

FDNY



LANGUAGE ACCESS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

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SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES

CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS SAVE LIVES

SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES

**FD
NY**

Your Safety Is Our Mission

PROUDLY SERVING NEW YORK SINCE 1865



LOS DETECTORES DE HUMO SALVAN VIDAS

LOS DETECTORES DE MONÓXIDO DE CARBONO SALVAN VIDAS



FDNY Language Access Policy

Implementation Plan

I. Agency Mission and Background

A Mission

The Fire Department (FDNY) responds to fires, public safety and medical emergencies, disasters and terrorist acts to protect the lives and property of City residents and visitors. The Department advances fire safety through its fire prevention, investigation and education programs, as well as contributes to the City’s homeland security efforts. The Department responds to more than 280,000 fires and non-fire related emergencies and more than 1 million medical emergencies each year, and maintains approximately 250 firehouses and ambulances stations.

B. Direct Services offered by FDNY

- Fire suppression
- Emergency Medical Service
- Fire Prevention Inspections, Licensing and Certifications
- Fire Safety Education
- Fire Investigation

RESIDENTIAL APARTMENT BUILDING FIRE SAFETY

There are special areas of concern when it comes to fire safety in apartment buildings. Families in apartment buildings live close together; affecting each other's risks associated with fire. While the chances of a fire starting in an apartment are about the same as in a private home, apartment fires have the potential to spread fire, heat and smoke throughout the building affecting the safety of all occupants.

FIRE SAFETY BEGINS IN YOUR OWN APARTMENT!

**IS YOUR FAMILY FIRE SAFE?
PROTECT YOURSELF, YOUR FAMILY AND YOUR NEIGHBORS**

SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS SAVE LIVES SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES

FDNY YOUR SAFETY IS OUR MISSION PROUDLY SERVING NEW YORK SINCE 1865

SEGURIDAD CONTRA INCENDIOS EN EDIFICIOS RESIDENCIALES

¿La seguridad contra incendios comienza en su propio departamento? ¿Su familia está protegida contra el fuego? Protéjase y proteja a su familia y sus vecinos.

Cuando se trata de la seguridad contra incendios en edificios, existen áreas que causan especial preocupación: en los edificios, las familias viven cerca y, así, los riesgos de incendio que corre una familia afectan a otras. Si bien las posibilidades de que se produzca un incendio son casi las mismas en un departamento que en una casa, en los edificios existe el riesgo de que el fuego, el calor y el humo se extiendan por todos los departamentos y pongan en peligro a todos sus ocupantes.

LOS DETECTORAS DE HUMO SALVAN VIDAS LOS DETECTORAS DE MONÍVIDO DE CARBONO SALVAN VIDAS



II. Agency Language Access Goals

The goal of the FDNY language access plan is to expand the offering of our services in more languages. Components of this over-arching goal include:

- Fire Safety Education: Increase the number of fire safety education materials in foreign languages, including on our website.
- Bureau of Fire Prevention (BFP): BFP currently utilizes the Language Line and is piloting a hand-held device that will provide access to on-line translation services, such as www.translation2.paralink.com. The pilot phase is underway.
- Fire Operations: Determine feasibility of expanding the Language Line to firehouses. Fire Operations will also be the recipient of the Visual Language Translators (see below).
- FDNY "Service Center": While we have no reported issues with language barriers (see. below), working with the Mayor's Office, we are installing new signage and expanding the Language Line to areas of Headquarters open to the public, e.g., cashier's office.
- Emergency Medical Service (EMS): FDNY EMS uses the Language Line and received a \$50,000 grant in 2008 to purchase "Medical Visual Language Translators". The Translators are being introduced to the field this Spring.
- General: Explore initiating participation in the City's language bank.
- Department-wide: Explore feasibility and necessity of providing website information in languages other than English.

A. Assessing success of our plan implementation

The FDNY's commitment to increasing and enhancing language access is widespread throughout the agency but, until now, had not been fully coordinated. One major milestone will be coordinating this effort among the involved bureaus and units. Finding budget-neutral alternatives is optimal.



