

**NFPA**

# FSI Fire Sprinkler Coalition Strategic Communications Plan Proposal

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[This document provides goals, identifies audiences, and presents strategies and activities to

implement a strategic communications plan for an FSI Fire Sprinkler Coalition.]

### **FSI Fire Sprinkler Coalition**

An FSI fire sprinkler coalition is formed to bring the fire service and other stakeholders together for the purpose of keeping the home fire sprinkler requirement in the code. The coalition participates in the code development process, develops strategies to fight anti-sprinkler legislation, identifies barriers, works with stakeholders to overcome these, and participates in the legislative process to introduce friendly legislation. It is best for the coalition to reside within a fire service organization that has a 501(c)3 designation through which funds may be funneled.

This document serves as a template to develop a strategic communications plan to raise awareness of the issue and implement activities to achieve these goals with various audiences.

### **Campaign goals**

To increase awareness of the power of fire and the home fire death problem; emphasizing the role that the home fire sprinkler requirement plays in saving lives and preventing injuries.

### **Key audiences**

- Fire service – The fire service must be “on the same page” with regards to the fire sprinkler requirement, and that there is work to be done to achieve this goal. Key audiences in this group are:
  1. Firefighters – volunteer, career
  2. Fire officers
  3. Fire chiefs
- Public
- Media
- Building code councils/Promulgating body
- Legislators
- Other stakeholders – the coalition should work to compile a list of stakeholders including, but not limited, to the following:
  1. Insurance agents
  2. Real estate agents
  3. Builders
  4. Mortgage brokers
  5. Burn nurses
  6. Safe Kids Coalition
  7. Building Officials
  8. Chambers of Commerce
  9. AARP

### **Environmental scanning**

Through committees and working groups the coalition should monitor the code development process as it relates to the home fire sprinkler requirement. Where does the promulgating/regulatory agency stand with regards to the adoption process, specifically the IRC requirement of fire sprinklers in one- and two-family homes. To achieve this, coalition members should be assigned the task of getting to know agency members and to talk to them individually about the issue. Whenever there is a vacant position at the agency the coalition should work to identify someone in favor of the requirement to fill the position.

The fire service members of the coalition should identify people (not necessarily fire service members, but other members of the business community) who have already established relationships with legislators so that they can speak individually with the members, on behalf of the

coalition, to advocate for the requirement. Engage legislators early on (before the start of the session)

A legislative survey has been developed by NFPA and may be sent to legislators and their staff members in order to gauge their knowledge of the issue and identify the best way to communicate with this group.

### **Development of messages**

The coalition should not “reinvent the wheel” and should use Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition (HFSC) materials for education and Fire Sprinkler Initiative (FSI) for advocacy messaging.

### **Communication channels**

The coalition should consider the following communication channels:

- TV and other media - coverage at coalition events
- Local government channels – airing of Faces of Fire and other PSA’s
- Print media –op-eds, newspaper ads
- Radio – paid spots and fire sprinkler advocates appearances – Develop messages and identify spokesperson
- Billboards - State specific impact messages including fire death and injury statistics
- Community meetings – educational and advocacy messaging

### **Campaign activities**

- Coalition Facebook page and website – Each coalition will have a Facebook page and a website linked to NFPA’s Fire Sprinkler Initiative website. The coalition identifies content and NFPA staff works to develop the website.
- Side-by-side demonstrations
- Faces of Fire – develop a theme featuring fire victims who reside in the state to share their stories.
- Booths at home shows
- Presentations during board meeting of identified stakeholders/business groups
- Participation at community events to provide education and awareness of the issue.
- Engagement with legislators – A standing legislative committee of any of the participating member organizations should develop a “playbook” to engage legislators
- Home fire sprinkler installation demonstration projects – Must be Built for Life FD

### **Partnerships**

The following fire service organizations should become members of the coalition:

- Fire chief associations
- Fire and life safety education associations
- Fire Inspectors Association
- Office of the State Fire Marshal
- Firefighters associations
- Firefighters union

Develop partnerships and participation of key stakeholder organizations to include, but not limited, to the following:

- Burn associations/foundations
- Sprinkler trade associations

- Real estate associations
- Home builder associations
- Insurance underwriters
- Water purveyors
- Building officials associations
- Health department
- Senior citizens associations (AARP)
- Safe Kids and other fire and injury prevention associations

### **Plan implementation**

Develop a timeline for implementing campaign activities to include who/which working group/committee will be responsible for making sure they are carried out. Some activities are ongoing, others to be conducted in response to anti sprinkler or pro sprinkler actions.

- Conduct side-by-side burn demonstrations - in major media markets, conferences, safety fairs, etc. – **Ongoing, dates?**
- Additional side-by-side burn demonstrations in the major media markets in response to pro sprinkler or anti sprinkler actions. – **Dates TBA**
- Meet with promulgating agency/building code council – Individually and request time on board meeting agenda for presentation to the entire board. – **Date?**
- Fire Team USA - this program brings together many stakeholder and is an opportunity to engage them to become involved in the coalition. – **Date/s?**
- Firefighter education during conferences, forums, fire academy, etc.
- Presentation by NFPA – NFPA staff is available to support the coalition by participating and presenting during conferences, educational forums, etc. - **Ongoing**
- Fire chief leadership forum – This is a good way to engage fire service leaders and increase awareness of the issue – **Date?**
- Op-ed pieces by fire chiefs and other organizations throughout the state - **Ongoing**
- Radio appearances by fire service and others – ongoing
- Paid radio spots to coincide with BCC/Legislative action - **TBA**
- Identify “faces” in your state – Home fire victims, victims’ families, etc to become “Faces of Fire”
- Develop messages and artwork for all media pieces for the fire sprinkler coalition brand for ongoing activities and in response to anti-sprinkler actions - **Completion date?**
- Legislative strategy playbook –Legislative committee will develop legislative outreach strategies and coordinate this effort for the coalition – **Completion date?**
- Fire service legislative day at the capitol – Press conference with large contingent of firefighters in uniform present. – **Date?**
- Newspaper ads - to coincide with anti-sprinkler legislative activities – Identify major markets in your state and list these in the plan along with daily circulation.
- Coalition booth in at least one major home show for consumer public outreach – Most of these provide special rates for non-profit state organizations; inquire about this when negotiating.
- Home fire sprinkler installation demonstration project –Work with HFSC and sprinkler trade associations to sprinkler homes in a low income community or disabled persons (including veterans) as a demonstration project.- **Date?**