Mission Statement

The Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition (HFSC) is a national, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) educational organization. HFSC is noncommercial and does not lobby for legislation. HFSC’s sole focus is educational outreach.

The mission of the nonprofit Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition is to save lives by increasing awareness of the benefits and availability of home fire sprinkler systems, ultimately increasing the number of installations in new one- and two-family dwellings.

Home Fire Sprinkler General Prevention & Awareness Campaign

Fiscal Year 2012

Fire Prevention and Safety Grant Summary Report

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The Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition (HFSC) carried out a comprehensive strategy to improve home fire sprinkler education nationally, especially among important target audiences that are known to lack facts. HFSC’s project increased awareness of the dangers of home fires (including the problems of modern, lightweight construction) and the need for more installed home fire sprinklers to prevent injuries and save lives.

Because of HFSC’s unique partnership with the fire service, HFSC’s deliverables were used by the coalition directly and by fire departments in grassroots fire safety education. This partnership benefitted the fire service by providing a means for improved local education and it benefitted HFSC’s national outreach by increasing the coalition’s reach and expanding the impact of its resources.

Ultimately, HFSC’s educational project improved knowledge and helped to drive demand for more installations. Here is an overview of the project’s specific accomplishments:

- HFSC added new content and updated its website, improving navigation and keyword search power to generate and keep traffic. With more than half of adults using their cell phones to access the Internet, HFSC restructured its website to make it mobile-device-friendly. The content is now easy to view and navigate even on mobile devices, and searches for HFSC keywords have a higher Google ranking, improving the coalition’s reach and impact. Other websites that are not mobile-friendly are penalized with lower search rankings.

- Across the country, firefighters and other advocates are dealing with real estate groups fighting home sprinkler codes. These national and regional groups use false information and often unite individual real estate agents in their cause. Regardless of code update or adoption, real estate agents in every community need access to sprinkler facts. To increase their awareness of the dangers of home fires, the benefits of sprinklered homes and HFSC’s free resources, the coalition’s grant project contained three core outreach tactics:

  - HFSC staffed an educational booth at the National Association of REALTORS (NAR) Conference & Expo, the largest real estate agent conference. HFSC hired professional actor Tom Clark to help drive traffic to its booth by hosting the educational BUILT FOR LIFE Game. Clark’s decades of experience working crowds at trade shows increased HFSC’s attendee engagement and gave staff more opportunities to educate agents waiting in line. Real estate agents waited in line to interact with Clark and answer questions about fire sprinklers for a chance to win a prize. HFSC offered many resources, including the “Living with Sprinklers” Kit, which had increased appeal for California and Maryland agents, where fire sprinklers are required in all new home construction.

  - Testimonial outreach is powerful and shown to influence target audiences. To tap into this, HFSC identified a real estate agent who lives in a sprinklered home and who recommends sprinklered homes to her buyers. HFSC shot video and still photographs of her in her own home and created an educational video to help real estate agents understand the dangers of home fires, the grant-funded Harris Poll data about homebuyer interest, and how to market sprinklered homes. HFSC promoted the free video through its website, YouTube channel and social media, and via paid ads in REALTOR Magazine – Show Daily and REALTOR Magazine, reaching 1.1 million. HFSC edited it into radio spots that combined with web banner ads to reach more than 21 million on the national network “Real Estate Today” radio.

  - HFSC utilized the real estate video shoot to produce a 30-second television spot to educate consumers, especially potential homebuyers. The spot was placed on HGTV, one of the most widely watched networks, reaching 3.3 million viewers. HFSC has made it available to fire departments and others for customized local media use (at no charge to them). The educational spot is being promoted through HFSC’s website and YouTube channel, as well as through routine social media outreach.

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Sound data helps HFSC convey the importance of sprinklers, increase media interest and counter damaging myths. With Harris Interactive, HFSC conducted a national Harris Poll survey in 2014 to gauge consumer perceptions regarding home fire sprinklers. Education proved to be key: without facts, just 52% of respondents felt sprinklers were important. When given additional information, the number went up to 78%. Overall, the data HFSC acquired demonstrated strong support for home fire sprinklers, with 70% saying sprinklered homes have more value. And 74% said they’re more likely to buy a sprinklered home. This data will have a long shelf life, giving HFSC and other fire safety advocates useful information to help educate and increase interest in sprinkler installations.

