



## WHITE PAPER

April 17, 2025

TO: FIRESCOPE Board of Directors

FROM: FIRESCOPE Operations Team & Task Force

SUBJECT: Community Risk Reduction/Fire Prevention Subcommittee Proposal

**Approval: The Board of Directors approved this document on April 17, 2025**

### **SUMMARY**

The FIRESCOPE Task Force proposes the formation of a subcommittee to meet, collaborate, and establish a strong connection/nexus with the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM), supporting the ongoing OSFM valuable efforts to implement, enhance and inform fire code. Additionally, the subcommittee will support and align efforts with the recommendations of the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission and the California Wildfire & Forest Resilience Task Force, furthering efforts to build resilience and reduce wildfire risks across the state.

- The proposed subcommittee will provide a structured mechanism for firefighters and designated Subject Matter Experts (SME) to provide operational application of fire code standards and recommendations to enhance incident safety and overall risk analysis. In addition, insights from the field may benefit OSFM and SME companies developing products and planning strategies that impact Community Risk Reduction (CRR), with a focus on efforts to improve the built environment in existing communities, ensuring a higher level of resiliency with reduced life and property loss.
- Meeting with the OSFM provides an invaluable opportunity for a group of firefighters, fire prevention specialists, and other SMEs to align their efforts by supporting statewide standards, initiatives, and resiliency efforts while fostering a proactive unified approach to managing wildfire risks.
- Fire codes and regulations are continually evolving to address emerging risks and technologies. Collaboration ensures that local fire prevention strategies remain current and effective. This communication opportunity will allow firefighters to gain rationale behind specific codes and regulations to enhance their ability to respond to emergency incidents, enforce fire code consistently, and educate the public and policy makers more effectively.



Fire Prevention and Operations personnel often encounter unique challenges and practical issues during emergency incidents, fire prevention inspections, plan checks, pre-construction reviews, and community education efforts. By creating this nexus, an improved communication pathway can be achieved. This collaboration not only strengthens fire response and prevention efforts but also builds a cohesive network of professionals dedicated to public safety focused on CRR, resiliency, and wildfire mitigation.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Formation of a Subcommittee “Community Risk Reduction/Fire Prevention”, including:
  - **Identify Core Members:** Form a core group consisting of fire prevention specialists and firefighters with additional members such as emergency response planners, environmental scientists, and local safety officers. The group should include a mix of operational, technical, and strategic expertise.
  - **Key Responsibilities:** Provide guidance on best practices for fire prevention and hazard mitigation, assist in identifying high-risk areas and recommend fire safety measures, evaluate fire prevention strategies and recommend updates or changes based on emerging threats or data.
  - **Regular assessment and training**
  - **Collaboration with other agencies**
  - **Public education and outreach**
  - **Continuous evaluation and feedback**

### **FISCAL IMPACTS/COST ANALYSIS**

To implement and sustain a program that supports subcommittee member participation of firefighters and prevention specialists meeting quarterly to conduct FIRESCOPE tasking, the following costs should be considered:

- **Staff Time:** Planning and coordinating for each department member.
- **Travel and Accommodation:** Lodging costs, mileage, rental vehicles, airfare reimbursement, per diem for meeting attendance.
- **Ongoing Professional Development:** Investment in continuous training to stay updated on the latest prevention technologies, mitigation strategies, and fire resilience best practices.

### **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

- Charter for 2025: Established by April 2025
- Roster Established: By July 2025
- Plan of Work: Finalized by October 2025



## **FINDINGS**

Given the ongoing evolution of fire risks, technologies, regulatory frameworks, and the existing and increased built environment in our communities, the need for regular collaboration between local fire agencies and the OSFM is more critical than ever. The FIRESCOPE Task Force recognizes that the fire service is facing increasingly complex challenges, from managing the growing risk of wildfires to adapting to new building and energy technologies.

- **Emerging Risks and Technologies:** As climate change continues to exacerbate the frequency and severity of wildfires in California, new strategies and regulations will be necessary to mitigate these risks. Collaboration between local agencies and the OSFM ensures that new codes reflect the latest scientific data and operational experience.
- **Code Consistency and Practical Application:** Local fire departments are often tasked with enforcing statewide fire codes and regulations, but without understanding the rationale behind them, the application of these codes can be inconsistent. Regular engagement with the OSFM will provide local fire agencies with a deeper understanding of these regulations, enhancing their ability to enforce them effectively and educate the public.
- **Firefighter Input into Code Feedback:** The subcommittee will also provide a structured mechanism for fire suppression personnel and other SMEs to share real-world insights from the field. This two-way exchange of ideas will help refine existing codes and propose new ones based on practical experience.

## **CONCLUSION**

The creation of a Community Risk Reduction/Fire Prevention Subcommittee will greatly enhance the State of California's ability to proactively address fire risks. By leveraging the expertise of fire prevention specialists, firefighters, and other stakeholders, the group will ensure that fire hazards are minimized, response strategies are effective, and public safety is continually improved. The recommendations outlined here provide a clear, actionable framework for establishing, resourcing, and sustaining such a group.

**Approved: 4/17/2025**