III. Limited English Proficient (LEP) Population Assessment

A. Department of Justice Four-Factor Analysis

1. *Emergency Medical and Fire Suppression:* As an emergency service agency that provides “services to the public that are not programmatic in nature” and for which the provisions of this order shall be implemented to the degree practicable, the FDNY can only estimate in the broadest sense the number of LEP persons to whom we provide our emergency services. One method of making the determination of how many LEP persons we serve might be the following: ¼ of the City’s population identify themselves as LEP; therefore, we can extrapolate that ¼ of our fire and EMS responses are to LEP persons. Though, arguably, some of our services are more frequently provided in the City’s minority and economically distressed communities that may have larger LEP populations. We do know that EMS uses the Language Line most frequently for Spanish, Chinese and Russian, see below.

2. *Fire Safety Education:* We conduct our fire safety presentations in schools throughout the city and specifically target neighborhoods that have experienced fatal fires. As with our emergency services, we cannot calculate with specificity how many LEP students are at a particular school or attending a public event, unless we specifically devoted resources to either polling the audience or asking for people to volunteer the information. However, before we visit a school, to determine the ethnic and language mix, our fire safety educators: (a) consult a census map, and (b) discuss the student population with school personnel. Based on that, we bring language-appropriate materials. In 2008, we visited 762 elementary schools throughout the five boroughs, making presentations to more than 60,000 children ages 5 to 11. Applying the ¼ analysis employed above means that approximately 15,000 of the children to which we make presentations are LEP.

The majority of our fire safety events require some translated materials: we bring English and Spanish materials to all of our events, especially at the larger, public events. We inquire about language needs prior to all events, e.g., senior centers mostly require Spanish and Chinese. At Fire Safety events that we attend following fatal or serious fires, such as a recent fatal fire in Chinatown, we assess the community needs by speaking to community organizations with which we are coordinating these events. In schools, we mostly use English. The most frequent languages we see a need for are Spanish, Russian and Chinese.

3. *Fire Prevention, Licensing and Certification:* BFP has approximately 350 civilian inspectors who inspect equipment and component parts of buildings for permitting and licensing purposes and to witness system tests. In Fiscal 2007, BFP inspectors conducted more than 180,000 inspections. Fire Prevention has distinct units responsible for different kinds of inspections. These include, among others, a Blasting Unit that inspects and issues permits for explosives, fireworks and special effects; a Bulk Fuel Safety Unit



that inspects motor fuel storage systems at gas stations; a Fire Suppression Unit witnesses tests of sprinkler and standpipe systems; a Fire Alarm Inspection Unit that inspects all fire alarm central stations in commercial buildings; and a Public Safety Unit that inspects high-rises and places of public assembly. Attached hereto as Appendix One is a list of our civilian Fire Prevention units and their respective inspection responsibilities. We do not currently have protocols in place to assess the number of LEP persons to whom we offer these services.

4. *Headquarters Cashier and Other "Street-Level" Services:* On the ground floor at FDNY Headquarters at 9 Metrotech Center, Brooklyn, FDNY employees serve members of the public who come to this location to submit plans and/or paperwork, take exams for certificates of fitness, or request fire reports. To the extent fees are associated with these services, they are paid at the cashier windows at this location. All of these employees are Fire Prevention personnel, except for the cashiers, who are FDNY Revenue Management employees.

The only document that the Cashier gives the public is a receipt from a standard receipt book. The important data on that receipt is name, date and amount paid. Translation would not seem to be necessary. Several Cashier's Office employees speak Spanish, and one speaks Filipino. More than 90 percent of the customers we interact at these cashier windows are paying for a Certificate of Fitness exam or Qualification. The Fire Code requires that Certificate applicants: **"Have a reasonable understanding of the English language and be able to answer satisfactorily such questions as may be asked of such applicant upon his or her examination."** The exams are all multiple choice written, and are only given in English. Therefore, we have not had an issue with language barriers.

