



CFAI 10th Edition and Community Risk Assessment CRR Radio www.StrategicFire.org/crrradio#knott

- Narrator: From the Vision 2020 project, welcome to CRR Radio.
- Ed Comeau: Today on CRR radio we're talking about a new publication out from the Center for Public Safety Excellence, Quality Improvement for the Fire and Emergency Services, or more commonly known as the CFAI 10th Edition. A significant part of this document focuses on Community Risk Assessment. And joining us today is Division Chief Matthew Knott with the Rockford Illinois fire department. Matt, could you take a moment and tell us a little bit about yourself and your role in the development of the 10th Edition?
- Matt Knott: Sure. Glad to be here and thanks for having me on and to talk about this important document. Like you said, my name is Matthew Knott. I've been with the Rockford fire department for over 23 years and currently in a role of the Division Chief of administration and fire prevention. So I manage all of our outreach and community education and our risk assessment for our department. This project, I'm very proud to be on, and very humbled to be a small part of it. This project we've been going for a while and then developed a great document that'll help us drive fire services into the future.
- Ed Comeau: Well, I'm really glad you could join us Matt. And maybe we can just start off with explaining how the 10th Edition is being used by fire departments that are undergoing accreditation.
- Matt Knott: Sure. This document really helps to do that. The self-assessment, and really when we look at accreditation, it's about really analyzing what you're doing as an agency and how you are best serving your citizens and how you can improve moving forward. So this document really kind of sets that tone and provides some guidance and some best practices and certain objectives that need to be met and to identify and reach these certain criteria. And as we move forward with the different sections too.
- Ed Comeau: And what was the process for developing the 10th Edition? It certainly wasn't something I know that was developed in a silo by any stretch of the imagination. How was it all put together? Where did the input come from?
- Matt Knott: This project has been ongoing. Obviously we had a great addition with the 9th Edition to start with as a template, but really the process began in 2018, looking for applications to serve on a committee. Committees were established actually in February of '19, where these assignments were made. And then ultimately a final draft was put out in mid 2019 with edits and everything else moving forward from there. And really Category 5 is I think one of the focuses we'll discuss today, but that had 15 people assigned to it. And these are experts and peers throughout the whole country and really provide some unique perspectives on the different areas of that criteria.
- Ed Comeau: So really what you're saying is these are people that walk-the-walk and talk-the-talk when it comes to community risk reduction in assessment.
- Matt Knott: Absolutely. Absolutely. And you know, the subject matter experts, there was a lot of applications. And like I said, we were able to choose 15 people out of that group. But as a whole, the entire document had just a rough number. But you know, 30 to 40 people involved in it. Those are individuals from across the country, departments, career, volunteer, big, small, all spectrums, and really gave a unique perspective to this document as we moved it forward.

- Ed Comeau: So what were some of the big changes between the 9th and the 10th Edition?
- Matt Knott: Some of the biggest changes is specifically breaking out a couple of components. And one of them, when we looked at just how important things like internet and our IT support are. And then one of the biggest sections was probably Category 11, which is a new health and safety section. But then specifically in Category 5, this always was just our programs. And really what we encompassed in this edition was lumping them all together under a community risk reduction program. Understanding that we have a community risk reduction involves a lot of things, but one is it involves that specific investment of resources to address those risks that we've identified. So that's probably one of the biggest changes of it. And certainly, it took a while for the committee to kind of get our heads around that whole concept. But really, I think it made for a great document and certainly something that will drive all of our agencies forward in the future.
- Ed Comeau: And the fact that there was so much emphasis given to community risk reduction and committee risk assessments in this document. Is it fair to say that CRR is really becoming a growing and perhaps even a more ingrained part of today's fire service?
- Matt Knott: I think so. I mean, it certainly is in our organization. And I think that this 10th Edition really serves as that driving tool to make that such as we move forward too. I mean, certainly community risk reduction and the various approaches that are identified in those as more a comprehensive program to drive your agency. It makes sense. You know, we can put a lot of information, a lot of emphasis out there specifically designed to, to reduce incidents, but also as a more holistic approach that community risk reduction program involves those responses to it. It makes sure you have appropriate resources to address your risks and your staff are appropriately trained to, again, address those risks and it all kind of fits in hand-in-hand and makes for a very solid program moving forward too.
- Ed Comeau: So really what you're saying is CRR is as part of emergency response as it is all the other aspects that we traditionally think of like fire prevention. It's the firefighters on the front line that are just as instrumental as anything else.
- Matt Knott: Absolutely. And that was, like I said, that was something that was... It was kind of unique when you think of fire suppression. Is that part of community risk reduction? And the emphasis in this addition is in fact it is. It is as a larger part of community risk reduction as our fire investigations or public education program. Again, those are all pieces and parts of it, but that whole system, and basically all of our response efforts really truly drive that community's risk reduction effort.
- Ed Comeau: A few times you've mentioned Category 5. For some of our listeners that may not be familiar with the whole accreditation process, can you explain that a little bit?
- Matt Knott: Sure. So the 10th Edition is really broken down and like I said, a lot of it is risk-based. So it has a... There's a lot of emphasis on identifying risks unique to your community, developing plans to address those. But really the document and the true CFAI model really breaks down into 11 different categories. And those are designed to cover all aspects of the fire service including things like perhaps finance and assessment and planning and training. And with that, with health and safety and our physical resources looking at plans, and our fixed facilities and our apparatus, and including our apparatus maintenance sections too. So there's a

lot of different components involved in this model, and all of them are designed to help identify and assess the department and as a more holistic approach.

