

CRAAP - Evaluating Fire Safety Sources

When researching fire safety and sprinkler systems, you'll encounter information from various sources. It's crucial to evaluate these sources to determine their credibility and reliability. This guide will help you understand different source types and how to assess them using the CRAAP method.

Types of Sources

Here are some common sources you might find, along with explanations of their typical characteristics:

1. Government Report:

- **Example:** Fire Sprinkler Systems in High-Rise Buildings: A Technical Report - Published by the U.S. Fire Administration ([USFA](#)).
- **What it is:** A report containing detailed information, data, and analysis on a specific topic, produced by a government agency.
- **Things to Know:**
 - Often authoritative and based on research.
 - Purpose is usually to inform policymakers and the public.
 - Generally considered reliable, but check for potential biases related to government policies.

2. News Blog:

- **Example:** Fire Safety First (<https://firesafetyfirst.com/resources/blog>)- A blog by a local news organization covering fire safety issues..
- **What it is:** An online platform where writers share news, opinions, and information on a particular subject.
- **Things to Know:**
 - Can be a good source of current information and different perspectives.
 - Reliability can vary greatly. Check the author's credentials and the blog's reputation.
 - May contain a mix of factual reporting and opinion.

3. Company Website:

- **Example:** Koetter Fire Protection (<https://koetterfire.com>) - A website for a company that designs, installs, and maintains fire sprinkler systems.
- **What it is:** A website created by a company to promote its products or services.
- **Things to Know:**
 - Provides information about the company's expertise and offerings.
 - May include case studies or testimonials.
 - Information may be biased in favor of the company's products or the industry it represents.

4. **Advocacy Organization:**

- **Example:** Pennsylvania Fire & Emergency Services Institute (<https://pfesi.org>) - A non-profit organization that advocates for stricter fire safety regulations.
- **What it is:** A group that works to influence public opinion and policy on a specific issue.
- **Things to Know:**
 - Provides information on the organization's mission and goals.
 - May present data and arguments to support their position.
 - Information may be biased toward the organization's agenda.

Evaluating Sources with CRAAP

To determine the credibility of a source, use the CRAAP method:

- **Currency:**
 - When was the information published or last updated?
 - Is the information recent enough for your needs?
 - For websites, look for publication dates, copyright dates, or "last updated" information.
- **Reliability:**
 - What kind of information is presented? Is it factual, opinion, or propaganda?
 - Is the information supported by evidence?
 - Does the source have a reputation for accuracy?
 - Is the information free of errors?
- **Authority:**
 - Who is the author or publisher?
 - What are their credentials or affiliations?
 - Are they experts in the field?
 - For websites, look at the "About Us" section or the author's biography.
- **Accuracy:**
 - When was the information published or last updated?
 - Is the information recent enough for your needs?
 - Is the information supported by evidence?
 - Does the source have a reputation for accuracy?
 - Is the information free of errors?
- **Purpose:**
 - Why was the information created? Is it to inform, persuade, sell, or entertain?
 - Is the information objective, or is it biased?
 - Does the author or publisher have a particular agenda or point of view?