Working with the Mayor's Office and using their prototype, we are installing a multilingual sign in the Cashier area that states what services are provided to the public by the FDNY at this location. We are in the process of determining what languages we will include.

B. LEP Languages:

1. *Fire Safety Education:* The FDNY provides its fire safety education literature in the "top 6 citywide LEP languages" in addition to English, Urdu, Arabic and Yiddish. To date, decisions about the languages we publish our materials in are based on our educators' observations and work in the field, at presentations in communities throughout the five boroughs. Nonetheless, we do think the current literature – especially English, Spanish and Chinese – fills most of our needs. At a recent City Council hearing on Fire Safety Education, a Councilman requested that we offer our literature in Creole. The FDNY Foundation, our not-for-profit organization that assists us with our fire safety education efforts, has made a commitment to do so.



2. *EMS*: Our EMS responders and BFP Inspectors utilize the Language Line, an interpreter service that provides 143 languages and dialects. We reviewed our Language Line usage agency-wide and found the following:

- From January through November 2008, we made 2,605 calls to the Language Line, using 12,631 minutes and requesting services in 44 languages.
- The most predominant languages are Spanish Russian and Chinese: 39 percent of the total minutes were calls seeking Spanish interpretation, 27 percent were Russian and 14 percent were Mandarin or Cantonese. The remaining 40 languages were each approximately 3 percent or less.





IV. Implementation Plan Logistics

A. Implementation Timeline

- Select Language Bank Coordinator by May 1, 2009
- Place “Medical Visual Language Translator” in the field by May 1, 2009.
- Assess the cost and determine the feasibility of translating fire safety literature into Haitian Creole by May 1, 2009
- Explore feasibility and necessity of providing website information in languages other than English by May 1, 2009
- Determine feasibility of expanding the Language Line to firehouses and HQ “service centers” by May 1, 2009
- Explore initiating participation in the language bank by June 1, 2009

B. Major milestones

1. Fire Safety Education: The FDNY Strategic Plan for the next two years will include as a goal increasing the number of fire safety education materials in foreign languages. We currently offer them in 10 different languages, but will consider more languages. In addition, our website does not include all of the languages we currently offer in hard copy. We plan to include all ten. As stated above, a Councilman requested that we print our materials in Creole. The FDNY Foundation has made a commitment to do so. At his request, we will also explore the costs and benefits of placing our fire safety ads in foreign languages.

2. EMS: EMS is using \$50,000 in grant funds to develop an FDNY EMS-specific “Medical Visual Language Translator, manufactured by Kwikpoint. With this, an EMS patient can point to pictures to “communicate immediately independent of language”. English words are next to certain pictures “to aid a clinician in usage.” This is intended to supplement interpretation services, such as AT&T, and to overcome verbal impairments. Moreover, to ensure compliance with HIPAA, this allows communications to be private. This “low-tech” translation tool consists of customized panels that enable patients, regardless of their native language, to point to pictures that describe their symptoms, etc. It is a laminated document that folds to pocket-size.

EMS conducted a limited pilot with positive feedback. We reviewed data from our EMS members as to which panels are best suited to New York City and we developed a customized New York City version. The cost is \$15 each, which allowed us to purchase approximately 3,300 Kwikpoint guides for every one of our ambulance personnel, FDNY fire units and 911-participating ambulances. We will train in usage of this product in the first monthly drill period after it is introduced. We will see if introducing this in the field affects Language Line usage. Like our Inspection force, many EMS personnel are



bilingual. Anecdotal evidence supports the Language Line statistics: the languages EMS personnel encounter most often in the field are Spanish, Russian, Chinese and Korean.

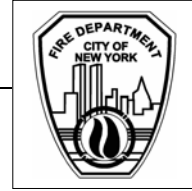
3. **BFP:** BFP Inspectors do not have agency-issued cell phones. But, BFP recently revised its customer service standards which includes instructions on using the Language Line. They use this service primarily while in their offices at headquarters or at the BFP District Offices. We have found that a good number of our inspectors are fluent in different languages and at times they are either able to handle the situation or they can radio a fellow inspector to conduct interpretation. Moreover, we have found that persons in need of navigating the inspection process will commonly hire expeditors.

