

Starting a Council: Preparing for the First Meeting

Contact Local Fire Officials

As the local fire safety experts, your fire department will have valuable insight about your community's fire environment. The department may be able to provide program ideas that will help you motivate the council to action and create some early successes.

Ask Fire Officials About the Nevada Fire Plan

The Nevada Fire Plan outlines a strategy for how the fire department and the community can work together to minimize losses and costs from wildland fires. The facts and statistics included in the Nevada Fire Plan will provide you with unquestionable proof of Nevada's fire problem. It can target the specific fire risk areas in your community to help you focus the Council's efforts. It can create community support for fire safe programs. For more on the Fire Plan, visit www.nvfireplan.org.

Contact Local Fire Safe Groups

Contacting members of other Fire Safe Chapters is a good way to learn about successful grassroots fire safe programs. Access some local Chapter's at www.nvfsc.org.

Select a Meeting Location

Hold the first meeting in a neutral location such as the local community center or library. Try to select a meeting place where everyone will feel comfortable sharing their ideas and concerns.

Create an Agenda

Fire safety can be a complicated issue. At your first Fire Safe Council meeting, keep your agenda simple and uncomplicated. Agenda items should be broad, topical areas that can be used as starting points for productive discussions. The goal of the first meeting is to begin a dialogue and build consensus. Avoid discussing controversial, divisive topics at the first meeting.

Appoint a Facilitator

Choose one person to direct the first meeting. A good facilitator has the ability to work with people and achieve consensus. The facilitator should be neutral, and understand the diverse views of members and be able to put them in the context of the larger issue. He or she should not be easily swayed by opinion and should have the ability to evaluate issues and concerns raised by members.

Sample Agenda For First Meeting

FIRE SAFE COUNCIL

MEETING AGENDA

DATE

I. Welcome

II. Introductions

III. Nevada's Fire Problem/The Nevada Fire Plan

A. Map of (NAME OF COMMUNITY/COUNTY'S) fire danger

IV. The Fire Safe Council Concept

V. Goals and Objectives

VI. High Fire Hazard Areas

VII. Fire Safe Projects

VIII. Appointment of Executive Officers

IX. Affirmation that forming a local chapter is supported and the appointment of an organizing committee. It is this small group that works on completion of the application and brings it back to the larger group at the second or third meeting.

X. Open Forum

XI. Next Meeting

A. Location

B. Action Items