HFSC also broke out the data into generational segments to better understand fire safety interest among the ages. HFSC has been promoting the results since mid-2014 through regular press releases and social media.

According to NFPA, one-half to two-thirds of new one- and two-family houses use lightweight construction, which burns hotter and fails sooner in a fire, making these houses more dangerous both to residents and firefighters. Homebuilding and real estate groups erroneously promote new homes as being safer from fire. To increase the understanding of actual home fire dangers and the unique protective benefits of home fire sprinklers, HFSC hired national home improvement expert Ron Hazelton (who lives in a sprinklered home himself), to conduct a national satellite media tour (SMT) in June 2014. The SMT focused on modern home lightweight construction dangers, life safety benefits of fire sprinklers and the Harris Poll data. HFSC confirmed a reach of nearly three million with availability to a total of more than 85 million viewers through FOX and Hallmark. A radio version of the SMT airing over two days in June 2014 reached more than 7.2 million listeners (HFSC received the second day at no cost).

To better educate building and local officials so they can actively advocate for home fire sprinklers, HFSC prepared a new video script to incorporate current information and National Institute of Standards & Technology (NIST) and Underwriters Laboratories (UL) lightweight construction data. HFSC used existing UL and Fire Prevention & Safety Grant-funded video footage from another organization and existing two-dimensional and three-dimensional graphics, combined with new video in a home being built with lightweight materials. HFSC promoted this new video as part of the coalition’s educational outreach to building and local officials, through participation and exhibits at the 2013 International City/County Management Association, International Code Council, National League of Cities and 2014 National Fire Protection Association conferences. HFSC also promoted it with single-page ads placed in their key trade publications, American City & County and Building Safety Journal, reaching more than 101,000.

HFSC announced its new video resources to the fire service and encouraged their use of them via key trade publications’ e-blast messages, reaching more than 190,000 readers.

HFSC successfully completed an outside audit for this grant. HFSC developed and implemented surveys of its grant project material, analyzed data and reviewed Web trends and other feedback. HFSC prepared an evaluation summary and report. In response to its specific grant project requests, HFSC used funds to receive and fulfill material requests and manage HFSC’s database.
Fire Service Advertising

HFSC created a new e-blast message for members of the fire service to announce the new “Selling a Home Protected by Fire Sprinklers” and “Protecting Your Community with Home Fire Sprinklers” videos. The message provided links to the HFSC website to request free copies of the DVDs and to sign up as a member of the free HFSC BUILT FOR LIFE Fire Department program.

The message was distributed through e-blasts from the following national fire service publications:

- **Firehouse**: June 24, 2014 e-blast; resulted in 102,063 messages delivered, 9,644 opened (9.45% open rate) and 604 click-throughs
- **FireRescue** (FireFighterNation.com): June 24, 2014 e-blast; resulted in 41,412 messages delivered, 6,377 opened (15.40% open rate) and 241 click-throughs
- **Fire Chief**: June 24, 2014 e-blast; resulted in 50,423 messages delivered, 9,873 opened (19.58% open rate) and 500 click-throughs

**E-BLASTS TOTALS**: 193,898 messages delivered, 25,894 opened (13.35% open rate) and 1,345 click-throughs
National Harris Poll Consumer Survey

With a new online consumer poll in 2014, HFSC updated a national benchmark study previously commissioned by HFSC in 2005 through funding from a FEMA Fire Prevention & Safety Grant.

From May 8-14, 2014, HFSC revisited homeowner awareness of home fire sprinklers and their life-safety benefits in a nationwide survey of adult homeowners. The new Harris Poll results underscored the importance of ongoing education and outreach to overcome common myths and misconceptions about home fire sprinklers.

Below are the key takeaways from the 2014 poll:

- Information and education is key. Without information regarding fire sprinklers about half (52 percent) of homeowners felt they were essential or important. After learning more, more than three-quarters (78 percent) felt the same way — an increase of 27 percentage points.

- More than three-quarters (78 percent) said home fire sprinklers provide the ultimate protection for residents.

- Seven in 10 (70 percent) said a sprinklered home has more value than an unsprinklered home.

- Three-quarters (74 percent) said they would be more likely to buy a home with fire sprinklers than one without them.

- Nearly half (47 percent) said they have more confidence in homebuilders who offer fire sprinklers than those who do not.

