Campaign Guide

NFPA 1710

IAFF ALWAYS ON THE FRONTLINE
With the final approval of NFPA 1710 Standard behind us, many IAFF affiliates across our two nations are now poised to take action to implement this new standard. NFPA 1710 will have a positive impact on the ability of our union members to do their jobs safely and effectively for decades to come.

The IAFF fought long and hard to develop and pass this new standard and successfully defeat the subsequent appeals of the decision. None of us will ever forget the unity and commitment of our affiliate leadership that heeded our call when more than 2,500 IAFF members came to May 2001 NFPA meeting in Anaheim, California, to cast an overwhelming vote in favor of NFPA 1710.

Now it is up to you and the International to work to implement NFPA 1710 in your respective jurisdictions. It won't be easy, but it is absolutely necessary to end inadequate staffing that exists in many of your fire departments. In some places, elected officials and fire chiefs will work with you hand-in-hand to embrace NFPA 1710 and improve fire and emergency services in their communities. In other locations, you will face stiff opposition from all sides and you will be required to wage an all-out campaign to get public support behind your efforts to achieve implementation of the standard.

This NFPA 1710 Campaign Guide, produced by the IAFF strictly for IAFF affiliates, is aimed at helping you map out your game plan. You must pursue the path to implementation in just the same way as you would work to elect a political candidate or run a referendum campaign. It will take organization, planning and a lot of hard work and dedication, but the results will be worth it.

This IAFF Campaign Guide is designed to serve as a companion to the NFPA 1710 Implementation Guide, which is sponsored jointly by the IAFF and the International Association of Fire Chiefs. Although the Implementation Guide provides IAFF locals, fire chiefs and city officials the knowledge, the data and a process to evaluate their fire and EMS department and move toward implementation, this Campaign Guide gives you the tools to help you wage your campaign in the political arena.

As always, the International and its professional staff are prepared to work with your local union to help achieve NFPA 1710 compliance in your jurisdiction. Good luck and work hard. Together we will prevail for the benefit of our members and our communities.

Fraternally,

[Signature]
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In 2001 the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) took an essential first step in our campaign to improve fire fighter and public safety when it passed Standard 1710. NFPA 1710 Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments sets minimum standards for fire fighter deployment, response times and other factors involved in determining service delivery of fire fighting and emergency medical systems.

The next step, equally essential, requires IAFF locals to encourage officials in their city, county, state or provincial government to implement the new standard. This document is a guide to developing your campaign for implementing 1710 and to bringing about the necessary departmental changes to meet the performance criteria contained in the standard. The companion guidebook offers assistance in understanding the technical requirements for implementing 1710.

We begin this guidebook by explaining how to determine the best strategies and tactics you can use to develop effective political and public relations campaigns. A successful campaign to encourage implementation of 1710 may not be easy; however, much of the difficult work has already been completed during the 10-year campaign that resulted in NFPA’s passage. Whatever concerns and criticisms your community’s governmental leaders may have about the standard, chances are they have already been asked—and answered—during the NFPA debate. Being able to anticipate and overcome the obstacles to your campaign gives you an enormous advantage over those who will oppose passage.
Getting Started: Creating a Campaign Committee, Budget and Timeline

The process of encouraging your community and local government to implement the 1710 standard must be viewed as a campaign—one that will involve politics and public relations. Public relations is often an extension of political action. They go hand-in-hand, and these two operations must work together for the local to succeed.

You must create PR initiatives to bring attention to your political activities. You structure a PR campaign in much the same way as a political campaign. The purpose of either campaign is to present a positive image to the community to influence decision makers who determine the jobs and working conditions of you and your members.

Building the Committee

Choose a 1710 campaign committee chair who has a commitment to fire fighter safety and understands the essential role of effective public relations and political action. We strongly suggest that the chair not be a principal officer of your local so he/she can dedicate his/her energies to focus on the implementation of the standard.

For committee members, include individuals who are comfortable working with politicians, government leaders, your community and the media. Some experience is always helpful, but not a prerequisite. The most important assets are their loyalty and ability to work with others, so they can help you build the contacts you will need when seeking to raise the awareness of 1710 in your community.

The size of your committee will depend on the size of your local’s total membership, and on the budget your local allocates to this campaign.

Setting a Campaign Budget

The process of determining how much to allocate to your 1710 campaign starts when you determine how important this issue is to your local and your community. This process will begin by educating your rank and file membership so they will support your campaign and the budget assigned to it.

There are several reasons for creating a campaign budget, which you will determine in the budgeting process:

• To identify resources (including money, time and people)
• To contact voters
• To identify short-term and long-term goals
• To quantify the costs of achieving your goals
• To establish concrete steps that lead to the ultimate goal—fully implementing the standard
Planning and budgeting a campaign plan takes time. It can be a difficult process that requires you to quantify resources, to understand the tradeoffs among different programs (for example, deciding between direct mail and leaflets distributed by hand), and finally, to make decisions. But constructing a campaign plan and developing time, money and volunteer budgets is the only way to ensure that your campaign has the resources it needs, when it needs them most.

With a campaign plan, you make the decisions instead of the decisions being made for you because resources may be squandered, needs may be unanticipated or trade-offs may be misunderstood. Your decisions should be made rationally by weighing the strategic and tactical needs of the campaign versus the available resources.

Any request for financial support and volunteer time will eventually lead to questions about how and where members’ money and time will be spent. The answers to those questions will emerge from the campaign planning process, especially as you set your campaign budget. The budget is your guide to determining what you will spend to implement the campaign tactics.

All campaigns have limited resources. There is no money to waste. Never spend dollars on impulse. Always ask yourself, “Was this item budgeted?” When someone suggests that the key to winning the campaign is to print 500 four-color signs, the budget will be there to provide the answer. However, this doesn’t mean that once that plan is written that it can’t be changed. But before making changes you should ask yourself, “Does this change help us achieve our goal?” And at what expense to other items in your plan?

Creating a Campaign Timeline

The objective of your campaign are to inform, educate and persuade your local government and citizens to implement the NFPA 1710 standard. But how long will that process require? The process may require several months to secure a commitment that will take years to fully implement because many communities are unaware of the standard, or they misunderstand the cost and benefits of its implementation.

Your timeline will depend in part on the strategy you choose to follow. For example, if you choose to put the implementation of 1710 as a referendum on the election ballot, when is the next such opportunity? If you want to address 1710 in your next collective bargaining negotiations, when do those talks begin, and what other issues (if any) take precedence?

Whatever your strategy, success will result only from a coordinated campaign that requires several incremental steps and includes numerous tactics. Outlining each step and determining the costs of your tactics are the first steps in developing an accurate timeline. The tactics you use to reach each audience will vary depending on the strategy you choose to pursue.

Campaign Strategy

Implementing the 1710 standard and making necessary departmental changes require the approval of some government entity in your community—a city or county council, mayor or others. Therefore, you must develop a campaign to influence these political institutions and politicians. To succeed, a political campaign must involve the media so that you can influence key decision-makers in government and, just as important, the members of your community who elect them.

Any successful campaign requires certain key elements:

- Research—the information you need to develop appropriate materials, message and your campaign strategy
- Planning—the strategy, tactics and messages for achieving your campaign goal
- Organization—the people and committees that will implement your campaign strategy

Much of the research relating to 1710, and its benefits to your community, has already been done. The local research you will conduct on your department and community will help you decide which strategy to encourage implementation of 1710. You must view your strategy from both the political and fiscal perspectives. Understanding the financial implications of 1710 in your community is essential to adopting an appropriate strategy. There are short-term costs associated with implementing changes to meet 1710 that will vary, depending on how far
from compliance your fire department is today. (There are also many potential long-term cost savings that come from implementation—which we cover later in this guidebook.) Determining the best way to pay for these initial costs is key to determining which strategy you will follow.