Our Field Activity Routing and Reporting (FARR) system is being developed that will include hand-held devices for our BFP inspection forces (ultimately, they will be issued to the fire operations field personnel as well). This prototype hand-held device will have a feature to allow language translation. The pilot is expected to start early this year.

C. FDNY personnel involved in implementing the plan

- Chief of EMS
- Deputy Commissioner for Legal Affairs
- Assistant Chief Fire Operations (Language Access Coordinator)
- Associate Commissioner for Intergovernmental Affairs
- Assistant Commissioner for Fire Prevention
- To-be-named Language Bank Coordinator

The image shows a bilingual fire safety brochure. The left side is in Hebrew and the right side is in English. The English side has a header "FIRE SAFETY FOR JEWISH OBSERVANCES" and a sub-header "PREPARING THE KITCHEN AND COOKING". The text on the English side discusses that 50% of apartment fires start in the kitchen and provides safety guidelines for Shabbat and Hanukkah. The Hebrew side has a header "איבטור אבטוריות" and a sub-header "אבטוריות אבטוריות". The text on the Hebrew side discusses kitchen safety and observances like Shabbat and Hanukkah. There are illustrations of a menorah, a Shabbat candle, and a kitchen scene. Logos for the Fire Department City of New York and the FDNY are present at the bottom.



V. Service Provision Plan

A. Interpretation Services

We will provide interpretation through:

- Continued (an expanded, as discussed above) use of the Language line by EMS and BFP personnel. Our EMS Operations Guide 109-10 provides instruction. It sets forth the standard for all Emergency Medical Dispatch personnel. In the field, EMS personnel contact our on-line medical control (dispatch), which connects them to the AT&T service.
- Use existing bilingual staff among BFP inspectors and EMS personnel.
- In the long-term, we plan to use the citywide Language Bank.

We identify the languages of our customers by:

- Working with schools and community groups in advance of our fire safety events to assess language needs.
- The Language Line Service summary, which provides languages requested, minutes and number of calls to the service, provides information as to the languages most needed.
- Discussions with EMS, BFP and Community Affairs personnel.

B. Translation Services

Translation of written material:

- We do not have many public documents other than our fire safety materials. We contract with Erickson, a company that provides this translation service.
- Continued use of Erickson, our translation service provider for our fire safety education materials. Through City Hall and the Association for a Better New York (ABNY), the FDNY is working with Transperfect to provide quality assurance.

Plain language:

- We devote three hours of the FDNY Officers Management Institute to teaching a course on “Plain Language” and otherwise have no agency-wide plan to use plain language
- We will continue to monitor this going forward.

