

VALUE FOR MONEY: ECONOMIC VIEW ON EMERGENCY SERVICES (IV), HOW PROTECTION PRODUCES VALUE - SAVED LIVES CASE -

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Abstract

Progressively, and after years, the new public management increased its influence in French public bodies' management. Citizens' exigency, but also governance and state incentives, let eventually build a continuum of processes and methods to monitor quality of provided services and global performance of public institutions.

Fire and emergency services didn't escape to. In the same time, the difficulty to witness of the "value for money" emerged: how to describe on an economic point of view, a non-monetisable service?

In the last five years, some studies focused on value of saved lives, and the transfer some already existing statistics to evaluate the value of residential surfaces saved by the fire department. Last year, studies gave evaluation to the spared losses during wildfires fighting. Ongoing works are, currently, aimed on industrial and collective public access buildings to complete the scope.

With some illustrative study cases, authors will focus on saved lives.

«How much is a human life worth?»

Some people say that life is priceless. But in 2018, the OECD considered that the human life costs 3 million EUR, regardless age, gender or health.

However, for the Fire and Emergency Departments, life has a price, notably when they implement prevention and lifesaving measures. Indeed, thanks to firefighters actions and first-aid training, many lives are saved with the saviors' quick action. Evaluating the value assigned to a life saved or serious injuries avoided, allows, in comparison against Fire departments' annual budgets, to sketch a real costs/benefits study of this emergency domain.

Nevertheless, if this kind of evaluation is typically uncertain and not easy, authors demonstrate the real added value to do on large scale with common ratios. The idea is to provide to each emergency service, very simple calculation models, based on usual service statistics, to give an approach to this economic value.

This virtuous practice could give some curbing ideas to policy makers having intended purpose to cut resources to emergency services. It could also demonstrate the "value for taxes" to citizens.

Keywords: life value, saved lives, economic value, fire service, first aid

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