In reviewing those communities that have already begun the process of promoting the implementation of 1710, we have identified four basic strategies for encouraging compliance with the standard:

- City council/commission vote to fund implementation in the budget
- Public referendum to approve a tax to fund implementation
- Collective bargaining negotiations
- Legal action in response to noncompliance

**City Council/Commission Vote**

With this strategy a local encourages the city's governing body to adopt a resolution or similar measure that indicates that the community will, by a certain date, implement the 1710 standard. The measure may indicate the source of any funding required, or defer such details to the annual budget document. This strategy will be the best for most IAFF locals and would result in compliance in a shorter period than other strategies.

**Public Referendum**

If the local governing body is unwilling to respond to your local's request to consider implementing 1710 either through legislative action or the collective bargaining process, an alternative strategy would be to take your request directly to the public by having the issue introduced as a referendum on the ballot during an upcoming election. This strategy would take the most time, but may be necessary if your local political leader is unresponsive to your requests to implement 1710. You must review your local and state/provincial laws to determine if a referendum is a viable option.

**Collective Bargaining**

A low profile strategy to encourage compliance with 1710 would be to include an agreement to implement the standard and to meet the performance criteria in the standard by a certain date in the next collective bargaining contract negotiated by your local. See the appendices for model contract language that would stipulate compliance with 1710.

**Legal Action**

Although less desirable than the other options listed, legal action against a local government that has failed to implement 1710 may be necessary in the event of an injury or death of a citizen or fire fighter.

**Your Message on 1710**

Whatever strategy you choose to follow, you will need to develop appropriate messages that explain the value of implementing 1710 in your community. In this section we offer several messages relating to 1710 that may be appropriate for your campaign.

Whatever strategy you decide is best for your situation, and whatever the budget assigned to the campaign, your political and public relations plans must ensure delivery of your message to a variety of audiences. Those include the following:

- Your affiliate members
- Elected governmental decision makers
- City/county manager or other unelected governmental decision makers
- The fire chief
- Community leaders
- The media
- General public

When developing any message, remember that audience is everything. Knowing your audience helps you decide what information should be included in your message, and, just as important, what to exclude. You must understand your audience if you are to communicate with it effectively.

Developing messages that will persuade your various audiences that implementing 1710 is the right choice has been made much easier because of the many years spent debating the merits of the standard. The International has addressed virtually every possible question or allegation during the rigorous process that resulted in the passage of NFPA 1710.

That process, in fact, is one of the key messages to communicate: NFPA's passage of the standard was the result of a long, detailed analysis involving the nation's finest experts in fire prevention, risk management and municipal government management. At the end of that
debate, critics’ questions were fully answered and, as a result, NFPA’s 1710 Technical Committee, members and Standards Council issued the standard.

Will that fact alone be enough information to encourage your community to implement 1710? Probably not, but there are plenty of other reasons why any community would benefit by complying with the standard. Whichever strategies you chose, remember that good messages share very specific qualities:

- Clear—easily explained, understood and repeated
- Concise—explained in only a few sentences
- Convincing—responsive to the audience’s needs and concerns

The messenger is as important as the message. Those encouraging implementation of 1710 must be effective, respected and experienced communicators—and not all of them need to be fire fighters. As we explain later in this guidebook, building coalitions is an important part of any successful political campaign because you need individuals from other organizations and communities to speak on your behalf. Whether your audience is a group of elected public officials or members of a neighborhood club, your audience must hear a message more than once and from more than one person or organization if you hope to persuade them that your idea is a good one.

The 1710 standard offers many benefits to any community. The following messages explain what some of those benefits are. Use them when developing speeches, advertisements, brochures or web sites that you develop as part of your 1710 campaign.

**1710 Is an Insurance Policy for the Community and Its Businesses**

Just as we have insurance policies on our lives, homes and businesses, 1710 would offer insurance for the local economy by guaranteeing the community and its businesses that fire and emergency medical services will respond promptly and appropriately in an emergency.

Even a moderate-sized fire can hurt the community’s tax base. When businesses close, employees don’t get paid. They cannot put money back into the community, and will go from being taxpayers to public support recipients. The business itself can’t pay taxes because it’s not selling its goods and services. A fire that devastates a building will inevitably cause the company to consider whether it should reopen; if it does, the owners may choose to relocate to another city or state/province, representing a permanent loss to the tax base.

A serious fire represents the potential loss of property and jobs. To reduce this risk to the community, it makes sense to implement 1710.

**1710 Enhances Public Safety**

Studies show that by responding quickly to a building fire, we keep a small incident small. When a response takes more than a few minutes, however, the losses escalate substantially, resulting in a significant loss of property. Communities that have a good record of emergency service response times enhance the quality of life for current residents, and can help attract new residents and businesses.

Money spent to meet the performance criteria in 1710 would increase both the community’s capacity to fight fires—and its capacity to prevent them.

**1710 Will Save Lives**

Emergency response is dangerous work. For the protection of fire fighters and the victims of fire or other emergencies, 1710 applies the documented and proven science of fire behavior and emergency medicine to the basic resource requirements for effective fire and emergency service deployment. This application allows a community to determine if the resources allocated for the different types of fires, emergencies, medical calls and other incidents are sufficient to effectively control the incident and protect lives and property.

Money spent to meet the performance criteria in the 1710 standard would enhance your community’s capability to provide for the public health, through improved emergency medical services and public safety, through better fire, rescue and HazMat response.

**1710 Is an Internationally Accepted Standard**

In July 2001, the NFPA concluded a 10-year effort to encourage the enactment of this standard on the “Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression, Emergency Medical Operations and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments.”
A technical committee comprised of fire fighting experts, fire and city managers, and other industry representatives from across North America drafted the standard in 1999. After two years of research, consensus building and public comment and input, the standard was issued.

NFPA is an international organization with more than 75,000 individuals and more than 80 national trade and professional organizations. NFPA’s mission is to reduce the worldwide burden of fire and other hazards on the quality of life by developing and advocating scientifically based consensus codes and standards, research, training and education.

1710 Protects the Community Against Liability
In the United States, by law (specifically, the General Duties clause of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration Act), if Congress fails to pass legislation setting industry safety standards, municipal governments nationwide are mandated to follow standards promulgated by an industry-wide group, such as NFPA. Therefore, any local government that fails to follow 1710 is subject to liability claims in the event of fire fighter injuries or deaths.

Building Coalitions
Gaining support for the standard will require the help of community groups that can deliver your message—to the media, elected officials and other residents. There are several types of groups to approach.

Labor/Management Coalition
A coalition between the fire chief and local affiliate leadership will provide a joint labor-management proposal that will be extremely powerful as discussions occur with local officials, other potential coalitions, community groups and the community at large. This partnership has already proven itself to be helpful in labor and management jointly developing implementation plans for NFPA 1710. A mechanism to accomplish consensus between labor and management has been the Fire Service Leadership Partnership. This cooperative program, developed between the IAFC and IAFF, has been instrumental in developing labor and management leadership teams. These teams have been influential in gaining cooperation between local affiliate members and senior fire department management in developing efficient mechanisms to resolve substantive issues within fire and rescue departments.

For additional information on the Partnership, local affiliates should contact the IAFF at (202) 824-1567, or send an email to politics@iaff.org to obtain additional information about the Fire Service Leadership Partnership. Information is also available by contacting the International Association of Fire Chiefs at (703) 273-0911.
Medical Organizations
Individuals whose profession is dedicated to saving lives are especially sensitive to the value of the work performed by fire service employees. They are natural supporters of a standard that can improve public safety and save lives.

