or Standards of Cover document. The program, while tracking traditional performance metrics, should focus on outcomes that identify the impact within the community.

The key elements used to evaluate these services are adequacy, deficiency, effectiveness, methods and results of programs. For purposes of accreditation, these terms are defined within the glossary.

The agency's mission, goals and objectives should determine the applicability of all the listed programs. The agency should decide the relevancy of each criterion in its self-assessment manual. For criteria in Category 5 that are not applicable to the agency, the agency should briefly explain why it does not provide this program.

## **Category 5**

### **Criterion 5A: Prevention Program**

The agency operates an adequate, effective and efficient program as identified in the community risk assessment and standards of cover. The approach is comprehensive and includes both prevention and mitigation strategies such as life safety, hazard risk reduction, plan review, code compliance, and the detection, reporting and control of fire and non-fire risks. The agency should conduct a thorough risk assessment as part of activities in Category 2 to determine the need for specific prevention programs.

#### **Summary:**

The Meridian Fire Department operates a robust prevention department that includes prevention, investigation, inspections, and community risk reduction efforts. The deputy chief of prevention is the fire marshal for the City of Meridian and is the only fire marshal in the state of Idaho accredited through the Center for Public Safety Excellence. The fire marshal also oversees all of the prevention department's individual programs. The City of Meridian has adopted the 2018 International Fire Code. Fire inspectors follow National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) 1730: *Standard on Organization and Deployment of Fire Prevention Inspection and Code Enforcement, Plan Review, Investigation, and Public Education Operations* frequency guide for low, medium, and high-risk occupancies. In 2022 the department conducted nearly 3,000 inspections, including 100 percent of all high-risk occupancies in the city. Two inspectors are also dual certified as fire investigators and are responsible for the investigation of the cause, origin, and circumstances of all fires in the department's jurisdiction. The public education program operates numerous sub-programs such as smoke detector inspections, home safety inspections, community and school educational events, senior citizen safety, and juvenile fire setter prevention which result in thousands of contacts with citizens every year.

**Performance Indicators:**

**CC 5A.1      The authority having jurisdiction has an adopted fire prevention and building code(s).**

**Description**

The City of Meridian uses the full set of 2018 International Code Council Codes (I-Codes), including the 2018 International Building Code (IBC) and International Fire Code (IFC) with amendments. In cases where the IFC conflicts with Idaho Code, Idaho code shall prevail.

**Appraisal**

The City of Meridian adopted the full set of 2018 I-Codes effective January 1, 2021, by City Ordinance and codified in City Code. The City of Meridian has updated its city code regularly, with the practice of adopting every other cycle of I-codes. The city adopted amendments to the IFC as necessary and used the Idaho Code when sections of the IFC conflict with Idaho code. The practice of adopting every-other code cycle has worked well for the city and all building inspectors and fire code officials have been able to enforce the code for new and existing occupancies.

**Plan**

The deputy chief of prevention and the city’s building official will continue to be responsible for evaluating the current fire code and Idaho code and make amendments as necessary. The city will continue with the every-other-cycle of adoption and plan to adopt the 2021 I-Codes in January of 2024.

**References**

- City of Meridian Ordinance 20-1905
- City of Meridian Code of Ordinances, Chapter 10-4-1 Fire Code Adopted
- City of Meridian Code of Ordinances, Chapter 10-4-2 Amendments to the Fire Code
- International Fire Code 2018

- International Building Code 2018

**CC 5A.2      The code enforcement program ensures compliance with applicable fire protection law(s), local jurisdiction, hazard abatement, and agency objectives as defined in the community risk assessment/standards of cover.**

**Description**

The Meridian Fire Department has three fire inspectors and a fire marshal who ensure compliance with adopted fire codes through regular building inspections. MFD utilizes *Mobile-Eyes*, a record management system that automatically schedules inspections based on building occupancy type, following National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) 1730: *Standard on Organization and Deployment of Fire Prevention Inspection and Code Enforcement, Plan Review, Investigation, and Public Education Operations* frequency guidelines for low, medium, and high hazard occupancies. Following regularly scheduled inspections, *Mobile-Eyes* generates an inspection report listing any code violations and schedules re-inspections at 2-week intervals. Certain identified hazards or violations, such as inoperable fire alarm or suppression systems, require that occupancies implement a fire watch during business hours. Over 95% of the city’s occupancies are compliant with inspections and codes.

**Appraisal**

The code enforcement and inspection program has ensured compliance with the International Fire Code as adopted by the city council. The inspection program has followed up on code violations in 2-week intervals. The majority of code issues encountered are resolved voluntarily. In certain circumstances, due to logistical delays, certain violations could not be solved in a timely way and those cases were addressed on a case-by-case basis. For cases in which code violations were persistent with no need for accommodation, the violations were referred to the city attorney. The department completed nearly 3,000 inspections in 2022 with 100% completion rates for all assigned inspections and re-inspections.

