

Information about the U.S. Fire Administration: Publications, Outreach Materials, and the National Emergency Training Center Library – Transcript of audio

Please stand by for realtime captions.

Good afternoon, everybody. Welcome to the national overseas training center fire administration library. Mine is Lauren Flint, administrative library no GPL, your host today. We have Ashley Dolan from GPO on tech support today. Our speakers are tomorrow Arrington, publications and U.S. fire administration relations, and Carolyn Hassler, librarian at the U.S. fire administration's NETC library. Before we get started, a few reminders and tips. A Q&A will be at the end of the talk please add your questions to the chat at any time and send them to all participants. If our presenters share the screen and you would like to see the chat window, mouse over the blue bar at the top of the screen and click on chat. We are recording this presentation, and will make it available to you shortly. Now, I will hand the microphone over to our speakers, who will take it from here, beginning with Caroline.

Hello, everyone. This is Caroline, the librarian at U.S. Fire Administration. I did used to work for GPL. I might have interacted with you back in those days. So, I just wanted to give little introduction to agency, since it is a pretty small agency. A lot of people may not know about it. There's a little over 100 federal employees at the U.S. Fire Administration. Our mission is shown in there. It's to support and strengthen fire and emergency medical services and stakeholders to prepare for, prevent, mitigate and respond to all hazards. There, on the screen, you see our logo, which is called the hot foot logo. It's the Eagle stamping out the flame. The four stars over the Eagle represent our program areas, which are fire and EMS, education, and training, and that is through the national fire Academy that is part of USFA. Community risk reduction, which includes fire prevention. The national fire data center and research, and the library is under the research umbrella, currently, although we also serve the education program. So, a little bit about USFA's history . It was created in 1974 through the U.S. fire prevention and control administration act, U.S. fire prevention and control act, and it was part of the Department of Commerce when it was created. In 1978, the name was changed to the U.S. fire administration, then, in 1979, with FEMA created, it was moved into FEMA, and then, in 2002, when the Department of Homeland Security was created and FEMA was rolled into there. So, we are also rolled into there. So, we are now U.S. Fire Administration, under FEMA, which is under department of homeland security. The creation of our agency was the application of the "America burning" report in 1973.then, this report was from the national commission on fire prevention and control. I put the information up there if you want to make sure that you have it in your catalogs. It was, you know, a landmark report that really laid out the scope of the fire problem in America, the number of fatalities and the critical need for fire prevention, and what a role that could play. So, the report called for the creation of the fire administration, and also the national fire Academy. At this point, I'm going to turn it over to my colleague, Tomara, to talk about average agency , and I'm going to talk a little bit more about the library when I come back.

Thanks, Caroline. So, I am Tomara Arrington. As mentioned before, I am the program manager for the U.S. fire agency's media production center. The U.S. Fire Administration's publication center , we were located on campus, at our campus in Emmitsburg, Maryland, and we're available for visiting national fire Academy students to learn more about our free publications and outreach materials. Publications' online catalogs have over 400 items for either hard copy ordering or PDF download. All of our items are free of charge, including shipping costs. We have a wide variety of fire safety outreach items, covering home fire safety, topics such as smoke alarm awareness, escape planning, cooking, fire safety, electrical

