

# An Overview of Fire Prevention and Control and Emergency Management Policy in Rural China

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**Keywords:** Rural Fire, Emergency Management, Policy Study.

**Abstract:** In recent years, fire safety has been an important part of the construction of rural public safety system in China and higher requirements have been put forward for rural emergency management ability, rural fire emergency management has gradually become an important part of public safety management system. This study selects 15 literatures from various aspects, summarizing the development of rural fire emergency management policies in China during the recent years, and the basic content and development trend of the policy are summarized. By analyzing existing research, this study discusses the main problems in rural fire emergency management, such as insufficient supervision and lack of fire resources, and find out the shortcomings in the current research for the purpose of improving the theoretical research content in this field and the effectiveness of policy implementation in the process of rural fire emergency management.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the 21st century, China's social and economic development has been rapid, the process of urbanization has been accelerated, and the gap between urban and rural development has gradually narrowed. However, the vast rural areas still face the problem of weak infrastructure and insufficient public safety guarantee. China has vigorously promoted the rural revitalization strategy in recent years and has put forward the construction of a "livable, viable and beautiful countryside" to maintain social harmony and stability in rural areas (CPC Central Committee and State Council, 2018). At the same time, China is at a critical stage of modernizing its emergency management system, report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China also called for "modernizing national security systems and capabilities" and strengthening the building of national and regional emergency response forces. The Fire and Rescue Bureau of the Ministry of Emergency Management of China deployed to strengthen rural fire work and help win the battle against poverty (Xi, 2022). Under such circumstances, the construction of rural public security system has become a key task, of which fire safety as an important part is directly related to the safety of farmers' lives and property.

Higher requirements are put forward for rural emergency management ability, and rural fire emergency management has gradually become an important part of public safety governance system.

In the process of constructing the management pattern of "total disaster species and great emergency response" in recent years, the government has issued a series of policy documents to strengthen the management of fire safety in rural areas. "The 14th Five-Year Plan" national fire control work plan proposed to ameliorate rural fire conditions, promote the construction of rural fire control system, strengthen fire prevention transformation, and reduce fire risk (Work Safety Committee of the State Council, 2022). Comprehensive Rural Revitalization Plan (2024-2027) emphasized enhancing the coordination mechanism and organizational system of emergency management at township and village levels, polishing the system of persons responsible for fire prevention, and strengthening emergency rescue capacity building (CPC Central Committee and State Council, 2024).

However, rural areas are affected by economic, social and institutional factors. The fire prevention and control system is still not perfect, the fire safety depression is increasingly prominent, and the fire protection force is particularly weak, resulting in frequent fire accidents and threatening the safety of people's lives and property. According to data from

the 2024 National Fire and Rescue Service press conference, there were 534,000 fires in rural areas in 2024, accounting for 58.8% of the country's total fires, which was a larger proportion than other areas such as urban areas, development zones and tourist areas (CCTV news client, 2025). Therefore, promoting the evolution of rural fire emergency management capacity and ensuring the effective implementation of policies is not only an inherent requirement of the modernization of national governance, but also an important part of ensuring sustainable rural development and improving rural grass-roots governance capacity.

This study summarizes the development of China's rural fire emergency management policy in recent years, and summarizes the basic content and development trend of the policy by using the policy text analysis method. On this basis, this paper analyzes the existing research results, discusses about the main problems of rural fire emergency management, such as insufficient supervision and lack of fire resources. Finally, the shortcomings of the current research are identified, and the theoretical research content in this field are optimized to advance the effectiveness of rural fire policy implementation.

By combing and analyzing relevant policy papers on rural fire protection and emergency management, this study aims to assess the effectiveness of existing policies, provide a scientific basis for future policy formulation and implementation, and present references for the government, fire departments and relevant decision makers to advance the level of rural fire safety, reduce fire risk and promote the furtherance of rural public safety system.

## 2 RESEARCH APPROACHES AND PROCESS

In the process of literature retrieval, this study adopts a systematic search strategy to ensure the authority and relevance of the selected literature. First, the author researched domestic academic databases such as CNKI and Wanfang and international databases such as Elsevier (Science Direct) and Web of Science. The author mainly focuses on core journals and CSSCI (Chinese Social Science Citation Index) source journals and sets a series of keywords for searching in order to ensure the professionalism of the literature. In the literature search, the keywords used by the author include "rural fire", "emergency management", "grass-roots fire control policy", "rural disaster prevention and reduction" "fire safety policy" and so on.

In order to ensure the scientific and feasibility of literature research, the author preferentially selects literatures containing empirical data and case investigations, and gives priority to articles published in major CSSCI journals or source journals. Articles that are not directly related to the research topic (such as studying fire policy in urban areas or emergency management in general), articles that introduce policies without in-depth analysis, and articles with outdated research data are excluded.