- Only half (56 percent) recognized the increased fire hazards associated with lightweight residential construction to residents and firefighters.

- Only one-third (31 percent) understood the open designs of homes make a home fire more dangerous.
On June 24, 2014, HFSC hosted a national satellite media tour (SMT) shot on location in a suburb of Chicago. HFSC spokesperson Ron Hazelton spoke with television news stations across the nation and explained that fires in today’s new homes burn hotter and faster, making them more deadly than fires in older homes.

While walking through a home, Hazelton made reference to data from the National Institute of Standards & Technology and Underwriters Laboratories (UL) that concluded modern lightweight construction, such as engineered wood beams, fails faster in a fire. Also, modern synthetic furnishings present in homes burn faster and emit toxic black smoke that quickly cause smoke inhalation for residents. His final point was that today’s homes are built to be energy-efficient, but the airtight construction allows fires to burn hotter than ever. Hazelton then stepped outside the home to narrate a live fire sprinkler demonstration and explained the lifesaving benefits of fire sprinklers and how they put out fires before they have a chance to grow.

The potential audience reach of all the airings was more than 2.9 million viewers.

In addition, the video was converted into an audio news release that aired June 24-25, 2014. The release reached approximately 7.21 million listeners on more than 150 radio, internet radio, and audio television stations across the nation.
Consumer Public Service Announcement

HFSC shot a 30-second television public service announcement (PSA) at the Glen Ellyn, Illinois, home of RE/MAX Suburban real estate broker Litsa Lekatsos, who lives in a sprinklered home and recommends sprinklered homes to her buyers. The spot, narrated by professional actor Tom Clark, discussed the benefits of home fire sprinklers and encouraged homebuyers to “Ask For Them.” The PSA extended on the success of the “Ask For Them” concept for consumers that was created through HFSC’s 2011 Fire Prevention & Safety Grant.

HFSC chose to air the PSA on HGTV to take advantage of its younger audience of consumers who are considering remodeling or buying a home.

The 30-second television PSA ran 12 times on HGTV the week of June 16, 2014.

- June 16: Property Brothers, Rent or Buy
- June 17: House Hunters Renovation, Flip or Flop
- June 18: Curb Appeal, Property Brothers
- June 19: Rent or Buy, Fixer Upper
- June 20: House Hunters International
- June 21: Beachfront Bargain Hunt, Love It or List It
- June 22: Buying and Selling

Impressions: 3,289,000 (gross)

View the PSA online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mK4fS2Z3JYw.
“Selling a Home Protected by Fire Sprinklers” Video

HFSC developed the new “Selling a Home Protected by Fire Sprinklers” video to educate real estate agents about the lifesaving benefits of home fire sprinklers, providing them with useful tips so they can support homeowner interest in sprinklered homes on the market.

The video is narrated by professional actor Tom Clark and features Litsa Lekatsos, a real estate broker with RE/MAX Suburban from Glen Ellyn, Illinois, who lives in a sprinklered home and recommends sprinklered homes to her buyers.

A total of 10,000 DVDs were printed and are available at no charge.

View the video online at www.homefiresprinkler.org/index.php/selling-a-home-protected-by-fire-sprinklers.
HFSC executed a targeted outreach activity on Twitter to promote the new “Selling a Home Protected by Fire Sprinklers” video. HFSC tweeted directly to major homebuilders, real estate companies and online residential building and real estate news and advice groups. This resulted in social media engagement that has opened communications between HFSC and major homebuilding companies.

- Toll Brothers now follows HFSC and shared the video with its California and Maryland teams (where fire sprinklers are required in all new home construction).

- K. Hovnanian Homes now follows HFSC and tweeted multiple tweets about the video.

- KB Home retweeted HFSC’s tweet and thanked HFSC for the video.

- Lennar Maryland and Lennar Sac (northern California) both followed and engaged in tweets with HFSC.
HFSC promoted its new “Selling a Home Protected by Fire Sprinklers” video, along with other educational materials and programs, to real estate agents at the National Association of REALTORS (NAR) Conference & Expo.

- November 8-11, 2013
- Moscone Center
  - San Francisco, California
- 10 x 20-square-foot booth space
- Attendance: 22,000

At the NAR Conference & Expo, professional actor Tom Clark hosted the interactive BUILT FOR LIFE Game, which presents multiple-choice questions and video answers about home fires and fire sprinklers.