Ed Comeau: So community, as you were talking about, mirrors reductions just as much a part of operations as everything else in this day and age, that's for sure. And so, as I'm looking at the document here, it also incorporates Standards of Coverage. It's C-R-A, slash, standards of cover. Can you explain a little bit of what Standards of Covers means?

Matt Knott: Standard of Cover can be looked at a couple of different ways, but probably the easiest way is, is to look at basically how you address that risk with CRA and with your community risk assessment you are developing, and identifying, the unique risks of your community. Your Standard of Cover looks at things like response times and apparatus positioning, station locations, any unique hazards, both geography-based and infrastructure based. And really helps identify what those issues are and helps you to identify those challenges, but also to identify solutions to those. And these are things that can be incorporated into budgets as we move forward into our strategic planning process to help but try and identify solutions to some of the problems we identify. But again, it's just a great tool to help drive your organization forward.

Ed Comeau: So really starts at the first step on really developing a Standards of Cover or community risk reduction plan, or a strategic plan, is doing a comprehensive community risk assessment. That's the first thing you have to do out of the gate to get everything else going.

Matt Knott: Right. It's difficult to, to really understand your risks if you haven't really identified them. So it's these tools are great ways to really take a deep dive into your community. Oftentimes we think we know all the hazards and challenges that we might face in our community, but when you start incorporating perhaps census data and all of our unique hazards that makes a more comprehensive document and certainly helps to drive future progress.

Ed Comeau: And actually that was almost my next question, I was going to ask you that. So often you talk to any firefighter or fire chief what their problem is, it might be what their last three calls where, okay we've got a kitchen fire problem or, or something along that line, but when you look at the data it could paint a dramatically different picture, couldn't it?

Matt Knott: Absolutely. And again, the data-driven decisions is kind of a key hallmark of this too, is really we sometimes, so you said, we can think or we feel, but data shows us exactly what our challenges are, where they're at, really helps us predict what will happen in the future too.

Ed Comeau: Fire's in our name. We're fire departments with fire and EMS services and stuff, but often fire isn't necessarily the biggest risk, is it?

Matt Knott: No, not necessarily. Certainly there's... And even breaking down the risks in buildings, certainly there are some buildings especially speaking directly of fire, there are some buildings that pose a much higher risks than others. And those are, there might have an at-risk population we'll say, but because of the building systems, whether it's the alarm systems and fire suppression systems and those built in engineered systems, we can work drastically pretty quickly there to reduce some of that risk and some of those risk levels in those buildings. And

that corresponds back to risk tolerance and really where we're looking to devote resources and what kind of risk are we comfortable with. And that's individuals and individual decisions and homes, to large infrastructure projects. And, and all of the above.

Ed Comeau: This manual was primarily written because a Florida department going through accreditation. Would it be of use to a department that has not gone through accreditation with the information in here, be useful to them in developing a CRA whether they needed it for accreditation or not?

Matt Knott: Yes. I mean, this is, these are just great tools to help drive an organization forward. I mean, and that's just it. And whether, like I said, ultimately the accreditation is, I feel, is the key part. Because that has a group of peers that come and evaluate. Because we can say we're a good organization, or we can say we developed all these plans, but having an outside agency come in and a group of peer assessors come in and really take that deep dive in, take that different perspective, different approach to your organization, and really look and verify and validate that in fact what you say you're doing is you what you are doing, and provide some opportunities for improvement.

I think that's the best approach, but certainly every single component in here is something that any agency seeking to improve. And that's the whole goal is that that whole model and goal of continuous improvement is what's important. And whether that involves necessarily seeking out accreditation, whether or not that's right for your agency, that's each agency's decision. But I think that ultimately that's the stamp of approval that says, in fact, we are beating this rugged standard as we move forward.

Ed Comeau: I mean, would you almost call this a how-to manual on doing a CRA?

Matt Knott: Certainly these are definitely tools that should be incorporated as we look to develop a risk assessment. And as we look to make our organizations better in the future.

Ed Comeau: Well Matt, I'm really glad you could join us today talking about this because to me, we have to move beyond, just like I talked about earlier, that focus on just fire to a more holistic approach. And I think that's probably one of the keywords on this. We could say this is a holistic look at any community, isn't it? That's kind of one of the big cultural shifts that has to be made, isn't it?

Matt Knott: I think so. And like I said, each of these components fall into place. I mean, we could have the best response team in and looking at, technical rescue team, or hazardous materials response, or something like that. But certainly when we talk about these big disasters and big incidents that do occur, we got to look back and think is there a way to prevent those from occurring in the first place? To one is to reduce injuries and potential deaths. But two is to look at and keep these businesses in business and keep them operational in our community. And understanding that we're here to serve our citizens. And if we can prevent an incident from occurring, I think that's a much better approach than responding to the same thing repeatedly and not learning from that, and adjusting and making it better for everybody.

Ed Comeau: Well, we've been talking with Division Chief, Matthew Knott, not from the Rockford fire department about the new document for CPSC, Quality



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Improvements with the Fire and Emergency Services, or what's commonly known as the 10th Edition.

Matt. I really appreciate you joining us today on CRR radio.

Matt Knott: Great. Thank you very much and appreciate the time.

Ed Comeau: And if you aren't already subscribing to CRR radio, you can do it through your favorite podcast app, whether it's Apple podcast, Stitcher, Overcast, or just about any other app, just search for CRR radio, hit the subscribe button, and you'll get CRR radio automatically downloaded whenever we come out with a new episode. CRR radio is a production of Vision 2020. It's edited by Rich Palmer and produced by me, Ed Comeau. Thanks for listening, and we'll see you next time.

Narrator: This is CRR Radio.