Civic Organizations
Many IAFF locals have established relationships with their community’s clubs and civic associations. Many locals pay dues for members to belong to these organizations. Ensure that at least one union member belongs to each of them, such as the Elks, Jaycees, Kiwanis, Lions, Masons, Moose, Rotary, VFW, American Legion and Shriners.

Business Organizations
In most communities, the leading business organization is the Chamber of Commerce, whose members are among the most vocal proponents of fiscal restraints in government. Concerns about the cost of implementing 1710 may be an obstacle to implementing the standard, unless an IAFF (and Chamber) member is there to defend 1710’s value to the business community.

Homeowners Associations
Few groups are more concerned about the quality of their fire protection and the cost of their insurance than homeowners. The fact that 1710 offers a higher level of fire safety will be most attractive to these groups. As a member of a homeowners association, you can furnish useful information year-round about fire prevention and safety. You can also deliver presentations on fire prevention in the home and distribute stickers for telephones, listing emergency numbers—and your local’s name.

Education Groups
Promoting CPR classes at colleges and universities and sponsoring a local Fire Prevention Week, EMS awareness and smoke alarm equipment tests through your community’s elementary or secondary schools are standard practice for most IAFF locals. Other opportunities for community involvement include supplying printed book covers with fire safety information, holding essay contests and hosting open houses at fire stations, especially on holidays.

An open house event is an excellent opportunity to bring kids (and their voting parents) into the fire station. Remember that every parent who brings a child to a fire station and is treated well is a likely ally in the campaign to implement 1710; those who are rushed through or ignored will more likely oppose it.

Senior Citizen Groups
Most people don’t expect their house to burn down, but do foresee that sometime in their lives they will need emergency medical services. No set of individuals understands that better than senior citizens. The benefits of setting standard response times through 1710 for emergency services (whether an ambulance or fire apparatus) will be obvious to members of these groups.

You can reach senior citizens through organizations like the American Association for Retired People and Canada’s Association for the Fifty-Plus, in residences built specifically for seniors and through senior centers. This is an excellent opportunity to get retired fire fighters engaged in part of your community involvement program.

Labor and Public Safety Coalitions
Improving the quality of fire prevention in your community by enhancing the safety of the working conditions for the city’s employees has implications for many individuals and groups, especially anyone in the labor movement and those involved in any aspect of public safety. These groups include other local labor unions, your community’s Central or District Labor Council, and the state or provincial federation (AFL-CIO, CLC).

Developing a Political Action Plan
With a strategy selected, messages defined and coalitions created, the next step in your campaign is to develop a political plan. Your initial objective is to take advantage of the coalitions you have already established with elected officials who support high-quality, government-based public services. Beyond these types of meetings, your plan will vary depending on the strategy you select.

Regardless of the strategy, your political goals will be the same:

- Explain the value of the standard
- Create public pressure on political leaders
- Produce the votes needed if implementation requires a vote by the city/county council or commission.
This standard is a new concept to most municipal officials, the media and the general public. Therefore, begin your political action plan by educating elected officials, influential civic and business leaders and the general public on the existence and importance of the standard. There are several tactics you can use for reaching these individuals:

- Private meetings
- Public meetings
- Telephone banks
- Door-to-door canvassing
- Polling place campaigning

**Private Meetings**

Behind-the-scenes, private negotiations with individuals or small groups often present the best opportunity to discuss your arguments, or to review the complex financial implications involved. A face-to-face meeting gives you the best means for establishing a relationship with appointed and elected officials, who often will speak more openly in private than they will during a public meeting.

Some people hesitate to lobby their elected officials in this fashion, feeling ill-equipped to persuade them. But firefighters and paramedics understand public safety better than government officials do, and they have the unique ability to present new and important information to these officials.

Remember, you’re the expert when it comes to understanding the standard. Nobody knows more about fire fighting than firefighters. You can help these individuals make informed decisions. Never make the mistake of assuming that the person you meet will completely understand the issue.

These seven easy steps can help you make the most of your personal visit with an elected official:

1. Schedule the meeting by phone. If there is time, follow up with a letter confirming logistics of the meeting and briefly reviewing 1710.

2. Prepare for the meeting by studying your issue, remembering that you may have only 15-20 minutes to present your case. Rehearse the answers to questions you are most likely to be asked. In addition, be prepared to respond to questions that opponents of 1710 have raised. If several proponents are to attend, decide in advance what speaking role each person will assume, making certain that each attendee participates. Schedule a premeeting planning session to review each person’s role and your expectations of the meeting.

3. Once the meeting begins, take a few minutes to explain the standard and what its effect will be on you and your community, even if the elected official claims to know all about 1710. Keep the discussion on track, and avoid attempts to steer the conversation to topics not on your agenda.

4. Clearly indicate the action you want the individual to take. Do you want the elected official to introduce a bill or motion? To place the issue on the ballot as a referendum? To be an active proponent on your behalf during a ballot referendum campaign?

5. At the meeting’s conclusion, review the issues discussed and any commitments made.

6. If the individual is undecided, don’t force the issue because you may lose them unexpectedly. Instead, schedule another meeting to discuss the issue again. Before your next meeting, send additional information to review when you meet the second time.

7. After the meeting, send a short note, again reviewing your discussion and reiterating any commitments made.

**Public Meetings**

In general, the same suggestions for a private meeting apply to a public meeting. Preparation is essential, as is a professional presentation. An advantage of public meetings is that they present an even better opportunity for you to educate a larger audience while making your point to the elected official, even if they are unwilling to commit at that time. The meeting may also afford you the opportunity to add those in the audience who may be sympathetic to your position to your coalition. In addition, an elected official is also more likely to keep a commitment made at a public meeting/city council meeting in front of an audience.

In the few minutes immediately before a public meeting, you usually have the chance to speak briefly with elected officials. If you’re meeting someone for the first time, or someone who may have forgotten you or your position in an IAFF local, always introduce yourself by name, indicating your position both as a fire fighter and an IAFF local representative.
Always arrive early at public forums. Opportunities to speak may be limited, with time at the microphone given on a controlled basis. During the meeting, be on the lookout for others who express similar viewpoints. You may discover unknown allies with whom to work.

If an official says something with which you disagree or that you believe is incorrect, and you don’t have the chance to address the comment publicly, try to get the attention of the official afterward. If unsuccessful, follow up with a meeting, a phone call, or a letter, stating your position or supplying information to refute the inaccurate comments.

Whether in a public or private meeting, remember these basic rules for lobbying appointed or elected officials:

- When discussing an issue, be polite and courteous. Don’t argue or threaten.
- When seeking a commitment for support, be clear and to the point as to what you want. Don’t be evasive.
- Know the reasons why the official should support or oppose the issue in question, and anticipate objections to and questions about the local’s position.
- Schedule meetings in advance. Don’t show up unannounced and expect a meeting on the spot.
- Never resort to name-calling. Remember that you may need to meet with this individual again on the same or some other issue.
- Never threaten political retaliation if the elected official disagrees with your position.

**Telephone Banks**

If your strategy involves a vote by your city council or commission, or if you are encouraging passage of a community-wide referendum, a well-planned telephone campaign is an effective tool for reaching large numbers of voters and accomplishing several objectives:

- Identifying voter preferences
- Recruiting volunteers
- Raising money
- Informing voters about an upcoming campaign event or election
- Reminding voters of your referendum campaign on election day

Phone canvasses are generally organized from one large centralized phone bank, from several small phone bank locations, or from fire fighters’ homes. One centralized phone bank is the easiest to manage because you can supervise closely the quality of each voter contact while ensuring that your worker completes the necessary calls. Possible locations include union halls, real estate offices, insurance or law firms—locations that usually have multiple phone lines that are available during evening hours.