After screening, this paper finally selected 15 high-quality literatures as the basis of this research, which involved various aspects of policy text analysis, rural fire protection system implementation, and local fire protection status at the grass-roots level, providing perfect theoretical support and comprehensive data support for this research (see Table 1).

Table 1: References and Literature Sources.

Literature sources	Title	Author
Chinese core journal of PKU	Comprehensive understanding of the fragmentation characteristics, driving mechanisms and governance paths of rural emergency management	Wu Qiong, Wu Jin, Kong Feng
	Failure" of Formal System under Conflagration——Case Study of Ethnic Villages in Southeast Guizhou	Wu Dahua, Guo Jing
	Rural emergency response capability assessment: an empirical study based on Jiangsu Province	Zhang Haibo
	The Construction of Disaster Prevention and Reduction Ability in Rural China Urgently Needs to Strengthen the Bottom Design	Xu Yuanshan
	Analysis of fire disasters and fire safety management in rural areas	Li Jingming

SCI/EI	Construction of fire safety management in the process of urbanization	Zhang Mingcan	2016
	Examining China's rural fire protection within the rural revitalization strategy: An in-depth policy research	Li Yang, Du Xiaorong	2024
	The Changes and Logical Explanation of the Attention of Emergency Management Policies in Rural China——Analysis of Central Policy Text from 2005 to 2023	Zhang Haiqi, Yuan Jinhui	2023
	Mode construction and system design of rural emergency management under the background of rural revitalization	Wen Zhiqiang, Cui Yuling	2019
	Research on the accuracy of policy understanding in the improvement of grass-roots emergency management ability	Zhang Yongli, Liu Xingsi	2024
	Research on policy optimization strategy of rural emergency management in China	Fu Jinghua	2021
	Promote grid management and services to enhance the emergency management capacity of rural communities	Wu Wei	2020
	A brief talk on the present situation of rural fire and fire prevention countermeasures	Bu Hongbo	2016
	Investigation and Analysis of Electrical Circuits Fire Potential in Southwest Countryside of China	Wang Wenbo	2016
	Research and Countermeasures of Fire Protection in Southwest Rural Areas	Peng Kaiwen, Chu Liwei, Li Jie	2016

### 3 RESEARCH STATUS AND RESULTS

Existing studies generally believe that the causes of rural fires are complex, involving both physical factors such as building layout, electricity safety and insufficient firefighting facilities, as well as social factors such as poor policy implementation and weak fire awareness. In this area, Li et al. (2024) based on an analysis of rural fire data from several provinces across the country summarized the main causes of rural fire and put forward eight policy recommendations based on foreign experience. However, Li et al.'s research focused on the development of policy frameworks, the actual implementation of these policies at the local level in rural areas and the challenges they may face are not explored in depth.

Based on the analysis of 36 central policy texts from 2005 to 2023, Zhang Haiqi and Yuan Jinhui (2023) studied the evolution of rural emergency management policies and put forward the improvement of rural emergency management policies and strategies from three aspects. Wu Qiong et al. (2024) comprehensively analyzed the diversified manifestations and driving factors of fragmentation in rural emergency management, which was committed to solving the problem of fragmentation in rural emergency management and

improving the overall governance efficiency of emergency management. Wen Zhiqiang and Cui Yuling (2019) stressed the importance of emergency management model construction, put forward the innovative measures of the dynamic operation mechanism construction of rural emergency management and the linkage mode of organization personnel. The research of these scholars was combined with new policies and time backgrounds, seeking the innovation of rural emergency management mode and strategy, which were of enlightening significance for the follow-up research.

Some researchers have taken a critical look at rural fire protection systems and their effectiveness. Wu Dahua and Guo Jing (2013) believed that the current rural fire protection system as a formal system has been widely promoted at the policy level, but it did not play its due effectiveness in practice. In their study of ethnic villages in the Qiandongnan region of Guizhou province, the research team pointed out that the failure of the formal fire protection system is very obvious in rural areas. On the contrary, the local fire control system with national characteristics (such as village rules and clan constraints) is more effective in some cases. This view called into question mainstream policy research on firefighting in rural areas and highlighted the contradiction and mismatch between the operational logic of grassroots society and public policy. Nevertheless, the limitation of the study was that its conclusions were mainly based on

case studies of a single region and ethnic group and it was not able to prove the universality of the phenomenon.