fire safety, and the list just goes on and on. So, we have outreach materials, specifically, for children. Our "Sesame Street" fire safety program kit for preschool children is one of our top items, you know, for ordering and download. This kit includes an educator's guide, a family guide, a coloring book, a poster, and a CD of songs and stories that accompany the activities that are found in the educators' guide. The full kit can be ordered by schools, day care centers and fire departments. The family guide and the coloring book are open to public ordering, but certain quantity limits to apply here. Our fold up firetruck and ambulance activity sheets are probably our most popular items. They help teach children age-appropriate safety tips for fire and emergency messaging. One side includes coloring activities, such as how to make the home fire escape plan, and then, they can be folded and taped together to make stand up firetruck and ambulance. Our catalog also includes guides, manuals, and research publications that are specifically targeted to the fire and EMS services. Our retention and recruitment guide provides tools, information, and support to assist fire and EMS departments as they work to recruit and retain volunteer service members. We're soon going to be releasing -- I'm hoping, next week, funding alternatives for emergency medical and fire services. This guide describes alternative sources of funding and revenue opportunities, such as federal and state funding, as well as other new and innovative sources of funding. This one that's being updated, our latest version of the publication that was put out in 2012. So, lots has changed since then. So, we're excited to have that new piece being released very soon. So, we also have outreach material that includes social media messaging and toolkits, customizable posters, and handouts, and when I say, customizable, those can be used. They have a spot on each of the PDF file, where logos can be inserted, or contact information. They cover a wide range of fire and safety topics that can be used within amenities to help highlight the importance of fire safety. We have, on our website, it outlines various ways that you can order our material. Our ordering portal on our website is easy to follow. And if you have questions, here, you see our 800 number, and our staff are always able to help you walk through the process. You can expect hard-copy materials to be delivered publicly around three to four weeks. I'd also like to share USFA has a podcast. We're actually about to celebrate in January. It will be a two-year anniversary. New episodes are released the third Thursday of each month our host, Teresa Neil, fire program specialist, here, at USFA, speaks with our nation's fire and emergency experts on emergent issues and topics within the field of fire and EMS. So, we have a large collection of social media cards. These can be downloaded, used on your social media channels, Facebook, twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and they can help your organization spread the message about fire safety, and these are all trusted, tested messages. They come from our, you know, the whole fire service one voice. They are tested and trusted messages that, you know, are definitely validated. So, we also have a large collection of pictographs. These pictographs communicate messages with pictures to low-literacy, high-risk populations. These digital files are easy to download and use, and handouts, posters or banners, as well as on your social media channels. That's basically where I will end. Well, no, I do have one more slide. Sorry. So, this is also putting up -- Since we are part of FEMA, FEMA does have some locations of their own. They're not within our USFA catalog, but they can also be ordered. They're free outreach material, and if you go to the website, FEMA.gov and search publications, you can find all of that information, or also here, on the screen, you will see an 800 number that you can call to order these publications. And that is about it with my presentation. So, I will pass this back to Caroline, and happy to take any questions you may have after the presentation.

Okay. Thanks, Tomara. So, the national emergency training center library, there, a picture of our building, it is on the campus in Emmitsburg. The campus was purchased by the federal government in the late 1970's. It was formerly Saint Joseph's College, which was a sister college. Mount St. Mary's, also in Emmitsburg. NETC is a place, not really an organization. There are several organizations here. Two of them are FEMA organizations, USFA and its national fire Academy. Also, FEMA has an emergency management Institute, here, also. The library, although organizationally, we are under the fire

administration, we serve both students from the national fire Academy, and also from the emergency management Institute. So, we are an externally-facing library, because the students and, to a large extent, also the instructors, are FEMA employees. They're not on the FEMA network, generally speaking. So, we're serving both of them, NFA, staff, here, NETC, FEMA staff to an extent, even though they are also served by the DHS library, and first-responder community in general, and the public. We do do a lot of inter-library lending. We field a lot of emails coming in, just general agency questions.

Here, you can see the inside of our building, and where we Okay two floors inside of that building, and this is a picture during high-Covid times, and a major subject areas are fire service, of course, EMS, first responder training and safety, health, disaster preparedness, leadership. We have a really strong collection about to start fires and disasters. This library, if this start around 1979-'80, here, on the Emmitsburg campus, but it did incorporate some seed collections that have resulted in us having a lot older, historic materials here as well. So, one of those was the civil defense staff college that was in Battle Creek, Michigan before it moved to Emmitsburg and became emergency management Institute. So, we have those materials, which include a lot of civil defense from the '50s, nuclear bomb shelter-type material, things like that. We also got the fire Academy had a library before this campus was opened. We had their materials too FEMA had a library until around 2008. That's not really a seed collection, because our library was open before that, but we did also get some things from the FEMA library. They were closed down, I assume, having to do with consolidation into the DHS library, but DHS library is entirely internally focused, and as I said, our main customers don't have access to this. So, that's why we are still around. So, we have a staff of eight, and one of our main activities is building and developing our index and catalog. There is a link there to our main home page. We like to say that our catalog is more than local catalog, because we do a lot of journal-level meta-data, data entry. We have a lot of journal articles in the database, and also, theses and student papers from the NETC programs, and we do, actually, also have our own thesaurus that we use for indexing, and I'm not sure how long that has been around, but quite a while, I believe, so that is another ongoing project that we have, just keeping that updated and developing it.