When recruiting phone volunteers, always recruit at least 1.5 to 2 times the number of volunteers you will need since you are guaranteed to have no-shows or last-minute cancellations. If by some chance more volunteers show up than phones available, have additional work readily available for the extra volunteers to do rather than sending them home. Remember, a disappointed or unused volunteer is unlikely to return when asked in the future.

Preparing a phone bank is easy if you plan it well in advance. In addition to a project manager, you need to recruit several shift supervisors who manage the phone bank on certain days, using the following materials:

- Sign-in sheet
- Instructions (one for the person phoning, one for the person supervising)
- Typed message
- Voter phone lists
- Question forms (if a voter asks for additional information)
- Volunteer worker forms (if a voter sounds enthusiastic about your position, try and recruit him/her as a volunteer)
- Daily report forms (used to determine how callers did with their call lists)

The shift supervisor’s work includes these responsibilities:

1. Call volunteer workers to remind them of their commitment, usually the night before.
2. Prepare call lists and other materials identified above.
3. Welcome and sign in volunteers when they arrive.
4. Review instructions and phone scripts with the volunteers making sure they understand their assignment and answer any questions they may have.
5. Listen to phone callers to make sure they are delivering the appropriate message and to solve any problems.


7. Bring refreshments.

8. Thank callers at the end of the shift, check their work, collect their report forms, and ask them to sign up for another shift before leaving.

The process for the caller is simple:

1. Deliver a brief, persuasive message about the issue, including the election date, and try to determine if the person called will support or oppose the referendum.

2. Record the results either by hand or computer, and send a brief follow-up letter or mailer to any undecided voters.

3. Ask supporters of your position to volunteer for the campaign.

4. If a recipient of a phone call is opposed to your position, do not become argumentative. Politely thank the person for their time and move on to the next call.

Door-to-Door Canvassing

When pursuing passage of a referendum, face-to-face personal contact can leave a stronger impression with each voter than any other voter contact tool. Organizing a door-to-door canvass, however, requires a substantial time commitment and may be impractical in some areas. Before deciding to undertake a door-to-door canvass, a local must assess the feasibility of implementing such an undertaking. Are the precincts compact enough to go door-to-door, and do you have enough volunteers to perform the work?

If you can implement a door-to-door canvass, the rewards are considerable. A door-to-door canvass is more persuasive than a phone bank, and usually more successful in converting undecided voters into supporters and supporters into volunteers. A door-to-door canvass also establishes visibility for a campaign and allows you to hand a piece of literature to the voter.

There are, however, limits to door-to-door canvassing. Voter preference information collected by canvassing is less reliable as that gathered by a phone bank. Undecided voters are more likely to say they support an issue or candidate, and unfavorable voters are much more likely to say they are undecided in a one-on-one conversation with a canvasser than over the phone with a volunteer. Therefore, volunteers must be trained to look for this problem and to probe for voter preference.

Managing a door-to-door canvass requires the following materials:

- Sign-in sheet
- Instructions
- Precinct map
- Walk lists or cards of registered voters, divided by street address
- Brochures
- Typed script
- Campaign shirts/buttons
- Volunteer forms
- Question forms (should a voter want additional information)
- Daily report forms

Because effective volunteers cannot stand on a doorstep and read from a prepared script, as an inexperienced phone caller might, canvassers require additional training (usually including role-playing) so they can learn how to deliver the message and make a good presentation.

The process for the canvasser is similar to that of the phone caller. Instead of working alone, however, canvassers work in two-person teams. They meet at your canvassing project temporary headquarters to collect information and materials, and then head out on foot or by car to their assigned precinct. Once they arrive in their assigned neighborhood, they split up rather than double-teaming voters. At the end of the day or tour, they return to the headquarters to deliver report forms and return any extra campaign literature.

U.S. Voter Registration Drives

This tactic can be successful in all communities because IAFF members can work on voter registration drives organized by their local or by other community groups. (In Canada, voter registration is unnecessary because all Canadians over the age of 18 are eligible to vote in municipal, provincial and federal elections whether they have been enumerated or not.)
The key to winning any referendum or election is to identify a minimum of 50.1 percent of the eligible voters to participate in the election who would support your position. After conducting your phone banks and door-to-door canvasses, you may determine you do not have enough identified votes to win. If this is the case, you have several options.

The first option is to determine if there are enough undecided voters, or “soft” opponents that you could target to persuade to support your position. If this still leaves you short you need to consider undertaking a voter registration drive to increase the pool of potential voters.

The first step in undertaking a voter registration drive is to make certain that all fire fighters and their families are registered to vote. Second, reach out to your coalition groups to make certain that all of their members are registered to vote. Elections have been won or lost by a mere vote or two, and no one wants to lose an election because a few fire fighters were ineligible to vote because they weren’t registered.

Voter registration laws in the U.S. vary from state to state, but recruiting voters begins by developing lists of prospects. In addition to your own membership data, you can ask your AFL-CIO central labor council for an alphabetical list of members with addresses, phone numbers and voter registration status. (This list can be helpful any time your local needs volunteers.)

Contact unregistered members by phone or in person, using the same general approach described earlier in this guidebook. After making follow-up calls or visits, enter the information on those newly registered voters into your database. However, keep in mind that you should approach voter registration in the same manner that you approach voter turnout. Target your voter registration efforts to those who would most likely support your position. Voter registration can be a time-consuming process, but also a valuable part of your campaign plan.

Polling Place Greeters
This tactic is perhaps the easiest to overlook, but it can be one of the most effective in a political campaign. Many voters arrive at the polling place either unaware of or undecided on ballot initiatives. Handing out sample ballots or handouts can have a decisive influence on these individuals. Knowing fire fighter’s support an issue often makes all the difference.

The local’s job before election day is to recruit volunteers to cover the entire voting period. If you can’t cover the entire day, be sure to have volunteers present at peak voting times—in the morning before most people go to work, and in the early evening as they are returning from work. The handouts can be simple, one-color pieces with a direct message on one side (vote for or against the referendum), and more detailed information about the implications of the referendum on the other side.

In Canada there are some limitations on polling day activities. Refer to relevant provincial or federal elections legislation, or contact the Returning Officer before conducting activities in the vicinity of a polling location.

Literature Drops
As we discuss later in this guidebook, producing simple, one-page brochures to educate your audiences on the standard will be an essential tactic. Mailing copies to every registered voter in your community would be too costly to consider. Instead, you can target your mail to households that have registered voters, or organize and conduct literature drops in targeted neighborhoods. You can also distribute information at community events, such as county fairs, church bazaars, homeowner association meetings, local festivals or any other event in the community that attracts a large audience.

Identifying Those Who Oppose 1710
In any campaign, criticism of your organization and your issue is inevitable. To defuse such criticism you must identify your opponents and the ideas they are promoting. In the 10 years of debate on 1710, the International has responded effectively to many concerns, questions and criticisms and can share these counterpoints with you. If you fail to find the information needed in this guidebook, contact the Division of Technical Assistance and Information Resources at IAFF Headquarters to request additional information.
Developing a Public Relations Action Plan

Public relations will be an indispensable part of your plan to encourage the implementation of the 1710 standard. A well thought out PR strategy can help you reach your key audiences at minimal cost. The goals of your PR plan should work in concert with those for your political plan. There are four goals:

- Explain the value of the standard
- Shape public opinion to support implementation
- Create public pressure on political leaders
- Produce the votes needed if implementation requires a public referendum

With your messages already crafted, your next step is deciding how to get those messages out there. There are several possible PR tactics to consider using.