Zhang Haibo (2015)'s empirical research based on Jiangsu Province emphasized that although the rural emergency management ability and villagers' self-rescue and mutual rescue level have been advanced in the short term, the progress of disaster prevention and reduction level still needs long-term investment under the policy suggestions. Zhang Yongli and Liu Xingsi (2024) discussed the specific implementation of local emergency management policies from the perspective of institutional change and pointed out that the differences in policy implementation are mainly due to the poor understanding of policy texts by local governments. The mismatch between the policy implementation process and the rural social environment results in poor policy implementation in the process of rural emergency management. The complexity of policy implementation often leads to different understandings of policy implementation by stakeholders, which results in poor execution. Nonetheless, the study did not provide a detailed analysis of specific differences in policy implementation failures between rural and urban areas, which may limit the applicability of the findings to some extent. Fu Jinhua (2021)'s research analyzed the optimization path of rural emergency management policy from the perspective of "one plan and three systems". It is proposed to be closely integrated with the rural revitalization strategy, strengthen institutional "top-level design" with a focus on prevention and mitigation to improve policy implementation mechanisms. In addition to this, Xu Yuanshan (2015) believed that China urgently needs to promote the "bottom-level design" of rural emergency management to refine the disaster prevention and mitigation capacity of rural communities. Although both studies put forward ideas for rural emergency management from the perspective of the policy framework, they ignored the realistic dilemma at the level of policy implementation as well.

Different from the institutional analysis of Zhang Yongli and Fu Jinhua, Wu Wei (2020)'s research focuses on governance optimization at the practical level, which believes that the network governance model can effectively heighten the ability of rural communities to manage emergencies. The importance of grass-roots staff and villagers participating in fire management is emphasized as well. However, the study mainly analyzed the role of network management from a theoretical perspective; the implementation of specific policies was not

analyzed and the realistic difficulties in policy implementation did not been fully explored and followed up. By contrast, Wang Wenbo (2016)'s research focused on electrical fires in rural areas of southwest China, which emphasized the high incidence of fire caused by backward circuit, private wiring and excessive power load. Recommendations were made to ameliorate local fire prevention, suppression and rescue efforts as well. However, the study was limited to the southwest, which leads to a lack of national or regional comparative analysis of this research question and limits the generality of the findings to some extent. Similar to Wang's study, Peng et al. (2016) also focused on fire safety in rural areas of southwest China. But still, the research emphasized the optimization of fire safety management systems and concrete solutions such as grid management and increasing financial support is proposed. Nevertheless, the scope of the data collected by the institute was limited, only six villages in three provinces were involved, and a total of 76 questionnaires were collected. As a result, the representativeness and credibility of the research conclusions need to be verified. On top of that, the present situation of fire safety and the difficulties of fire prevention and control in rural areas of Guizhou and Guangdong were analyzed from a professional perspective by Bu Hongbo (2016) and Li Jingming (2014) as the grass-roots fire team staff. Zhang Mingcan (2016) also took grass-roots practice as the starting point and put forward the contradiction between urban-rural integration and the shortage of rural fire resources. Nonetheless, their research also lacked guidance and advanced measures at the policy level.

## 4 DISCUSSION

Existing research has made important contributions to fire emergency management policies in rural areas. Some studies revealed the main causes, existing characteristics and structural problems behind rural fires through empirical investigation and data analysis. Some of the research focused on the level of policy, systematically combed the development vein of China's rural fire protection policy, summarized the main measures of the governments' rural fire protection policy in recent years, and analyzed the main contents of the policy, the effect of implementation and the difference of implementation at the local level. Besides, some studies draw on foreign rural fire management systems and experience, and some suggestions and measures, such

as strengthening the construction of rural volunteer firefighting teams and introducing intelligent firefighting equipment, are put forward, which can be applied to rural fire emergency management in China.

Although the existing research provides valuable theoretical support and empirical data for rural fire emergency management policies, there are still some limitations. Existing research focuses on policy design and formulation, but little attention is paid to the practical difficulties encountered in the implementation of policies at the local level, and there is also a lack of examination of the actual implementation of policies. The feasibility and practical applicability of its policies have yet to be demonstrated. Most studies tend to focus on specific geographic areas, which leads to a lack of comparative analysis between regions on a national scale and the generalizability and generalization of the research results are limited. In addition, most of the existing studies are based on qualitative analysis and lack systematic quantitative evaluation. Although quantitative research methods such as questionnaire surveys are used in individual studies, the questionnaire data are too few and lack data support and in-depth research, which makes it difficult to prove the validity of their findings. Consequently, future research should adopt both quantitative and qualitative methods, measuring and evaluating the effect of rural fire emergency management policy systematically and scientifically to enhance the persuasive power of the research.

## 5 CONCLUSION

This study combs the rural fire emergency management policy in China, combines rural fire emergency management systems in different regions with case studies, discusses issues related to policy implementation. In the future research and practice of rural fire emergency management, researchers can further expand data sources and combine diverse empirical studies, pay more attention to the specific implementation of rural fire prevention and mitigation, in order to analyze the effectiveness of fire emergency management policies in rural areas in more detail and ensure that policies and measures to improve fire safety in rural areas are effective in practice.

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