So, when I say we do a lot of article indexing, last year, we added over 2000 article records in addition to records for the books that we added during the year, et cetera. A lot of that comes from periodical subscriptions that we maintain. Those are both trade and scholarly journals that we receive and index. Now, we're not doing a lot of exhaustive cover-to-cover indexing. Mostly, I would say, it is selective. The type of things that we wouldn't do our, you know, a very short article, something that's just very newsy or an article that's not relevant to the curriculum on our campus. So, about 80% of the articles that we indexed last year were from our subscriptions, and then we also picked up about another 20% from journals that we don't subscribe to, but we will go out to other Oracle databases like science rapture, Wiley, or what have you, look for articles that are relevant to the programs, here, on campus, and also add those to the database, and when there is a reliable link to the article, like a DOI link, we will put that in. So, some of our index and has gone back quite a ways, and it's quite in deep, so I just wanted to call out some of those things. So, for instance, fire engineering. We have 16,000 article engineering for fire engineering going back to 1926. The national fire protection Association Journal goes back to 1907, although the title has changed a few times. For firehouse, we have 1000 article records for firehouse. Government publications that we index, I can only find two, but they were fire management today from the forest service. Which goes back to 2000 in our database, and homeland security, graduate school. Let's see. Other activities that we do here include, you know, library instruction, course orientations, document delivery. We have a few research databases that we provide to students. If you are at a school that has an emergency management or a fire service program, we always like to see our index and catalog listed as a resource. The direct URL to our catalog is USFA.bibliography.ski.nation.com. The

donation is our vendor. You can find that on the library homepage. Here is the link to the USFA homepage. There are times at the top, both for library and for complications. And that wraps it up for me. So, I think we're ready for any questions.

Thank you so much, Caroline and Tomara. I haven't seen any questions come in yet, but please, if you do have questions, go ahead and put them in the chat. Maybe, in the meantime, all everybody's thinking about the questions, I can throw one out there, which is if we go to your website, this is your index available there, from your website?

Yes. So, if you go to the USFA website, and then you follow the library tab at the top, there is a box there for the index and catalog, and there's also a link there for advanced search, which goes to the catalog site. There is a link there for, also, to our library guide site, where you can find links to our thesaurus, our hours. We are not exactly open to the public, but if somebody had critical research needs that can be fulfilled with our collections, that is something that we can facilitate, but the catalog is completely open, externally open, and as we said, we do a lot of interlocked rate-loan lending.

Thanks. We have a question from Barbara. Could you talk about the data available from the USFA?

Yeah. so, the main data system that we currently have is called national fire incident reporting system. I'm not a big expert on NFIRS. It is being revamped into a new system. From the homepage --

I was going to say, Caroline, yeah. I can't I'm with Caroline here. I can't really speak a whole lot to our data, but we definitely have a thorough outline of it on our website, up in the gray -- We have a navigation bar. You will see NFIRS. It has lots of information there. It is switching to what you were mentioning, Caroline, the national emergency response information system, NERIS.

So, it does collect information. Fire departments will report on the incidents that they respond to into the system in various ways. So, part of the new system is to streamline that and make it a little easier for them to report and get the data in there. The data, you know, is available to researchers that can contact them and get the data. We also have another kind of separate program that tracks home fire fatalities through news reports, and keeps track of that daily, and that's also on the website.

As well, was firefighter fatality numbers were, you know, for annual numbers, we also tracked that data.

I suspect everyone is like me, over on your website, on the side, looking these things up as you are talking about them. Do we have any other questions?

Jessica asks what is the normal time allotted to borrowing physical copies of materials?

We actually just extended our base loan to six weeks, and for IOL, it is six weeks for ILLs with one or two renewals. I'm sorry. I will be 12 weeks. We try to be pretty generous, accommodating with that, because that is also the way that some of our students would receive material or prospective students, or former students. Some of those, because they're not, like, currently affiliated or not here on campus, they would get materials through our library loan, through their library. So, we try and do as much as we can there.

All right. Any last questions? All right. I think we are pretty good. You guys were so clear. You have such a great website. I'm sure we all learned something new. So, want to say a big thank you, again, to

Tomara and Caroline for presenting this webinar to us. We also hope you will check out some past webinars from the webinar website, and we will be sending you a registered for this lies a recording of this webinar. Thank you for attending. We will see you soon.

Thanks, everyone.

Thank you.

[Captioner standing by] [Event Concluded]