Newspapers

The single, most important media outlet in almost every community is its daily newspaper. It is a permanent record of significant events, is almost always read by key decision-makers and offers more detailed information than any other medium. As mentioned previously, newspapers often reach an older audience; however, they can be an effective, if indirect, way of reaching younger individuals who obtain most of their news from television and radio programs. That’s because the stories that appear in your daily newspaper are often the “menu” of story ideas used by news directors and reporters at television and radio stations.

Remember when approaching newspapers that you may need to develop relationships with more than one reporter. The person who covers fires and other emergencies is usually not the same person who would cover your city or county council as they consider organizational or budgetary changes or privatization proposals. Be sure that you contact the right reporter for your issue.

Television

The power of television news when covering fire and EMS stories comes not only from the fact that these programs reach the largest audience among all local media, but also from the power of the visuals they offer. Television can be a great tool for reaching a lot of people at one time, but remember that television reporters frequently focus on the negative side of a particular story. You can use this focus to your advantage if, for instance, you are trying to point out the problems that could occur following a budget cut, staffing reduction or failure to implement 1710.

Because each television news story is typically short, you must deliver your information in sound bites suitable for a general audience (avoiding acronyms or jargon). Be careful not to over-answer questions.
Keep your comments as short and simple as possible.

With the exception of breaking news (such as a multi-alarm fire), television news stories often must be completed by mid-afternoon for airing on programs that may be broadcast as early as 5 p.m. So contact these individuals as early in the day as possible—ideally the day before—to improve your chances of making that night’s news programs.

**Radio**

Radio is often underrated because it lacks the excitement and the reach of television. But because radio stations are often targeted to specific audiences (based on their age, race or ethnicity), radio stations offer the perfect opportunity to reach certain key segments of the community. You can also customize your message, based on the listeners and their need for and appreciation of the various services your fire and EMS department delivers every day.

Many of the same rules that apply to working with television reporters also apply to your contacts with radio reporters. Keep your message short and simple. Stories are often completed closer to the time the program airs, but because radio news programs often air throughout the day, getting information out as early as possible is always preferable.

**Call-in Talk Shows**

Radio and television stations often host regular talk shows that permit you to reach a large audience without paying for airtime. When campaigning on a specific issue, contact each show’s producer and try to get a representative of your local on the program.

Not everyone is suited for this type of setting, so be sure to select a fire fighter representative who is comfortable on radio or television. In most instances when talk shows invite guests to appear to discuss an issue, they will attempt to bring on another guest who represents the other side. Therefore, your local’s representative must know the issue thoroughly and be able to respond quickly to questions from the moderator or opponent. No hotheads allowed.

Be sure to have your members ready to call in—some identifying themselves as fire fighters, others merely calling in as interested members of community. Encourage your members to have their friends and family also available as callers to support your position.

**Media Advisories, News Releases and News Conferences**

Much of the news that is printed and broadcast originates with news releases that were mailed, emailed or otherwise delivered to individual media outlets, or that were distributed in conjunction with a news conference. News conferences are often announced with a media advisory.

A news release is the basic tool for generating publicity. It serves several different functions:

- Publicizing your local’s position on an issue
- Providing background information
- Announcing upcoming events

A media advisory is like a short news release, usually announcing the who, what, when, where and why of a news conference or other event. Media advisories include the name, phone and fax numbers of the individual to contact for additional information about the news conference.

News releases are often distributed at a news conference, a PR tactic best used to launch a campaign. (If your local has its own web site, remember to post the news release on it the same day you distribute the printed version.) A news conference is successful when it delivers important news. Call a “no news” conference too often, and the media won’t show up when you finally have something to say.

In addition to a general news release announcing the subject of the news conference, you may also need to include other materials in your media kit. These might include the text of any speeches to be given, a background sheet on the sponsoring organizations and participants, as well as copies of any substantial newspaper stories relevant to the issue.

For those who have never participated in a news conference, a dry run or rehearsal can be very helpful. Be sure to stage a practice question-and-answer session, in which someone asks your spokesperson the most difficult questions likely to come up during the real news conference.

**Letters to the Editor**

Nearly every newspaper accepts letters to the editor. Getting your letter printed may be easier than you might expect, because few people respond to news stories they disagree with. Your chances for getting a letter published increase when several individuals write about the same issue.
Contact the newspaper involved first and ask for details about the policy on letters to the editor. Newspapers often limit the number of words; if that’s the case in your community, make sure your members’ letters conform to this rule. But even if they don’t, keep your letters under 150 words, so the editors won’t choose what to take out—you will. And never be hostile or abusive in the letter; stick to the facts.

Never prepare form letters; newspapers rarely print them. Instead, give your members a fact sheet and ask then to prepare a letter in their own words. Also, mail the letters as soon as possible to improve your chances of getting your message heard. A sustained letter-writing campaign will show there is considerable support in your community on a particular issue. This tactic might be just what it takes to persuade undecided voters, particularly if they recognize the names of the letters’ authors.

**Opinion Articles**

Having an opinion (or op-ed) article accepted for publication is more difficult than getting a letter to the editor published, but most newspapers are likely to accept an op-ed article written by an IAFF local president explaining the union’s position on a ballot initiative concerned with public safety services. Most newspapers prohibit unsolicited op-ed pieces, so it’s essential that you call the editor’s office first to learn the newspaper’s policy for submitting them, and any format requirements.

Op-ed pieces may run up to 1,000 words, although the newspaper always reserves the right to edit the material for clarity or space limitations. Include facts to back up the local’s position. Keep the tone serious. Never attack your opponent; present yourself as a reasonable advocate for public safety.

**Editorial Board Meetings**

A meeting with the editorial board of local newspapers or with managers at television and radio stations can help unions educate and persuade a key audience, one that is often biased against unions. Community groups, candidates for public office, business-interest groups and others regularly meet with editorial boards; so should you. The newspaper or broadcast station considers this information when deciding what editorial stance to take on fire-related issues. Such meetings give you a chance to win over an opponent or to soften the blow if the board takes a position different from the union’s.

Editorial board meetings must be scheduled. Contact the editor (in the case of newspapers) or general manager (at radio and television stations). At smaller newspapers and broadcast stations the board may be just a single editor, perhaps accompanied by the reporter covering the issue. Limit the number in your group attending an editorial board meeting to three or four people—your local’s officers and any member good at articulating your position on the issue you will discuss—but assign primary responsibility for delivering the presentation to one individual (preferably your local’s president).

As with a news conference, preparation is essential. If this is your first editorial board meeting, stage a dress rehearsal when you can practice answering questions likely to come up during the meeting, which will probably last no more than 30 minutes.

**Newsletters**

Although external audiences are the focus of most of this guidebook, never overlook the importance of your internal audience. The best way to reach your members and their families is through a timely, information-rich newsletter. And with the help of computers, producing newsletters is easier than ever.

Many locals now produce electronic newsletters, distributed either as email attachments or on their web site (more on web sites in a moment). Even if you produce a printed version, you can easily convert the document into an electronic version, too, using Adobe Acrobat® software.

Whether you distribute the information on paper or electronically, the material must be well written and presented in a professional manner. Carefully choose individuals for your newsletter committee who have some skill in writing, design, art or photography. The more people you can recruit for this committee, the better the end product. Good newsletters take several hours to produce; spreading the workload will ensure a high level of quality, and will help you keep turnover among committee members as low as possible.

The final product you design belongs to the local president. This person’s name appears on the masthead as the editor-in-chief. List the individual primarily responsible for the newsletter as the editor.
Web Sites
Maintaining a web site is almost, but not quite, a necessity for PR programs. If you have the time, the funds and the skilled members available for such a project, a web site can be an extremely effective way to distribute information to your members, to the public and especially to the media.