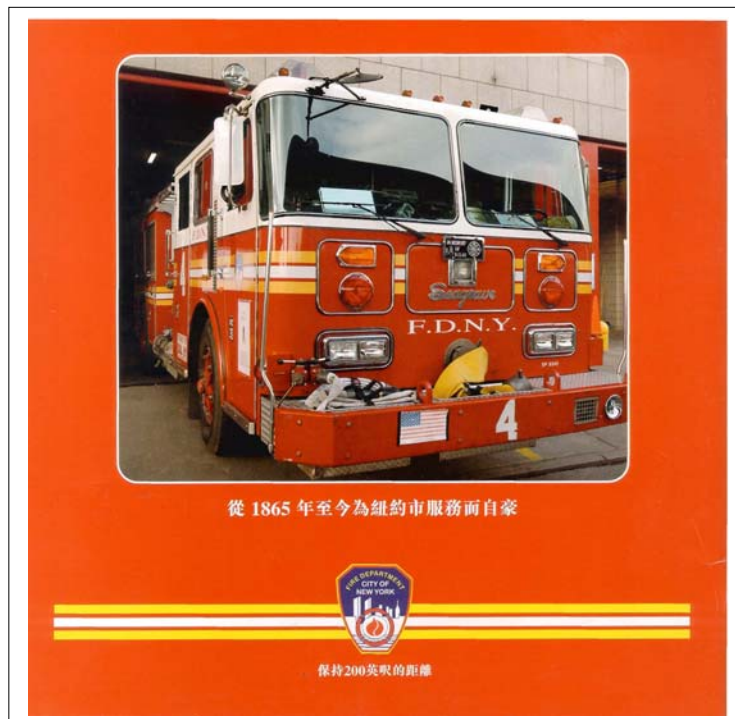


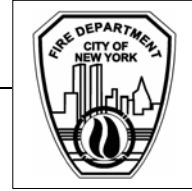
Website:

- We currently provide our fire safety materials on our website. The only other areas that the public may access our website for are:
 - Recruitment: We do not have our Firefighter and EMS recruitment materials in different languages because a prospective recruit needs to be English-proficient to join the Department. We do, however, have bilingual recruiters for those instances where a family member or friend of a potential candidate asks questions in a foreign language.
 - As stated above, certifications require English proficiency.
 - We will review the extent to which other parts of our public website should be translated as well.

Signage at public service centers:

- We effectively have one “service center.” As stated above, our cashier’s window serves as a portal for the public to submit plans and/or paperwork, take exams for certificates of fitness, request fire reports. To the extent fees are associated with these services, they are paid at the cashier windows at this location. We are reviewing what languages our new signage will provide, as discussed above.





VI. Training

Currently, EMS and BFP inspectors use the Language Line. An agency directive referenced above provides the procedures for EMS personnel to utilize that service. EMS Personnel are responsible for abiding by all extant agency directives, rules and regulations: there is no training *per se*.

BFP has training planned for early 2009 for customer service and language line.

The vendor who produced the Medical Visual Translator is providing training materials and EMS plans to provide instruction about the Translator during drills immediately following its introduction to the field, likely by May 1, 2009. Fire Operations plans to do something similar.

VII. Record Keeping and Evaluation

Quality Assurance: see above.

Maintaining records: The agency Language Access Coordinator in coordination with Operations and Legal staff will maintain all records.

Ensuring compliance with the Executive Order: The agency Language Access Coordinator in coordination with Operations and Legal staff will maintain all records.

VII. Resource Analysis and Planning

A. Current Agency Resources:

As set forth in many instances above, the FDNY is leveraging many current agency resources to implement our Language Access Plan: expanding use of the Language Line, utilizing grant for Medical Visual Translator, planning to add translation service functionality to the ongoing FARR project, providing fire safety materials in several more languages using existing contract, adding multilingual signage to our cashier location at Metrotech, etc.

B. Volunteer language bank:

We would like to take part in the voluntary language access bank and will explore this option over the next several months. The initial step would be appointing someone to be the agency Language Bank Liaison/Coordinator. As stated above, this agency like all City agencies faces a grim budget climate. Because of staffing shortages, we would have to appoint an existing employee to take on this responsibility. Among the responsibilities would be recruiting volunteers and maintaining the list/database.



After appointing an FDNY Liaison/Cordinator, the next step would be recruiting via our Intranet, civilian bulletin, Department Order and all agency publications, and our fraternal organizations. We could also send emails Department-wide.

The Language Bank guide provided to us by the Mayor's Office should be a helpful source for taking the next steps and planning. We would also consult with the Mayor's Office of Operations (MOO) and the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA).

Initial steps include:

- Identify Liaison/Coordinator;
- Schedule meetings with MOO and MOIA;
- Determine how to identify volunteers (e.g., survey new hires);
- Recruit via publications and outreach;
- Create list of volunteers;
- Develop process; and
- Determine how to assess proficiency levels.





