



**IFCEM**<sup>TM</sup>  
International Fire  
Conference &  
Exhibition Malaysia

## **CHALLENGES IN MANAGING FIRE SAFETY IN SARAWAK.**

At 124,171 km/sq. vast in land size, Sarawak with its mountains, rivers, rainforest and remote settlements, makes managing Total fire Safety quite challenging for the Sarawak Fire Service.

As a promised duty and responsibility stated in our Fire Service Act 341 1988 (amendment 2021), in giving maximum fire cover and response capability plus capacity quite challenging.

The Fire Safety knowledge among the sparsely distributed communities in Sarawak are far below the required standard. Connectivity and communication also render challenges in fulfilling our duties and tasks.

The basic understanding of total fire safety is often neglected, thus leaving many unaware of the potential dangers they may face. Issues and challenges identified include incidence rate of fires, death and property destruction per capita is still high. There is also low community involvement in empowering the safety culture aspect and lack of public awareness regarding safety aspects among the general society especially rural and remote areas. The application 5E approach is much needed to tackle these issues and challenges. The lack of exposure and experience in fire safety elements such as the 3P (precaution, prevention, protection) concept and basic survival knowing in the event of a fire remains alarmingly low.

When I first assumed leadership of Bomba Sarawak, my primary focus was on education. I made it a priority to engage consistently with the community, ensuring that everyone understands the concept of total fire safety. It's essential for them to realize the importance of the first five minutes during a fire incident, as this window is critical for effective response.

We have identified and empowered champions within the community, recognizing them as exemplary citizens and rewarding them for their contributions. These individuals are now known as community fire safety champions. The 3P concept serves as a vital tool to keep the community on high alert and prepared. The 5E Golden Circle ensures that the community risk reduction plan is strategic, cost-effective, and sustainable over the long term.

We conduct thorough community risk analyses and foster partnerships, promoting a sense of ownership and responsibility within the community. We develop strategies to address and resolve problems effectively, followed by thorough implementation. By evaluating the outcomes, we ensure that our efforts lead to a safer community.

What is community risk reduction? It is a process that helps identify high-risk neighborhoods, assess hazards, build partnerships, and enhance overall safety. This allows for the creation of effective strategies, even when working with limited resources within the community. We travel to these remote and rural areas in implementing this initiative. We would guide and provide firsthand experience to them so they are not only learning but put into practical what they have learned. We want them to take ownership and embrace how this fire safety program is theirs. We have travelled to Bario Highland, Bekelalan, Belaga, Mulu, Lesung Laku, Long Busang and the Baram basin in the quest to deliver these programs and achieve our goals.

How do we deliver this? By designing for fire safety success through a comprehensive approach that ensures both occupant safety and property protection. We enhance fire safety by enforcing building ordinances and creating community awareness, fostering a collective responsibility for fire safety. It's crucial that everyone understands that total fire safety is a shared responsibility. We collaborate with NGOs, GLCs, and individuals who have the capacity to support and enhance our mission.

In Sarawak, we have successfully implemented and delivered initiatives such as the Community Fire Brigade, the 3K Children Fire Safety Club across nearly every corner of the state, the CELIK SURI Program, FIRE POINT, the Summer Camp for 'Kita Selamat, 'the 1RAPI Program, the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), the Water Safety Council, and the Longhouse Special Fire Campaign.

The best results have begun to show, with positive trends reflected in the statistics over the past three years. Bomba Sarawak is deeply appreciated for its dedication and efforts.

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Director

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