Some reporters, especially the youngest, may never call a local when researching a fire-related story. Instead, their first (and sometimes their only) attempt to learn about your local will be a search for your web site. If you have one, think about what a reporter who is unfamiliar with fire and EMS operations will find. Make sure that a reporter just learning your issues will find the information useful and understandable. Try it out on someone who doesn’t know your business.

Fortunately, creating a web site today is much easier, thanks to new user-friendly computer software. But a web site can consume as much as or more time than a printed newsletter. Remember this fact when recruiting members to your PR committee, and when preparing your PR budget, because some of the work will likely have to be done by paid professionals.

Leaflets
One of the simplest tools at your disposal, and one of the easiest to produce, is often the most effective: the leaflet. This time-tested device is usually a single letter-sized sheet, folded to fit into a standard envelope, sent as a self-mailer, or more often tucked into a door handle. Leaflets are particularly helpful in educating and motivating the public when distributed by a group of members in uniform going door to door. Spending a Saturday morning or Sunday afternoon canvassing a neighborhood that would be particularly affected by, say, a staffing cut or firehouse closing can go a long way to building support for your issue.

The best leaflets are also the simplest. Focus on a single issue, explaining in clear language the issue at hand and your local’s position. A few well-chosen graphic images and your local’s logo can make the piece more inviting. This tool is easy to produce on your computer, but the International’s PR department in Washington is always available to help if you’re new to public relations, or need someone to critique your first draft. For help, especially when you need to produce a leaflet on short notice, call the Department of Public Relations and Publications (202) 824-1588.

Paid Advertising
There are many types of paid advertising. The most effective when implementing a PR strategy are newspaper, radio and television ads:

Public Safety First
Your Fire Fighters Need Your Help to Protect Springfield

Contact your community leaders and let them know you support increased staffing for your fire department.

A message from the Springfield Professional Fire Fighters Association
• Newspaper ads may reach an entire community or specific communities, depending on whether they appear in dailies or weeklies. They are particularly effective when trying to reach senior citizens.

• Television ads can be effective in reaching the broadest possible audience. That also makes them the most expensive to purchase. Effective ads can also be expensive to produce. Advertising on broadcast stations is usually unaffordable, and often reaches communities miles beyond your local’s area. Instead, consider cable TV advertising, which is a less expensive alternative. Most cable providers also offer production assistance, again at costs substantially below that charged by broadcast affiliates.

• Radio stations can be effective because you can often target a specific age group, based on the type of music they play. Radio commercials are usually inexpensive to produce.

Newspapers will help you design advertisements, sometimes charging a small fee, if you give them the words you want to include. Their art departments have volumes of clip art from which you can choose appropriate images to highlight the advertising copy.

To create professional, effective radio and television ads, it’s best to hire a professional public relations or advertising firm. Starting with the general idea and information you present, these professionals write a script and design the visual or audio aspects of the advertisement. If you approve the concept, they proceed with production. However, because of the technical aspects involved, production costs, especially for television advertisements, can be high.

Similarly, you’ll get what you pay for when purchasing radio or television airtime. The lower the cost, the fewer listeners or viewers you reach. Professional media buyers negotiate with the radio and television station salespeople to help you get the most for your advertising dollar.

Next Steps

Now that you have a better understanding of how to develop a campaign that encourages implementation of 1710, your next step is to begin developing a campaign suited to your municipality. This is a process that will take many months to complete, so preparing a timeline for each campaign element and assigning responsibility to one of your local’s officers or members is a good first step. Remember, too, that some of the steps suggested will require funds. Therefore consider developing a preliminary budget with the help of the individuals you assign to work on each particular campaign element.

Once you’re ready to begin developing your campaign, you have several resources for beginning that process. Along with this guidebook you received a CD and another guidebook with more technical information about implementing 1710. Included in both guidebooks are references to other IAFF manuals on specific topics, such as legislative campaigns and public relations. Other resources include the officers and staff members at the International’s headquarters in Washington. They are ready to answer questions you may have or to help you develop the tools you need. Before calling, however, be sure you have thoroughly reviewed both guidebooks and have taken the first steps in the campaign development process.

NFPA Standard 1710 will be the subject of many conference and training seminar sessions for the next several years because of its potential for improving public and fire fighter safety. You can begin the process in your jurisdiction by taking the steps outlined in this document for determining the best campaign strategy and tactics, a process that will help you identify which of the many tools available from the International can be most helpful in your situation.
Responding to Questions

During your conversations with local officials about the value of adopting Standard 1710, you are likely to hear many of the same issues raised during debates before NFPA. In this section we list several of the issues most frequently raised, and our response to each.

**1710 Undermines Local Democracy**

The Concern

Standard 1710 is unnecessary and undermines local democracy. Local government knows how best to run our fire department based on the particular needs of our community.

The Response

Throughout its history, the NFPA has issued standards establishing minimum requirements related to building safety, fire apparatus, clothing, hose lines, rescue tools, occupational safety and other areas to reduce the hazards of fire. These standards established minimum requirements that are applied to, and followed by, fire departments located in jurisdictions throughout North America. It is very likely that our jurisdiction has adopted some portion of the NFPA's codes and standards, and it is almost certain that our fire department has purchased fire equipment specifically designed to meet NFPA safety standards.

NFPA's standards apply to all jurisdictions regardless of their geography, topography, fiscal capacity, service burdens, population density or similar local variations. This universal adoption occurs because a fire burns the same way in Los Angeles or New York City as it does in a small town. Standard 1710 is based on the same universal principle. The standard relies on scientific studies of how fires behave and spread in order to establish feasible staffing and deployment criteria designed to optimally reduce injury and damage due to fire. Local governments across North America adopted NFPA codes or standards that regulate fire apparatus, clothing, hose lines and rescue tools, even though adherence to these standards and codes may have imposed significant costs. One reason someone might be concerned about preserving local control over the issues regulated by Standard 1710 is that this standard addresses staffing issues, or personnel, rather than inanimate objects such as buildings or fire equipment.

Ensuring adequate deployment of fire fighter personnel must be the highest priority of a fire department. For fire department managers who say people are their most important resource, Standard 1710 is a way of putting this philosophy into practice.

**1710 Has No Scientific Basis**

The Concern

The 1710 Standard has no scientific basis.

The Response

Standard 1710 represents the culmination of a 10-year process. During this process the fire service professionals on the NFPA Technical Committees assigned to develop the standard applied their real-world experience when reviewing reams of empirical data to develop the staffing and deployment criteria found in the standard.

Some of the most important criteria in 1710 are based on the fire propagation curve, a universally accepted, empirically-based measurement of how quickly a fire will reach the flashover stage and potentially spread to surrounding buildings if left unaddressed. The medical response times established by 1710 are based on well-established, empirically-based measurements of the maximum amount of time that a patient in cardiac arrest can survive without intervention.
**1710 Undermines Public Safety**

**The Concern**
The 1710 Standard undermines public safety because it will require shifting resources from fire prevention to fire suppression.

**The Response**
Most fire departments provide both fire prevention and fire suppression services. Many career fire departments use staffing and resources to address numerous facets of their jurisdictions’ fire service requirements, including fire prevention, training, fire inspection, fire dispatch, emergency medical services, hazardous materials training and response, confined space rescue and/or weapons of mass destruction response. The fire fighters employed by these departments perform a number of these roles—a situation that Standard 1710 would not change.

The standard would, in fact, enhance public safety. Money spent to hire an additional fire fighter to comply with the 1710 Standard will increase both the jurisdiction’s ability to fight fires and its capacity to prevent them. Such a change may also enhance the jurisdiction’s ability to provide for the public’s health—through emergency medical services—and the public’s safety, through better rescue and HazMat response.

