Outside Fires

“Outside fire” is a broad term that includes fires occurring outdoors, ranging from trash and rubbish fires to fires involving natural vegetation such as trees, brush, and grass. This course prepares telecommunicators to recognize different types of outside fire calls and the hazards associated with them. Learners examine outside fire characteristics, wildfire behavior, hazardous materials concerns, information-gathering techniques, and appropriate Pre-Arrival Instructions for callers who may be threatened, trapped, injured, or evacuating during an outside fire.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, learners will be able to:

1. Identify the types of outside fires and their associated hazards.
2. Describe factors that influence the ignition, behavior, and spread of outside fires.
3. Explain the information-gathering process used when handling an outside fire call.
4. Recognize hazardous materials and other exposures that may increase the danger of an outside fire.
5. Describe the appropriate Pre-Arrival Instructions to provide callers reporting an outside fire.

Module 1: Introduction

This module introduces the prevalence and impact of outside fires. Learners examine national fire statistics, when outside fires are most likely to occur, and environmental conditions that increase fire risk. The module establishes the importance of recognizing seasonal and time-of-day patterns when handling outside fire calls.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Describe the prevalence of outside fires compared with other fire property types.
2. Identify the times of year when outside fires are most likely to occur.
3. Identify the time of day when outside fire activity typically peaks.
4. Explain how dry conditions, limited rainfall, and high winds increase outside fire risk.
5. Recognize the potential human and property impacts associated with outside fires.

Content/Activities

- The Numbers: Fires by Property Type
- Annual Impact of Outside Fires
- Time of Year and Seasonal Fire Patterns
- Time of Day and Peak Fire Activity
- Dry Conditions and Wind Risk
- Outside Fire Statistics Review

Module 2: Types of Outside Fires

This module examines the major classifications of outside fires and the hazards associated with each. Learners distinguish among rubbish fires, wildfires, outside yard or storage equipment fires, and cultivated crop fires. The module also explores wildfire types, weather conditions, firefighting equipment, dumpster and mailbox fires, hazardous materials, and the Emergency Response Guidebook.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Differentiate among the primary classifications of outside fires.
2. Distinguish among ground, surface, and crown wildfires based on their characteristics and hazards.
3. Explain how heat, humidity, and wind affect fire behavior and spread.
4. Identify hazards associated with dumpster fires, mailbox fires, and hazardous materials.
5. Describe how fire weather information, firefighting equipment, and the Emergency Response Guidebook support outside fire response.

Content/Activities

- Classifications of Outside Fires
- Rubbish Fires and Wildfires
- Ground, Surface, and Crown Fires
- Weather Conditions, Wind Speed, and Wind Direction
- Fire Weather Watch and Red Flag Warning
- Firefighting Equipment and Wildland Engines
- Dumpster and Mailbox Fire Hazards
- Hazardous Materials Classes, ERG, and Check Your Understanding

Module 3: Information Gathering

This module focuses on the information telecommunicators need to obtain when processing an outside fire call. Learners examine methods for determining the fire's location and size, identifying threatened structures and exposures, determining whether anyone is trapped or injured, recognizing hazardous materials, and gathering information about smoke, fire cause, and environmental conditions. Spotting, torching, and triangulation are also introduced as important concepts when locating and tracking large outside fires.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Gather information needed to determine the location, direction, and approximate size of an outside fire.
2. Explain spotting, torching, and triangulation and their relevance to outside fire calls.
3. Identify structures, exposures, and Home Ignition Zone hazards that may be threatened by fire or embers.
4. Determine whether callers or bystanders are trapped, injured, or require another emergency protocol.
5. Gather information about hazardous materials, smoke characteristics, possible fire cause, weather, and terrain.

Content/Activities

- Locating the Fire and Identifying Spot Fires
- Spotting, Torching, and Triangulation
- Estimating Fire Size and Acreage
- Structures, Exposures, and the Home Ignition Zone
- Trapped or Injured Persons and Related Protocols
- Hazardous Materials and Smoke Characteristics
- Causes of Outside Fires
- Information-Gathering Scenarios and Knowledge Checks

Module 4: Pre-Arrival Instructions

This module addresses the Pre-Arrival Instructions telecommunicators may need to provide during outside fire incidents. Instructions vary according to the caller's location and the nature and intensity of the fire. Learners consider situations involving evacuation, callers trapped outdoors or in vehicles, callers unable to safely leave their homes, injuries, and safe practices when returning home after a fire.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Select Pre-Arrival Instructions based on the caller's location and the intensity of the outside fire.
2. Describe appropriate actions for callers who need to evacuate from a threatened area.
3. Provide appropriate safety instructions to callers trapped outdoors or inside a vehicle.
4. Identify appropriate guidance for callers who cannot safely evacuate or who have sustained injuries.
5. Explain safety precautions callers should follow when returning to an area affected by an outside fire.

Content/Activities

- Pre-Arrival Instruction Overview
- Evacuation Guidance
- Trapped in a Vehicle or Outdoors
- Unable to Evacuate Safely
- Fire-Related Injury Considerations
- Returning Home After a Fire
- Hidden Embers and Spot-Fire Awareness
- Check Your Understanding: Pre-Arrival Instruction Scenarios

Module 5: Knowledge Check

This module provides learners with an opportunity to apply knowledge gained throughout the course. Scenario-based questions assess recognition of outside fire types, hazards, information-gathering priorities, and appropriate Pre-Arrival Instructions.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Apply course concepts to realistic outside fire call scenarios.
2. Distinguish among outside fire types based on caller descriptions.
3. Identify hazards and exposures presented in outside fire scenarios.
4. Determine the most important information to gather from callers.
5. Select appropriate Pre-Arrival Instructions based on caller circumstances.

Content/Activities

- Outside Fire Classification Questions
- Wildfire Type Recognition
- Hazard Identification Questions
- Information-Gathering Scenarios
- Pre-Arrival Instruction Scenarios
- Course Knowledge Check

Module 6: Conclusion

This module reinforces the major concepts presented throughout the course. Learners review the different types of outside fires, the hazards associated with them, the information-gathering process, and the appropriate Pre-Arrival Instructions to provide callers during outside fire incidents.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Summarize the major types of outside fires and their associated hazards.
2. Review the key environmental and hazardous-material factors that influence outside fire risk.
3. Summarize the essential information telecommunicators should gather during an outside fire call.
4. Explain how caller location and fire conditions affect Pre-Arrival Instructions.
5. Integrate outside fire assessment, information gathering, and caller safety considerations when handling an incident.

Content/Activities

- Review of Outside Fire Types
- Review of Associated Hazards
- Review of Information-Gathering Priorities
- Review of Pre-Arrival Instructions
- Course Conclusion
- References and Resources

Course Completion Criteria

To successfully complete this course and earn continuing education hours, learners must achieve a minimum score of 75%. The quiz must be completed within 30 minutes.

- CE hours awarded: 1
- Certificate duration: 12 Months

Technical Requirements

- Desktop, laptop, or mobile device
- Speakers or headphones
- High-speed Internet access
- A current web browser