

Background Information

Introduction

ISO collects and evaluates information from communities in the United States on their structure fire suppression capabilities. The data is analyzed using our Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS™) and then a Public Protection Classification (PPC™) number is assigned to the community. The surveys are conducted whenever it appears that there is a possibility of a classification change. As such, the PPC program provides important, up-to-date information about fire protection services throughout the country.

The Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS) recognizes fire protection features only as they relate to suppression of first alarm structure fires. In many communities, fire suppression may be only a small part of the fire department's overall responsibility. ISO recognizes the dynamic and comprehensive duties of a community's fire service, and understands the complex decisions a community must make in planning and delivering emergency services. However, in developing a community's Public Protection Classification, only features related to reducing property losses from structural fires are evaluated. Multiple alarms, simultaneous incidents and life safety are not considered in this evaluation. The PPC program evaluates the fire protection for small to average size buildings. Specific properties with a Needed Fire Flow in excess of 3,500 gpm are evaluated separately and assigned an individual classification.

A community's investment in fire mitigation is a proven and reliable predictor of future fire losses. Statistical data on insurance losses bears out the relationship between excellent fire protection – as measured by the PPC program – and low fire losses. So, insurance companies use PPC information for marketing, underwriting, and to help establish fair premiums for homeowners and commercial fire insurance. In general, the price of fire insurance in a community with a good PPC is substantially lower than in a community with a poor PPC, assuming all other factors are equal.

ISO is an independent company that serves insurance companies, communities, fire departments, insurance regulators, and others by providing information about risk. ISO's expert staff collects information about municipal fire suppression efforts in communities throughout the United States. In each of those communities, ISO analyzes the relevant data and assigns a Public Protection Classification – a number from 1 to 10. Class 1 represents an exemplary fire suppression program, and Class 10 indicates that the area's fire suppression program does not meet ISO's minimum criteria.

ISO's PPC program evaluates communities according to a uniform set of criteria, incorporating nationally recognized standards developed by the National Fire Protection Association and the American Water Works Association. A community's PPC depends on:

- **Needed Fire Flows**, which are representative building locations used to determine the theoretical amount of water necessary for fire suppression purposes.
- **Receiving and Handling Fire Alarms**, including telephone systems, telephone lines, staffing, and dispatching systems.
- **Fire Department**, including equipment, staffing, training, and geographic distribution of fire companies.
- **Water Supply**, including condition and maintenance of hydrants, alternative water supply operations, and a careful evaluation of the amount of available water compared with the amount needed to suppress fires up to 3,500 gpm.

Data Collection and Analysis

ISO has evaluated and classified over 48,000 fire protection areas across the United States using its Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS). A combination of meetings between trained ISO field representatives and the dispatch center coordinator, community fire official, and water superintendent is used in conjunction with a comprehensive questionnaire to collect the data necessary to determine the PPC number. In order for a community to obtain a classification better than a Class 9, three elements of fire suppression features are reviewed. These three elements are Receiving and Handling Fire Alarms, Fire Department and Water Supply.

A review of the **Receiving and Handling Fire Alarms** fire alarm and communication system accounts for 10% of the total classification. The review focuses on the community's facilities and support for handling and dispatching fire alarms. This section is weighted at **10 points**, as follows:

- Telephone Service 2 points
- Number of Needed Operators 3 points
- Dispatch Circuits 5 points

A review of the **Fire Department** accounts for 50% of the total classification. ISO focuses on a fire department's first alarm response and initial attack to minimize potential loss. In this section, ISO reviews such items as engine companies, ladder or service companies, distribution of fire stations and fire companies, equipment carried on apparatus, pumping capacity, reserve apparatus, department personnel, and training. The fire department section is weighted at **50 points**, as follows:

- Engine Companies 10 points
- Reserve Pumpers 1 point
- Pumper Capacity 5 points
- Ladder/Service Companies 5 points
- Reserve Ladder/Service Trucks 1 point
- Distribution of Companies 4 points
- Company Personnel 15 points
- Training 9 points

A review of the **Water Supply** system accounts for 40% of the total classification. ISO reviews the water supply a community uses to determine the adequacy for fire suppression purposes. Hydrant size, type, and installation is also considered, as well as the inspection frequency and condition of fire hydrants. The water supply system is weighted at **40 points**, as follows:

- Credit for Supply System 35 points
- Hydrant Size, Type & Installation 2 points
- Inspection/Condition of Hydrants 3 points

There is one additional factor considered in calculating the final score – **Divergence**.

Even the best fire department will be less than fully effective if it has an inadequate water supply. Similarly, even a superior water supply will be less than fully effective if the fire department lacks the equipment or personnel to use the water. The FSRs score is subject to modification by a divergence factor, which recognizes disparity between the effectiveness of the fire department and the water supply.

The Divergence factor mathematically reduces the score based upon the relative difference between the fire department and water supply scores. The factor is introduced in the final equation.