**1710 Jeopardizes Public Safety**

**The Concern**
Adherence to the 1710 Standard will require allocation of funds to fire departments at the expense of the police department, thereby jeopardizing public safety.

**The Response**
As discussed in the previous response, adherence to the 1710 Standard will only enhance the public’s safety. Local governments are constantly required to allocate limited resources between competing citizen demands for services. Certainly, a city’s resources should be primarily directed towards ensuring that its citizens’ health and safety are protected from physical harm. It is hard to come up with a better example of how this can be accomplished than by ensuring compliance with the 1710 Standard.

The argument that a city will have to take from its police department what it gives to its fire department is nonsense. A responsible local government must ensure that the city’s police and fire departments are sufficiently funded to protect the public’s health and safety. Moreover, the same concern could be cited with respect to any decision to allocate resources towards performance of a vital city function. For instance, one could also argue that providing a sufficient number of sanitation workers limits the city’s ability to hire additional police officers, but citizens are clearly not willing to tolerate piles of garbage on their streets to accomplish this purpose. The case is no different, nor should it be different, with respect to the need to maintain a safe and effective fire department.

**1710 Is Too Costly**

**The Concern**
Implementation of the 1710 Standard will require the jurisdiction to increase taxes. We can’t implement something like this during a recession.

**The Response**
First of all, it is by no means a foregone conclusion that a jurisdiction will have to expend additional resources to bring its fire department into compliance with the 1710 Standard, much less raise taxes to accomplish this result. Even if a fire department requires additional expenditures to comply with 1710, local governments are routinely required to make adjustments to resource allocations within existing budgets to ensure that the jurisdiction’s various departments are providing adequate services. If existing resources cannot be reallocated to the fire department to ensure compliance with the 1710 Standard, federal or state grant money may be available to assist a locality in providing
minimally adequate fire response. And even if all other sources of potential revenue are exhausted, and a tax increase is ultimately deemed necessary, citizens in several jurisdictions have already approved referenda raising revenue for the specific purpose of complying with the 1710 Standard. A slight increase in sales taxes to ensure adequate fire protection is much cheaper than the alternatives—namely, loss of life and property to fire, and corresponding increases in fire insurance rates.

Current Staffing and Equipment Are Adequate

The Concern
We have been getting the job done just fine with the same staffing and equipment levels we have used for years.

The Response
This position is no more defensible than refusing to get a routine physical check-up because you don’t feel sick. A fire department’s safety record is only as credible as its last response. There are two ways to find out if your fire department is sufficiently staffed and equipped: continuous trial and error, or applying the 1710 Standard. The standard allows a municipality to evaluate their performance in key areas to determine if their service is efficient, effective, and safe.

1710 Is Unnecessary Because of Modern Building and Fire Codes

The Concern
Our jurisdiction doesn’t need more fire fighters because modern building and fire codes have reduced our reliance on suppression activities.

The Response
Modern building and fire codes have introduced many fire-prevention features. In addition to sprinklers, the building materials used are more fire retardant, and the designs more conducive to stopping fire and containing them to a smaller part of the building. Unfortunately, not all fires occur in modern buildings, and not all buildings have sprinklers or fire-retardant materials. Even when a fire occurs in a sprinkler-equipped building, the fire department must ensure that the fire is extinguished and conduct a primary and secondary search for potential trapped occupants. Sprinklers are an essential part of fire prevention, but they are unable to run up the stairs of a building to save a life.

Additionally, the standard addresses more than fire suppression, and our fire department does more than fight fires. Today, fire fighters are multi-faceted responders dealing with many all types of emergencies. Such situations include medical emergencies, HazMat crises, acts of terrorism response and emergency rescues.

1710 Unnecessarily Duplicates Other Fire Department Standards

The Concern
Our jurisdiction already complies with OSHA’s 2-in/2-out standard. This is enough to ensure that our department is protecting the health and safety of our citizens.

The Response
The primary purpose of the 2-in/2-out standard is to protect the safety of fire fighters. This is certainly an important standard that has undoubtedly saved numerous lives, but it was intended to protect the lives of fire fighters, and was not, like the 1710 Standard, primarily designed to protect the lives, safety and property of citizens. Your jurisdictions’ citizens—who, after all, are the consumers of your fire departments’ services—deserve the standard of protection, as provided by the 1710 Standard.

Current Standards are Adequate

The Concern
We already have alternative standards by which to measure the effectiveness of our fire department, such as the ISO ratings, and we do fine by it.
The Response

None of these other standards were designed to achieve the same goal as the 1710 Standard—namely, to ensure that your fire department is providing minimally sufficient fire and emergency medical protection to its citizens. ISO ratings, for example, are developed by insurance companies to determine fire insurance rates based on any number of variables, many of which are completely unrelated to fire department staffing and equipment, and have more to do with actuarial assumptions than fire safety.

“Equivalent” Standards Are Adequate

The Concern

Our jurisdiction does not need to implement the 1710 Standard because we have already implemented an “equivalent” standard, as we are specifically allowed to do under the 1710 Standard.

The Response

When the NFPA Standards Council adopted the 1710 Standard, it included what is sometimes called an “equivalency” statement. Equivalency statements are common features in NFPA Standards. The equivalency statement contained in the NFPA 1710 Standard allows jurisdictions to use other “systems, methods or approaches” to meet requirements of the standard if they can validate and document in writing that such avenues are equal or superior to the requirements contained in the standard. The equivalency standard in 1710 is not intended to allow any jurisdiction or fire department to reduce the requirements in the standard and still claim compliance. Moreover, it specifically requires any jurisdiction relying upon an “equivalent” standard to validate and document in writing that the standard is equal or superior to the requirements contained in the 1710 Standard. Any department seeking to rely upon “equivalent” standards, therefore, should be required to document and demonstrate its equivalency to the 1710 Standard in all aspects, and in no case should the “equivalent” standard demand less of a department than the 1710 Standard.
Sample Fact Sheet

Background
In 2001 the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) issued NFPA 1710, Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments. NFPA is an international organization with more than 75,000 individual and more than 80 national trade and professional organization members.

NFPA 1710 sets minimum standards for fire fighter crews, responses times and other factors involved in determining the organization and deployment of fire fighting and emergency medical systems. The standard represents the culmination of a 10-year process that involved research, expert opinion, debate and, finally, consensus.

Adopted NFPA standards apply to jurisdictions regardless of their geography, topography, fiscal capacity, service burdens, population density or similar local variations.

Fire fighting and other organizations supported passage of NFPA 1710 despite improvements in modern building and fire codes that introduced many fire-prevention features. In addition to sprinklers, the building materials used are more fire retardant, and the designs more conducive to stopping fires and containing them. Unfortunately, not all fires occur in modern buildings, and not all buildings have sprinklers or fire-retardant materials. Even when a fire occurs in a sprinkler-equipped building, the fire department must ensure that the fire is extinguished and conduct a primary and secondary search for trapped occupants.

Additionally, the standard addresses more than fire suppression, and our fire department does more than fight fires. Today, fire fighters are multi-faceted responders dealing with many types of emergencies. Such situations include medical emergencies, hazardous material incidents, acts of terrorism response and emergency rescues.

Requirements
The standard establishes minimum criteria for effectiveness and efficiency of wildland, aircraft, marine and special operations to adequately protect the safety of the public and fire department employees.

The standard specifies minimum requirements for health and safety, incident management, training, communications and pre-incident planning.

Benefits of Compliance
Implementing NFPA 1710 has several benefits for our community’s citizens, businesses and fire fighters.