**Plan**

With the explosive growth that the City of Meridian has seen in the last 3 years, the department has need for an additional fire inspection on its staff. The deputy chief of

prevention will work with the fire chief and the finance department to request an additional inspector position in the city's 10-year comprehensive financial plan.

### **References**

- Mobile Eyes Inspection Report Example
- NFPA 1730: *Standard on Organization and Deployment of Fire Prevention Inspection and Code Enforcement, Plan Review, Investigation, and Public Education Operations*
- Fire Watch Flyer

**CC 5A.3      The prevention program has adequate staff with specific expertise to meet the goals, objectives and identified community risks.**

**Description**

The department's prevention division consists of the deputy chief of prevention, who is also the city's fire marshal, and three cross-trained fire inspectors and investigators. Fire investigators are certified as International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI) Fire Investigation Technicians (FIT) and IAAI Certified Vehicle Fire Investigators (CVFI) certification. The deputy chief of prevention is IAAI Certified Fire Investigator (CFI) and National Association of Arson Investigators (NAFI) Certified Fire and Explosion Investigator (CFEI) certified. Prevention through public education is designed, coordinated and instructed by the Community Risk Reduction (CRR) staff. This includes a CRR Program Manager and CRR specialists. These programs focus on smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, child car seats, CPR, home inspections, reading programs and injury prevention, among others. Line personnel are also able to conduct low-level fire investigations, smoke detector inspections, and all entry-level firefighters are certified as car-seat technicians.

**Appraisal**

The City of Meridian has seen a huge increase in growth, population, and development over the last several years without a corresponding increase in prevention and community risk reduction staff. The inspection staff has been able to complete all assigned inspections, however is dealing with a backlog of low-priority inspections. The department added an additional CRR specialist to assist with the coordination of public education and risk reduction in the community. The deputy chief of prevention has added an additional inspector/investigator position to the city's 10-year Comprehensive Financial Plan (CFP) to have one investigator available for each shift. All fires in the City of Meridian have been handled by Meridian Fire Department investigators on on-scene crews.

**Plan**

The deputy chief of prevention will work with the fire chief and finance department to request an additional fire inspector/investigator for the CRR division. The deputy chief

will work with the CRR division and line personnel to increase services, including planning programs that reach large audiences instead of individual home visits, and to increase the number of prevention services that line personnel can provide, including potential inspections.

### **References**

- 10 Year Comprehensive Financial Plan by Department FY 2019-2028, Pg. 3-5
- Meridian Fire Department Organizational Chart 08.02.23
- Deputy Chief of Prevention – Job Description
- Captain – Fire Inspector Job Description

5A.4 A plan review process ensures that adopted codes and ordinances determine the construction of buildings and infrastructure (such as hydrants, access, and street width).

### **Description**

The deputy chief of prevention reviews all pre-applications for projects in the City of Meridian for access, water supply and other applicable codes (such as Firefighter Air Replenishment Systems (FARS)). The city uses *Accela* to track plan reviews and building permits. The deputy chief of prevention also evaluates building and project applications for response time reliability. Plans are then submitted to the planning and zoning department and then to city council for approval. The City of Meridian uses a third-party contractor, Fire Code Consultants Northwest, for inspections on construction projects, as well as final life safety inspections prior to a Certificate of Occupancy being issued. Any code issues or violations are communicated to the deputy chief of prevention. The city's other divisions (public works, land development, mechanical, electrical, etc.) review plans for all non-fire code related applications and have inspectors for their specialties.

### **Appraisal**

The plan review process used by the City of Meridian has ensured compliance with codes and ordinances. By using a third-party contractor for plan reviews and inspection, the city has freed up the fire department's inspectors to conduct more inspections on existing structures. The department has maintained good communication with Fire Code Consultants Northwest and all code issues have been resolved in a timely manner. The use of the *Accela* software ensures that all appropriate departments can monitor projects in real time.

### **Plan**

The department will continue to use the current plan review process.

### **References**

- ACCELA Plan Review Workflow
- Fire Code Consultants Northwest Contract

5A.5 The prevention program identifies the frequency that occupancies are inspected.

### **Description**

The department uses *MobileEyes* software for inspection planning and scheduling. Inspections are scheduled automatically following National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) 1730: *Standard on Organization and Deployment of Fire Prevention Inspection and Code Enforcement, Plan Review, Investigation, and Public Education Operations* frequency guidelines for low-, medium-, and high-risk occupancies. Occupancy types are defined by the International Building Code and categorized as low, medium, or high risk and are inspected triennially, biennially, and annually, accordingly. The department's goal is to inspect 100 percent of all high-risk occupancies annually.

