



# Community Risk Reduction Program

## Model Performance Template & Guidance Document

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## Introduction

Model performance criteria (MPC) is the gold standard that drives the focus for all risk reduction programming and helps fire departments measure their program value toward a desired outcome. Whether your effort is education programming, home safety visits, EMS or mobile integrated healthcare, inspections and enforcement, or firefighter/operational safety; MPC clearly defines the risk, intervention strategies, and program impact that is focused on your outcome or desired state. While the steps for model performance are clearly defined, Vision 20/20 has identified a gap between the knowledge and practical application of MPC and we have created this simple template to use with any risk reduction effort. As Community Risk Reduction incorporates a holistic and diverse approach to managing risk, using this template provides a critical approach in measuring effectiveness, driving performance, and fostering organizational improvement. Simply stated, model performance measurement is the value-add that the fire service provides to the communities they serve.

Our goal is to streamline the process, which enables you to create evidence-based, 2-page synopsis of your Community Risk Reduction (CRR) program describing your research, design, evaluation, and impact towards your desired outcome and helps to engrain the evaluation process into your organizational culture. This template focuses on the four evaluation measures of model performance that include formative, process, impact, and outcome. These measures are attributed to your planning, implementation, short-term and long-term effects. As a point of reference, before you start your journey of model performance measurement, you should visit our website to review the library of model performance presentations from our Symposium series to examine what others have done for similar programs. The goal of Vision 20/20's Model Performance in Community Risk Reduction Symposium is to identify the best programs in the nation and provide an avenue for replication in other communities.

Vision 20/20 also offers a variety of training and an Outcomes Guide. This guide is critical to understanding the stark difference between output versus outcomes. There is a direct relationship between these two principles, namely that outputs are the actions or items that contribute to achieving your desired outcome. Outputs are simple measures of work performed like incident counts, response time,

number of people trained but they do not communicate the value of the organization towards their desired goals and objectives. Outcome measures tell us if our ultimate goals of public safety have been reached by documenting changes in fire or medical incidents, dollar losses, injuries, or deaths. Using these tools, you can drive organizational excellence by increasing the model performance skillset.

All Vision 20/20 products are available at no cost through our website [www.strategicfire.org](http://www.strategicfire.org).

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## How to use this template

Documenting the four model performance sections of your Community Risk Reduction program sets the stage for others to understand the five tenants of who, what, why, when, and how. This provides the intricate detail to show your program is research based and is tailored to address the identified risk through proven intervention strategies with appropriate measurements in place. Before you start, you should understand that this process is secondary to analyzing data associated with the problem you are facing. This is an important first step to clearly identify the risk, desired outcome, and prevent the creep of scope when it comes to program development. If your problem statement is not concise or excessively broad your program and associated measurements toward your goal will be increasingly difficult to obtain. You should also be realistic in setting output goals, which can be an incredible asset in gaining and retaining momentum.

If you find that obtaining data and performing the required analysis present challenges, we encourage you to look at Vision 20/20's Data Collection & Analysis training course. This 2-day course provides the basics for understanding your organizations data and the elements necessary to complete a basic Community Risk Assessment for your organization.

Data measurement is essential in creating model programs. If you are using this this template to measure existing efforts, we highly recommend that you examine current data to determine whether changes are warranted to formative or process measures. Depending on program age, it would also be prudent to examine advances in technology that may provide a higher level of intervention than previously existed.

From everyone at Vision 20/20, we are encouraged by your interest in measuring your performance as a holistic approach to risk reduction management across all disciplines in your organization. Using this formula and associated template can pay large dividends in building a culture of measurement and model performance for all aspects of risk management. To reinforce this holistic approach, whether it is addressing firefighter safety, emergency response to incidents, EMS and mobile integrated healthcare, building inspections & code enforcement, plans review, fire & life safety education or fire investigation, this process helps others understand

the vision your organization has created for building a safe, healthy & resilient community. Vision 20/20 encourages you to share the model performance evaluation of your programs with us to be included in our online library for others to learn from your experience and build a framework for replication across the nation.

The following content provides detailed descriptions in creating all four sections of your Model Performance Evaluation and the resulting output is a two-page synopsis of your identified risk, program, and measurements toward your desired outcome.

## Risk Assessment Primer

Vision 20/20 encourages all fire departments to conduct a basic Community Risk Assessment (CRA) to determine which risks are most prevalent in your community. Risk can also fluctuate within your response area for a variety of reasons that include demographics, building age and use, as well as special hazards. For this reason, your basic CRA is a living document that will grow over time as you narrow your focus towards natural community boundaries (North, South, East & West) or fire station response districts. The CRA is the story of your organization and community; those that have a deep understanding of its contents have a definitive leg up on understanding the importance of CRR and the risks, problems, and challenges within your response area.