REALTORS who answered questions correctly were able to spin the prize wheel for a chance to win an iPad Mini, Flip video camera, Target gift cards, HFSC thermoses, HFSC water bottles and San Francisco souvenirs.

REALTORS waited in line to play the interactive game, increasing their time with staff who provided information about the benefits and technology of home fire sprinklers.
HFSC developed a print advertisement for real estate agents to promote the new “Selling a Home Protected by Fire Sprinklers” video and to emphasize the additional marketability of homes protected with fire sprinklers. It featured Litsa Lekatsos, a real estate broker with RE/MAX Suburban from Glen Ellyn, Illinois, who lives in a sprinklered home and recommends sprinklered homes to her buyers.

The single-page, four-color advertisement appeared in the following national real estate agent trade publication:

- **REALTOR Magazine**: July/August 2014 issue; circulation 1,043,446

Using an existing real estate agent testimonial advertisement, HFSC spotlighted Janet Hall, a REALTOR with Keller Williams Realty in Pleasant View, Tennessee. She is a home fire sprinkler advocate in the real estate industry who uses HFSC educational materials to explain the benefits of fire sprinklers in homes she markets.

The advertisement also invited real estate agents to learn more by visiting HFSC’s booth at the 2013 National Association of REALTORS (NAR) Conference & Expo in San Francisco, California.

The single-page, four-color advertisement appeared in the following real estate agent trade publication:

- **REALTOR Magazine – Show Daily**: Distributed for three days at 2013 NAR Conference & Expo; circulation 20,000 for each issue

**TOTAL CIRCULATION: 1,103,446 gross**
Real Estate Agent Advertising (continued)

HFSC also reached out to real estate agents via a campaign through national network “Real Estate Today” radio from June 9 to July 20, 2014. The six-week campaign featured 40, 30-second and 60-second radio spots on “Real Estate Today”; 30, 30-second radio spots on Cox’s “Clark Howard” radio show; 18, 30-second radio spots on “Dennis Miller 3rd Hour” radio show; two on-air radio interviews; eight digital pre-roll audio advertisements; and eight digital banner advertisements on the website.

The first on-air radio interview occurred on July 5, 2014. Topics included home fire sprinklers in new construction homes, importance of smoke alarms and fire sprinklers working together, movie myths about fire sprinklers, how they operate, home fire sprinkler cost studies, insurance discounts, and free resources on the HFSC website. The segment ran more than four minutes.

The second interview occurred on July 26, 2014. Topics included HFSC’s mission, movie myths about fire sprinklers, how they operate, home fire sprinklers in building codes, insurance discounts, maintenance of systems, freeze protection, and free resources on the HFSC website. The segment ran more than five minutes.

- **On-air impressions** (30-second and 60-second spots, radio interviews, and all HFSC mentions as heard by terrestrial radio listeners): 16.65 million
- **Digital impressions** (download listeners, online player advertisements and listeners, and website visitors): 4.80 million

**TOTAL IMPRESSIONS: 21.45 million**
“Protecting Your Community…” Video

New construction homes have many advantages. But they also present unique fire hazards that result from lightweight construction, popular open design and certain energy-efficiency features. Combine these with typical contents, such as electronics and synthetic furnishings, and the makings of fast and deadly flashover are present.

HFSC developed the new “Protecting Your Community with Home Fire Sprinklers” video to educate building and municipal officials about the dangers of today’s modern home fires and to highlight the lifesaving benefits of home fire sprinklers. The video includes interviews with experts from the National Institute of Standards & Technology (NIST) and Underwriters Laboratories (UL). They’ve conducted fire tests and research showing why fires in new single-family homes are more dangerous and how fire sprinklers protect occupants and firefighters.

A total of 10,000 DVDs were printed and are available at no charge.