### **Appraisal**

The *MobileEyes* software has scheduled inspections according to NFPA 1730 standards. In 2022, the department inspected 100 percent of all high-risk occupancies on schedule, which account for 32 percent of all occupancies in the city. The department has had a backlog of low- and moderate- risk occupancies, due to the need for additional inspector personnel.

### **Plan**

The deputy chief of prevention will continue to monitor inspection completion percentages, with the goal of 100 percent of all high-risk occupancies being inspected annually. The deputy chief will work with the fire chief and the finance department to budget for an additional fire inspector in the department's 10-year Comprehensive Financial Plan. The department will continue to use *MobileEyes* as its inspection management and scheduling software.

### **References**

- Mobile Eyes Inspection Report Example
- NFPA 1730: *Standard on Organization and Deployment of Fire Prevention Inspection and Code Enforcement, Plan Review, Investigation, and Public Education Operations*

5A.6 The agency sets specific, targeted, and achievable annual loss reduction benchmarks for fire incidents and fire casualties based upon the community risk assessment and baseline performance.

### **Description**

The department's prevention division focuses on loss reduction through inspections and investigations, and through its partnership with the community risk reduction (CRR) program and dedicated public education department. It is difficult, if not impossible, to quantify the number of fires prevented through the efforts of regular inspections, public education, smoke detector inspections, and other community risk reduction efforts. In addition, annual dollar loss is difficult to quantify year over year as the City of Meridian home values have increased dramatically in the last 5 years. However, the department uses the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) annual fire loss reports as a guide for measuring reduction benchmarks. The department's goal is to be below the national average for fires per thousand population size. The department also has a goal to inspect 100 percent of all high-risk occupancies annually.

### **Appraisal**

The NFPA reports that the national average for fires per thousand population in 2021 was 3.3, or 3.6 for communities with 100,000-249,999 persons. The City of Meridian averaged 2.69 fires per 1,000 people in 2021. This included car fires, structure fires, fires of "unknown" origin, appliance fires, outdoor fires, as well as fires that were reported but no problem was found on scene. In addition, in 2022 the public education program made over 60,000 contacts with citizens through alarm and detector inspections, juvenile fire setter interviews, school educational tours, senior home and center events, and other. The department successfully inspected 100% of all high risk occupancies in the City of Meridian in 2022.

### **Plan**

The department will continue to inspect occupancies according to the NFPA 1730: *Standard on Organization and Deployment of Fire Prevention Inspection and Code Enforcement, Plan Review, Investigation, and Public Education Operations* frequency guidelines and continue to look for ways to expand its community risk reduction

programs. The newly hired community risk reduction (CRR) specialist will be in charge of analyzing all the department's CRR programs and look for ways to improve outreach and maximize efficiency. The department will continue to track fires per thousand population each year to monitor for any changing trends that may prevent it from reaching its goal.

### **References**

- Fire Loss in the United States During 2021, NFPA Research Group. Pg 4.
- Meridian Fires per 1,000
- NFPA 1730: *Standard on Organization and Deployment of Fire Prevention Inspection and Code Enforcement, Plan Review, Investigation, and Public Education Operations*
- Alarm Inspection Contacts 2022
- Public Education Event Contacts 2022

**CC 5A.7      The agency conducts a formal and documented program appraisal, at least annually, to determine the program’s impacts and outcomes, and to measure performance and progress in reducing risk based on the community risk assessment/standards of cover.**

**Description**

The prevention division of the department conducts a prevention program appraisal annually. In addition, the department prepares an annual update for the published Meridian Fire Department Annual Report. The program appraisal examines the program’s budget, number of inspections completed and violations noted, as well as goals for the upcoming year.

**Appraisal**

The prevention division has provided an annual appraisal in the form of an annual report for many years. Starting with Fiscal Year 2022 the department began completing a more formal program appraisal following accreditation models, including an analysis of the program’s inputs and outputs, performance, budget, and goals. In FY 22 the inspection program had a budget of \$457,594, completed 2,868 inspections, noted 946 violations (848 of which were cleared), and added an additional fire inspector to the staff. The City of Meridian also averaged 2.69 fires/1,000 for 2022, below the national average.

**Plan**

The department will continue to complete annual program appraisals, following the fiscal year calendar and timing appraisals to be due prior to the city budget process. The department will continue to evaluate the current appraisal methodology and update as needed. The department will gauge the effectiveness of its program based on high risk occupancy inspection completion, fires per 1,000 population, and number of fires in high risk occupancies.

**References**

- ASOG – Program Appraisal
- Annual Program Appraisal – 5A.7 Fire Prevention