Once you have identified and prioritized risk, you can begin to select those that have a good match to local resources and start the CRR planning process. There are tools and training to assist you in successfully completing your basic risk assessment and we encourage you to add these to your toolbox. For more assistance, you can visit our website to take advantage of Vision 20/20's free offerings.

Prior to proceeding with the next section of program evaluation, you should have completed the process of assessing the risk you are attempting to mitigate. This risk assessment can be simple or complex, depending on the complexity of problem. Use your risk assessment to narrow the scope of the problem that you want to focus on. If you are looking at firefighter injuries, try to identify a single problem such as back injuries, rather than all injury types. The resulting effort, program development, and measurements will be very specific, which allow for the identification of distinct intervention strategies and well-developed measurements directly focused on a single problem. It should be noted that CRR is holistic in its approach to risk and there are times when a comprehensive program is warranted to capitalize on engagement opportunities and address a wide range of risk. Home Safety Visits would be an example of such a comprehensive program. Evaluation of such programs should build in measurements for each risk that the program is addressing and will build out your model performance evaluation document accordingly.

Your risk assessment is a critical step to help your team have focused discussions on root causes that are key to developing solid intervention strategies using the 5 E's of Community Risk Reduction: Education, Engineering, Enforcement, Economic Incentives and Emergency Response. For additional details on intervention strategies and program planning, visit our website at [www.strategicfire.org](http://www.strategicfire.org) and review the CRR Planning Guide.

## Model Performance Criteria

Model Performance Criteria (MPC) helps us to understand two key questions. Are we doing the right thing, and are we doing the thing right? This template helps organizations arrive at the answers to those questions with evidence that supports your efforts in a two-page evaluation synopsis. The goal is to help others understand what is working, what needs to be changed, and ultimately if your program has had a positive impact on the problem that you have identified. Program development is a fluid process, and there are always changes and adjustments that need to be made when a certain aspect of the development or implementation lifecycle does not meet your needs. This change process is supported by the six step Community Risk Reduction model and is an important lesson for personnel to gain an understanding of how we learn from mistakes or miscues. Being supportive through program development and implementation helps other take ownership of the program or certain program elements without the fear of failure.

## The Problem Statement

Writing a problem statement is an important step to engaging your organization or readers to see the importance and pain that surrounds an issue. A clearly defined and well-understood problem is crucial to finding and implementing effective solutions. This process provides the pathway to building a connection, gaining commitment, and helping others take ownership of the problem. The problem statement is based on the facts that we already know from data analysis.

The problem statement is a single sentence that always start with the following, “The Problem is...”. The benefits of using this approach are to provide important information that is crucial in decision-making in relation to policies and programs. Problem statements identify who the problem impacts, what those impacts are, where and when the problem occurs, and are the driver of discussions on why it needs to be fixed.

Below we provide some examples of problem statements with a simple analysis that highlights both positive and negative aspects and provide a rewrite. Authors should resist including too much information into the problem statement or provide solutions for the issue at hand. The goal is to be concise and focus the reader’s attention on understanding the issues, which offers the opportunity to get behind the problem.

## Problem Statement Examples

*The problem is that over the past 7 years the (jurisdiction) has experienced a 37% increase in the numbers of residential fires and 44% increase in fire fatalities in non-owner-occupied residential structures.*

This example is timebound, highlights the increase in both fires and fire fatalities in a very specific subset of occupancies within a distinct jurisdiction. It incorporates two separate problems, an increase in residential fires and an increase in fire fatalities.

*The problem is that over the past 7 years the (jurisdiction) has experienced a 44% increase in fire fatalities in non-owner-occupied residential structures.*

In this rewrite, the statement, *37% increase in the numbers of residential fires*, is removed from the problem statement to focus on a single problem (fire fatalities). The increase in fires is a contributing factor or root cause of the fire fatalities and can be used as supporting documentation in your formative analysis of your program.

*The problem is that 31% of businesses within the City of XXXXXX are operating without a certificate of occupancy.*

This example shows a very concise and easy to understand problem although it describes a single snapshot in time and doesn't highlight whether the problem is increasing or decreasing.

*The problem is that over the past 5 years there has been a 24% increase in businesses within the City of XXXXXX operating without a certificate of occupancy.*

The example is now concise, timebound, and highlights the trend of the problem.

*The problem is that firefighter injuries have seen a significant increase over the past 5 years.*

While this example is timebound, the problem statement is a bit obscure, very broad, and uses subjective language to describe the increase in firefighter injuries.

*The problem is that the XXXX fire department has seen a 62% increase in firefighter back injuries over the past 5 years.*

This rewrite quantifies the increase and narrows the profile of firefighter injuries to only include back injuries. This assists in developing a program with a narrow scope focused on definitive intervention strategies to mitigate a single risk toward firefighters.