NFPA 1710 Is an Insurance Policy for the Community and Its Businesses
Just as we have insurance policies on our lives, homes and businesses, NFPA 1710 would offer insurance for the local economy by guaranteeing the community and its businesses that fire and emergency medical services will respond promptly and appropriately in an emergency.

Even a moderate-sized fire can hurt the community’s tax base. When businesses close, employees don’t get paid. They can’t put money back into the community, and will go from being taxpayers to public support recipients. The business itself can’t pay taxes because it’s not selling its goods and services. A fire that devastates a building will inevitably cause the company to consider whether it should reopen; if it does, the owners may chose to relocate to another city or state/province, representing a permanent loss to the tax base.

NFPA 1710 Enhances Public Safety
Studies show that by responding quickly to a building fire, we keep a small incident small. When a response takes more than a few minutes, however, the losses escalate substantially, resulting in a significant loss of property. Communities that have a good record of emergency service response times enhance the quality of life for current residents, and can help attract new residents and businesses.
NFPA 1710 Will Save Lives
Fire fighting is dangerous work. For the protection of fire fighters and the victims of fire or other emergencies, NFPA 1710 applies the documented and proven science of fire behavior and emergency medicine to the basic resource requirements for effective fire and emergency service deployment. This application allows a community to determine if the resources allocated for the different types of fires, emergencies, medical calls and other incidents are sufficient to effectively control the incident and protect lives and property.

NFPA 1710 Protects the Community Against Liability
Courts frequently rely upon NFPA standards to determine the “industry standard” for fire protection and safety measures. Judicial reliance on NFPA doctrines is most frequently found in common law negligence claims. NFPA 1710 could be found to be highly relevant to the question of whether a jurisdiction has negligently failed to provide adequate fire or emergency medical protection to an individual harmed in a fire or medical emergency. The level of fire and emergency medical service provided by a jurisdiction will be compared to NFPA 1710 Standard in courts considering such lawsuits even where the particular jurisdiction has not specifically adopted the standard. Jurisdictions will assume some additional legal risk by failing to abide by NFPA 1710 even where it has failed to explicitly adopt the standard.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: PRESS CONTACT:
Feb. 5, 2003 Local President phone, email, fax

Inadequate Fire Protection Puts Anytown at Risk
Report confirms understaffed fire department, neglected areas of city

ANYTOWN, Anystate—The Anytown Fire Department is dangerously understaffed, leaving fire fighters unable to reach many city neighborhoods in time to avert major property loss and potential tragedy, a new fire service report reveals. Anytown Fire Fighters Local XXX today released the report, conducted by the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) today.

“We’ve stated time and again that the fire department is understaffed and that public safety is threatened,” said Jim Stalwart, president of Anytown Fire Fighters Local XXX. “This report confirms it. The city needs to recommit itself to the safety of its citizens by rehiring our 17 laid-off fire fighters, reopening all closed stations and opening a new station.” The 50-page report details some chilling facts about Anytown public safety.

While the city has grown 33 percent in the last three decades, the number of fire stations has been slashed from six to one, and the number of fire fighters has been reduced by 41 percent. In 1971, 96 fire fighters protected the city’s 13.23 square miles from six stations. By 1999, the city had reduced the number of fire fighters to 74, deployed from three stations with just 17 on duty. The final blow came in January 2000 when the city laid off 17 fire fighters, leaving only 57 working from one fire station (with only 12 on duty) to protect the city’s 16.08 square miles.

Fire engines and ambulances can reach less than 19 percent of the city within four minutes.

A four-minute arrival is critical to prevent small fires from growing into large ones, and is the recommended limit for the initial arrival of fire companies at major fires and incidents. It is also essential for EMS response. The American Heart Association recommends that a basic life support EMS unit arrive within four minutes of cardiac arrest, followed by an advanced life support EMS unit within eight minutes to minimize brain damage or death.

To comply with the national fire fighting guidelines as outlined in the National Fire Protection Association’s (NFPA) 1710 Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments, the report recommends not only reversing the January 2000 cuts to fire protection in the city, but also opening an additional station.

Anytown Fire Fighters Local XXX and the Anytown Fire Department also commissioned the Geographical Information System (GIS) survey and report, which contains a Fire Suppression Capability Analysis covering department staffing, response times, station location and overall operations. The survey is based on Anytown City government public records provided by Fire Chief Joe Smith, satellite-based geographic mapping programs, and national fire service standards. Copies of the report are available from Jim Stalwart.

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**Candidate Questionnaire**

In 2001 the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) issued a new standard regarding the organization, deployment and staffing of career fire departments: NFPA 1710, Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments. This standard has the overwhelming support of the nation’s major fire service organizations, including the International Association of Fire Fighters, International Association of Fire Chiefs and the National Association of State Fire Marshals.

NFPA 1710 Standard ensures fire engine and truck staffing at a minimum of four fire fighters (five or six in jurisdictions with tactical hazards and high-hazard occupancies); response time of four minutes for the arrival of first due companies a unit with First Responder or higher-level capability at emergency medical incidents and if provided, eight minutes for the arrival of the Advanced Life Support; and minimum requirements for health and safety, incident management, training, communications, and pre-incident planning.

As a candidate for office, do you support or oppose the implementation of the NFPA 1710 Standard for (name of jurisdiction) Fire Department?

**Model Referendum**

*Legislature of the State/Province of ________*

An Act

Relating to the minimum criteria addressing the safety, effectiveness and efficiency of public fire suppression operations, emergency medical service, and special operations delivery in protecting the public of the jurisdiction and the occupational safety and health of fire department employees.

For the purposes of this statute, the minimum criteria addressing the effectiveness and efficiency of public fire suppression operations, emergency medical service, and special operations delivery in protecting the public of the jurisdiction and the occupational safety and health of fire department employees shall be in accordance with the 2001 Edition of NFPA 1710, published by the National Fire Protection Association.

The provision of this statute will be applicable to all substantially career fire departments.

This act shall be in full force and effect upon passage and approval
**Model Collective Bargaining Language**

*Option #1:*

The authority having jurisdiction through its Fire Department shall work toward implementation/compliance with the NFPA 1710 Standard.

There shall be a Joint Committee composed of an equal number of Management and Labor representatives (include language on the number of representatives your local deems appropriate). The Union representatives shall be selected by the Union.

The purpose of the committee will be to evaluate the Fire Department’s compliance with the minimum criteria addressed in NFPA 1710 regarding the effectiveness and efficiency and safety of fire suppression operations, emergency medical service, and special operations delivery in protecting the public and fire department employees. Where applicable, the joint committee evaluation will also include a review of relevant local/state/provincial policies, regulations and statutes that address fire suppression operations, emergency medical service and special operations delivery.

Upon completion of the evaluation, the Joint Committee will recommend a written plan and schedule for compliance with the operational criteria identified within NFPA 1710. Department evaluation and development of a written plan and schedule will be completed within ___ (specify time frame).

*Option #2:*

All policies implemented by the Fire Department will be in accordance with industry standards.

The term industry standards will be inclusive of but not limited to: NFPA Codes, and OSHA Regulations. (In Canada, applicable provincial regulations or other standards such as those developed by the Canadian Standards Association may be cited.)

In circumstances, where multiple policies on a given issue exist (i.e., staffing of apparatus), an evaluation of all appropriate industry standards will be conducted. The governing industry standard shall be the one that affords the greatest protection and safety to fire suppression personnel, EMS personnel and the public.

**Clip Art**

The CD that accompanies this handbook contains graphic files displaying the IAFF logo, in black and white and color, with and without the US and Canadian flags. There are numerous clip art libraries available that contain fire service-related images, and that may be purchased from any computer store. For additional art, contact the Department of Public Relations at the International’s headquarters in Washington (pr@iaff.org).