View the video online at www.homefiresprinkler.org/index.php/building-officials-video.
HFSC promoted its new “Protecting Your Community with Home Fire Sprinklers” video, along with other educational materials and programs, to building and municipal officials at the following conventions:

**International City/County Management Association (ICMA) Annual Conference**
- September 22-24, 2013
- Boston Convention Center
  - Boston, Massachusetts
- 10 x 10-square-foot booth space
- Attendance: 3,500

**International Code Council (ICC) Annual Conference**
- October 1-2, 2013
- Atlantic City Convention Center
  - Atlantic City, New Jersey
- 10 x 10-square-foot booth space
- Attendance: 1,831

**National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Conference & Expo**
- June 9-11, 2014
- Mandalay Bay Convention Center
  - Las Vegas, Nevada
- 10 x 10-square-foot booth space
- Attendance: 4,595

At the NLC Congress of Cities & Exposition, attendees who obtained information at the HFSC booth and left their contact information were entered into a random drawing for a chance to win an iPad Mini at the end of the exposition.
HFSC developed a print advertisement for building and municipal officials to promote the new “Protecting Your Community with Home Fire Sprinklers” video and underscore the problem of lightweight construction and the lifesaving value of home fire sprinklers.

The single-page, four-color advertisement appeared in the following national building/municipal official trade publications:

- **American City & County**: June 2014 issue; circulation 69,631
- **Building Safety Journal**: June 2014 issue; circulation 32,000

**TOTAL CIRCULATION: 101,631 gross**
Below are samples of media coverage HFSC received related to its grant project:

HFSC Awarded 2012 Fire Prevention & Safety Grant
- Fire Engineering online (08/01/13)
- Firehouse online (08/06/13)
- Fire Protection Contractor (p. 7, September 2013 issue)
- National Fire Sprinkler Association – Wisconsin Chapter’s “Fire Sprinkler Times” e-newsletter (08/22/13)
- Northern Illinois Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board’s “Fire Sprinkler Times” e-newsletter (08/22/13)
- Pennsylvania Fireman (p. 44, August 2013 issue)
- Sprinkler Age (p. 25, August 2013 issue)
- Wisconsin Fire Journal (p. 31, September/October 2013 issue)

National Harris Poll Consumer Survey
- Fire Engineering online (06/24/14)
- Fire Protection Contractor (p. 7, August 2014 issue)
- Greater Syracuse Association of REALTORS & Central New York Information Service’s blog (06/24/14)
- Green Builder online (02/02/15)
- “Inside Real Estate” blog (06/24/14)
- Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety’s blog (07/21/14)
- Maine Fire Service Institute online (06/27/14)
- National Fire Protection Association’s “Fire Sprinkler Initiative” blog (06/24/14; 01/28/15; 02/09/15)
- National Fire Sprinkler Association – Wisconsin Chapter’s “Fire Sprinkler Times” e-newsletter (06/24/14)
- Northern Illinois Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board’s “Fire Sprinkler Times” e-newsletter (06/24/14)
- Pennsylvania Fire & Emergency Services Institute e-mail to members (06/25/14)
- Pennsylvania Fireman (p. 34, July 2014 issue)
- RE/MAX 440 June Croissette’s blog (06/25/14)
- Sprinkler Age “Weekly News Brief” e-newsletter (06/25/14; 07/02/14)
- Western Fire Chiefs Association’s “Daily Dispatch” online (06/25/14)

Satellite Media Tour
- Illinois Fire Safety Alliance’s e-newsletter (10/06/14)
- National Fire Protection Association’s “Fire Sprinkler Initiative” blog (10/07/14)
- Sprinkler Age “Weekly News Brief” e-newsletter (07/09/14; 07/16/14; 12/24/14)
- See page 8 for more media coverage
In addition, HFSC and its educational materials were highly promoted on various social media networks, such as Twitter and Facebook, with tweets, retweets, likes and shares.
A fast-increasing number of consumers are viewing websites via their mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets, instead of traditional laptop or desktop computers.

To address the growth of mobile traffic on the HFSC website, HFSC created new mobile templates to address a variety of screen sizes from smartphones to tablets. This ensures that the HFSC website can be easily navigated no matter the device accessing it. Some content was converted to make it compatible with mobile technology.

This improvement protects HFSC’s strong position in online searches for home fire sprinkler information, especially among Google searches. Google rewards websites that have made the investment in mobile-optimization and penalizes those that have not.
Other Website Improvements

Throughout the course of the grant period, HFSC updated its website with grant-developed educational materials and programs as they were released (with quick links from the homepage). Those included:

- Harris Poll Consumer Survey
- “Selling a Home Protected by Fire Sprinklers” Video
- “Protecting Your Community with Home Fire Sprinklers” Video

Also, HFSC updated the list of members in its BUILT FOR LIFE Fire Department (BFLFD) program.

Among many other improvements, website maintenance also included updated keyword search terms and the addition of new photography and press releases to the media room.