Public Protection Classification Number

The PPC number assigned to the community will depend on the community's score on a 100-point scale:

PPC	Points
1	90.00 or more
2	80.00 to 89.99
3	70.00 to 79.99
4	60.00 to 69.99
5	50.00 to 59.99
6	40.00 to 49.99
7	30.00 to 39.99
8	20.00 to 29.99
9	10.00 to 19.99
10	0.00 to 9.99

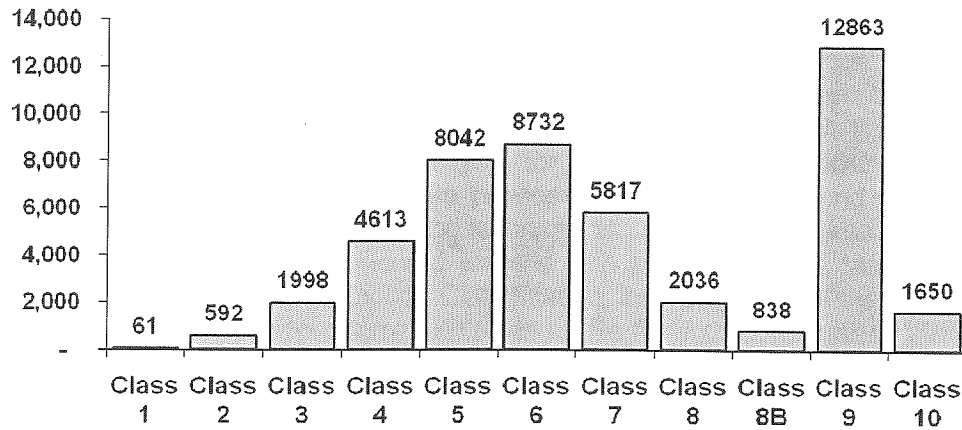
The classification numbers are interpreted as follows:

- Class 1 through (and including) Class 8 represents a fire suppression system that includes an FSRs creditable dispatch center, fire department, and water supply.
- Class 8B is a special classification that recognizes a superior level of fire protection in otherwise Class 9 areas. It is designed to represent a fire protection delivery system that is superior except for a lack of a water supply system capable of the minimum FSRs fire flow criteria of 250 gpm for 2 hours.
- Class 9 is a fire suppression system that includes a creditable dispatch center, fire department but no FSRs creditable water supply.
- Class 10 does not meet minimum FSRs criteria for recognition.

Distribution of Public Protection Classification Numbers

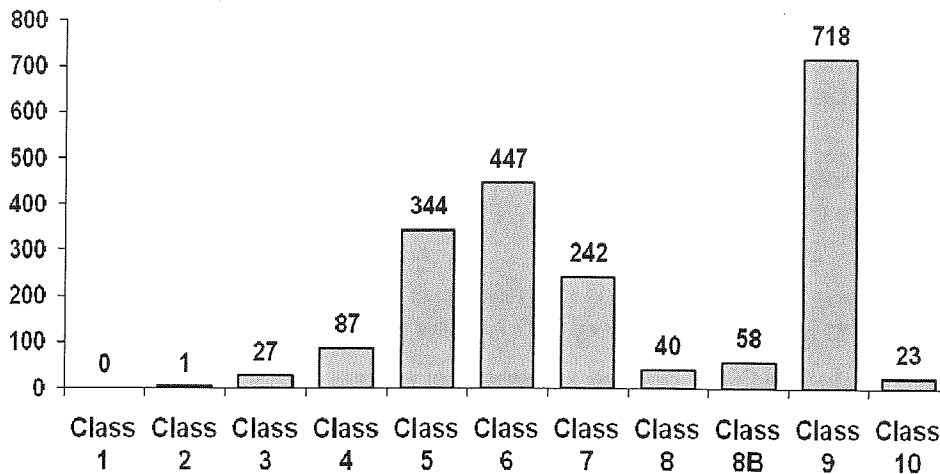
The 2011 published countrywide distribution of communities by the Public Protection Classification number is as follows:

Countrywide



The 2011 published statewide distribution of communities by the Public Protection Classification number is as follows:

Michigan



Assistance

The PPC program offers help to communities, fire departments and other public officials as they plan for, budget, and justify improvements. ISO is also available to assist in the understanding of the details of this evaluation.

ISO Public Protection representatives can be reached by telephone at (800) 444-4554. The technical specialists at this telephone number have access to the details of this evaluation and can effectively speak with you about your PPC questions. What's more, we can be reached via the internet at www.isomitigation.com/talk/.

We also have a website dedicated to our Community Hazard Mitigation Classification programs at www.isomitigation.com. Here, fire chiefs, building code officials, community leaders and other interested citizens can access a wealth of data describing the criteria used in evaluating how cities and towns are protecting residents from fire and other natural hazards. This website will allow you to learn more about ISO's Public Protection Classification program. The website provides important background information, insights about the PPC grading processes and technical documents. ISO is also pleased to offer Fire Chiefs Online — a special secured website with information and features that can help improve your ISO Public Protection Classification, including a list of the Needed Fire Flows for all the commercial occupancies ISO has on file for your community. Visitors to the site can download information, see statistical results and also contact ISO for assistance.

In addition, on-line access to the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule and its commentaries is available to registered customers for a fee. However, fire chiefs and community chief administrative officials are given access privileges to this information without charge.

To become a registered fire chief or community chief administrative official, register at www.isomitigation.com.