## Formative Evaluation – Planning

This section is an important part of your evaluation and therefore we provide the most detail into what it should include. Your formative evaluation is focused on the planning aspect of your program. As discussed in the above section, formative evaluation and planning start with a distinct problem statement that clearly identifies the problem. This is a key step to help address scoping problems early in the planning process. It is worth reiterating that your risk assessment can be either simple or complex and the resulting problem statement should help readers understand the scope of the problem. To put your program into perspective, during program development, it is also important to gain an understanding of problem trends in other communities with a short comparison of your problem vs. State and National averages. If, for example, you seem to be having a distinct fire problem in non-owner-occupied residential occupancies, what are the percentages of those residences in your community compared to State and National averages?

Formative evaluation essentially answers the question of why you have selected to address the risk and allows for a detailed discussion on which of the five intervention strategies you have incorporated into your program. Understanding the value of integrating multiple intervention strategies builds considerable strength into your program and planning discussions should not limit consideration of the 5 E's to a single approach. For example, Education is likely to be a component of every model program you create, although using a single intervention such as Education is a poor strategy to change behavior or environmental factors. However, when Education is combined with Engineering and Economic Incentives, your approach to the problem brings a higher level of engagement and lends itself to a higher level of success toward your program goals and objectives. For example, a program that addresses firefighter back injuries will likely include Education for the firefighters to address the risk, but a comprehensive approach would also include Engineering (powered stretchers is an example) and a fire department policy (Enforcement) which will lead your firefighters to change behaviors toward achieving your desired Outcome (75% lower numbers of back injuries over the next two years).

A short note to close the Formative section is that frequent change during the planning process should be expected and typically leads to a better overall

program. It is a natural part of the process to change forms, trainings, presentations, installation policies, and other program components when problems arise from earlier versions. The goal here is to be supportive of the change process and simply capture the adjustment being made in planning documents.

## Process Evaluation – Implementation

Process measures tell us how programs were implemented so we can quantify the number and extent of activities and resources committed to reaching the program goals and objectives. Process outputs are those measurable elements achieved immediately after implementing an activity, program, or process. These items are commonly categorized by number of presentations delivered, inspections performed, houses visited, smoke and/or CO alarms installed and elements like qualifying incident numbers. To revisit the firefighter back injury example, an output for the process evaluation could likely be the volume of EMS calls that resulted in a patient being put on a stretcher, lifted into the ambulance, and transported. Following a short narrative on how the program was implemented, these types of process outputs can be bulleted in your model performance evaluation document.

## Impact Evaluation – Short-term Results

Impact measures tell us how much our programs have helped to change the risks of our intended audience. It is measuring elements that show changes in knowledge gained or behaviors, or changes in the environment (like smoke alarm installations, home safety visits that identify and correct fall hazards) that we know reduce risks. Remember, in this context; these impact measures are about risk. If your program scope is narrow (achieved through your problem statement) and program objectives are broad (correctly utilizing as many of the 5 intervention strategies as possible), this reduction in risk should have a positive impact on your desired outcome. This illustrates why program design and formative evaluation are so important to the process. For example, if your problem statement is focused on an

increase in fires and your desired outcome was a 100% reduction in fires, there are so many variables outside of your control that efforts to address this risk and achieve your desired outcome will either be futile or just plain luck.

Conversely, if you look at a distinct subset of fires (cooking, fires involving juveniles, WUI), are realistic in setting outcome goals, and incorporate a comprehensive set of intervention strategies, your likelihood of success is increased exponentially.

For impact measurements, we are taking outputs from your process (program implementation) and extracting measurable elements that contribute to lowering risk. An example is taking the number of tests performed in your program process and analyzing them to find the increase in knowledge gained; understanding that this single element may not solely impact your desired outcome but more so equates to lowering the risk for your intended audience.

In a more comprehensive example, if your outcome goals and objectives are to lower fire fatalities in your community, impact measurements could include the percentage of your intended audience that has seen an increase in knowledge on fire safety and escape, the percentage of homes that now have early warning from fire through the installation of smoke alarms, or percentage of homes that have installed home fire sprinklers. All these elements are focused on lowering risk and those are the elements that are captured in your impact (short-term results) evaluation.

## Outcome Evaluation – Long-term Results

Outcome measurements require you to go back and perform a risk assessment using the same data elements that you used to identify the problem at the start of this process. Has the problem frequency or severity changed over time and are the results in line with your outcome goals that you set in the formative stage of planning? There is a learning experience to be gained through outcome evaluation.