Appendix One

FDNY BUREAU OF FIRE PREVENTION (BFP) INSPECTIONS

District Offices

The BFP District Offices conduct annual inspections citywide relating to the manufacture sale, storage and use of flammable/combustible liquids and compressed gases. Its inspections include the review of flammable paint-spraying operations, motor fuel and fuel oil storage systems, large-capacity refrigeration systems and commercial cooking equipment.

Fire Suppression Unit

Hazardous Cargo Vehicle Inspections

BFP inspects all vehicles transporting or using hazardous, combustible, or flammable products, and issues permits for these vehicles for the transportation and delivery of hazardous materials within the City. The Unit also provides authorization and escorts for the transportation of otherwise prohibited cargo within the City, and provides escorts for and special routing of explosives through the City.

Sprinkler and Standpipe Inspections

BFP witnesses the five-year tests of sprinkler and standpipe systems, including the five-year flow tests of residential sprinkler systems and performance testing on gaseous, chemical and non-water fire suppression systems. It processes sprinkler installation and removal recommendations and performs facility inspections of companies requesting FDNY certificates to inspect and service portable fire extinguishers.

Hazard Control Unit

Blasting/Special Effects Inspections

The BFP Blasting Unit performs inspections of, and issues permits for, fireworks displays and entertainment-industry special effects. It also performs inspections and issues permits for explosives used in the construction industry.

Bulk Fuel Safety Inspections

BFP performs inspections of motor vehicle fuel storage systems at service stations and private fill stations, including compressed natural gas stations. It also issues permits for the storage and use of bulk petroleum products and liquid natural gas, and for methane recovery facilities.



Laboratory/Pipeline Inspections

The Hazard Control Unit performs inspections of and issues permits for medical gas systems and chemical labs in hospitals, research centers, schools and private industry. It also issues permits for bulk (tank) chemical storage and inspects interstate and intrastate petroleum pipelines delivering fuel to bulk oil terminals and airports.

Central Station Inspection Unit

This Unit performs annual inspections of all fire alarm central stations -- where all the data from the various smoke alarm or sprinklers sensors are compiled. The Unit provides Operations with information regarding "Class 3" fire alarm assignments in commercial buildings and hotels via the Bureau of Fire Communications.

Fire Alarm Inspection Unit

The Fire Alarm Inspection Unit inspects fire alarm, smoke detection and emergency voice communications systems in office buildings, hotels, hospitals, schools, nursing homes, bulk fuel storage facilities, methane recovery facilities and piers.

Public Safety Inspection Unit

High-Rise Inspections

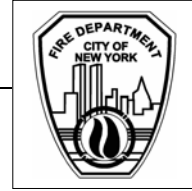
The Public Safety Unit annually inspects and enforces fire prevention and life safety requirements in high-rise office buildings and hotels, and is responsible for enforcing Local Law #5 (covering high-rise office buildings). The Unit schedules and conducts on-site examinations for Fire Safety Directors.

Places of Public Assembly Inspections

The Public Safety Inspection Unit conducts annual inspections and enforcement of fire prevention life safety requirements in places of public assembly (i.e., occupancies that accommodate 75 or more persons). Places of Public Assembly include movie theaters, cabarets, restaurants and catering establishments.

Public Buildings Inspections

The Public Safety Inspection Unit maintains inspection records regarding fire and life safety conditions in facilities such as hospitals, nursing homes, schools, colleges, day care centers, day camps, group homes, shelters, prisons and foster care facilities.



Technology Management Unit

Rangehood Inspections

The Technology Management Unit reviews rangehood extinguishing system plans and performs rangehood extinguishing system initial installation inspections. It also witnesses performance testing. Rangehoods are usually located in occupancies such as restaurants, hospitals and hotels.

Fire Protection Plan Examiner

The Fire Protection Plan Examiner reviews the fire protection plan for completeness and accuracy as per the City's Building Code. It is responsible for reviewing blueprints, specifically as they relate to communications, sprinkler, standpipe, HVAC and smoke detector systems and elevator recall. It also reviews construction sites to determine conformity to the fire protection plan and reviews LPG variances that would impact firefighting operations.