It is important to remember that trends toward your desired goals and aspired state develop over time. If your program did not meet your outcome goals, you should

examine the reasons why. Was your outcome goal set too high? Was your outcome evaluation performed too early? Were there environmental variables that you didn't account for in program design? Were your intervention strategies comprehensive enough? The answers to those questions help your personnel learn from the experience and design/develop larger, more comprehensive, and successful programs as they move forward. The experience gained through this process is a valuable tool to achieve organizational excellence and build a culture of model performance.

As you saw throughout this document, there are several examples that focused on firefighter safety. This was done by design to show how model performance evaluation and Community Risk Reduction truly accentuates a holistic approach to building safe, healthy & resilient organizations and communities.

Let's conclude with a short description of the elements that you should use in your outcome evaluation. Define and quantify resulting conditions based upon your program/project goals which include target population, goals, and objectives met; changes over time (i.e., reduction in incident rates, deaths, injuries, dollar loss, and/or revenue saved).

What follows is a Model Performance Template that you can use for the evaluation of your programs. The template is broken into distinct sections, is easy to follow, and all descriptive text should be removed from your completed evaluation.

SAMPLE TEMPLATE  
PROGRAM TITLE  
MODEL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION



Replace Maltese Cross with Organizational Logo



## Introduction

Replace this text with your introductory narrative. This section need not be lengthy and should mention the focus on using Model Performance Criteria to evaluate your efforts.

Describe why the organization felt the need to address this risk. This section, while short, provides the reader with the necessary information to understand the evaluation process and realize its benefits to both the organization and community in mitigating this risk identified.

## Problem Statement

Replace this text with your concise problem statement that you have developed. The problem is...

## Formative Evaluation

Replace this text with a summary of the Formative Evaluation by developing a narrative around the bulleted items detailed below (note – your narrative should be full text and not bulleted).

- Describe the research that went into understanding the scope of the problem, i.e. what data did you analyze to identify the risk.
- Include a risk assessment explaining related risk factors and target population the problem affects (this can be within the organization or the community).
- Add a sentence to explain how and why the addressed risk was selected.
- As it relates to your Problem Statement, identify project/program goal and objective(s) that are focused on the Outcome you desire, i.e., 50% reduction in fire fatalities within the next 5 years, 75% reduction in firefighter back injuries within the next 2 years, 50% increase in fire determinations by fire investigators over the next 3 years, etc...
- Identify the specific intervention strategies that were incorporated in program design (which of the 5 E's did you use)

- Describe the process used for development and testing materials and methods for intervention and a short section on change(s) that were necessary to program materials.

## Process Evaluation

Replace this text with a summary of the Formative Evaluation by developing a narrative around the bulleted items detailed below (note – your narrative should be full text and not bulleted).

- Describe how the program was implemented; quantify the activities and resources committed to reaching the program objective(s).
- Define and quantify outputs such as the number of inspections, presentations given, plans reviewed, qualifying incidents, environmental changes made in homes, smoke alarms installed, etc.
- Describe and quantify the required resources and any changes that were necessary to program process(es).

## Impact Evaluation

Replace this text with a summary of the Impact Evaluation by developing a narrative around the bulleted items detailed below (note – your narrative should be full text and not bulleted).

- Define and quantify changes in safety behavior and/or decreased hazards such as changes in knowledge gained, behavior, environment, policy, practice, and deployment of resources.
- These short-term impact measures are the results of analyzing the output from your process, i.e., compiling the test results from your process and detailing the increase in knowledge gained.
- It is perfectly acceptable to include charts or graphs to increase readability of the document.

## Outcome Evaluation

Replace this text with a summary of the Outcome Evaluation by developing a narrative around the items detailed below (note – your narrative should be full text and not bulleted).

- Initially this section will be very short.
- Outcome evaluation is done over a period of years as related to your goals and objectives. Depending on the scope of the risk addressed that can be as short as 3 years, but more complex programs and risk mitigation can typically take 5 years or more to assess positive effects on Outcome. You should monitor your progress on an annual basis and report those within this evaluation document.
- It is appropriate to include a chart or graph that highlights the change over the period of years you have selected.

## Conclusion

Replace this text with a short narrative with a recap of the problem, challenges you faced in program development, changes you made over time and the reasoning behind them, program impact and your analysis of program success as it relates to your outcome goals. This section should typically be 5 to 8 sentences.



Congratulations on completing your program evaluation using Model Performance Criteria. Vision 20/20 hopes you found this Model Performance document and associated template helpful and encourages you to share your evaluation with us to be included in our library of model programs. This is an important step in helping Vision 20/20 to support the U.S fire service in its effort to Educate, Equip & Engage. We would like to thank our Model Performance Template and Guidance Document sponsors for their support in the creation of this product.

Model programs can be sent to us via email at [info@strategicfire.org](mailto:info@strategicfire.org) for inclusion into our program library.