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Frequently Asked Questions
National Fire Incident Reporting System

1. **Question: Who can I contact with questions pertaining to the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS)?**

   Answer: The Bureau of Fire Services (BFS) serves as Michigan's state program manager for the United States Fire Administration (USFA). You can contact the BFS for NFIRS related questions by telephone at 517-241-0691 or by e-mail at nfirs@michigan.gov.

2. **Question: How often are fire departments required to report incidents to NFIRS?**

   Answer: Per Public Act (PA) 207 of 1941, (MCL 29.4(1)), all fire departments are required to submit a complete fire incident report of the fire immediately after the occurrence of fire within the official's jurisdiction resulting in loss or life or property. The bureau urges compliance with the statute and recommends, at minimum, incidents are reported on a monthly basis and are due by the 15th of each month following the incident. For example: An incident that occurred in January must be reported by February 15th. It is encouraged that reports are submitted frequently to ensure accurate and timely reporting.

   Note: It is important that fire departments **do not** wait until the end of the year to submit all of their incident reports. As a reminder, one of the eligibility requirements for receiving federal grant money and/or fire investigation training through the Michigan State Police is that fire departments participate in and are compliant with the NFIRS program.

3. **Question: Are fire departments required to submit a monthly report even if the department did not respond to any incidents during that timeframe?**

   Answer: Yes. If your department had no activity (incidents) for the month, you must indicate so on the "No Activity" section of the electronic NFIRS report. This response will indicate that your department is actively participating in the NFIRS 5.0 system as mandated by PA 207 of 1941. The incident (report) date should indicate the last day of the month in which your department had "no activity", i.e. 1/31/15. The incident number should be entered as seven zeros (0000000).

4. **Question: Can a fire department import multiple months in one file?**

   Answer: Yes. Multiple months may be imported into one file depending on the size however; keep in mind to be in compliance with the NFIRS reporting requirements fire

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departments are required to report incidents on a monthly basis. Refer to the NFIRS 5.0 Bulk Import Utility Information Page for more information.

5. **Question: Are there Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) concerns when reporting fire department incident data to NFIRS?**

   Answer: No. It is the USFA's view that per Chapter 49 of U.S. Code, Section 2208, which provides for the collection of data for the reporting of disease, injury and arguably public health surveillance, investigation and intervention, the number of injuries and/or deaths resulting from fire as well as the maximum available information on the specific cause, nature and property loss of such incidents are reportable under Section 1178 of HIPAA of 1996. Consequently, it is USFA's position that provision of this information to NFIRS would not be a violation of HIPAA and therefore, will continue to collect the existing data elements.

6. **Question: I tried logging into my department's NFIRS account and received a message indicating that my account is locked. What do I do?**

   Answer: To meet the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) security requirements for the protection of application and information access, NFIRS 5.0 includes a daily account "last login" check which will deactivate an account that has not been accessed for 45 days. An account will also become locked (deactivated) after three (3) unsuccessful login attempts. To have your account reactivated, please contact BFS by telephone at 517-241-0691 or by e-mail at nfirs@michigan.gov to have your account reset.

7. **Question: Do I need to change my NFIRS account password?**

   Answer: Yes. The USFA requires passwords to be changed every 89 days. For assistance with resetting your NFIRS password you may contact BFS by telephone at 517-241-0691 or by e-mail at nfirs@michigan.gov.

8. **Question: Are there specific password requirements for NFIRS 5.0?**

   Answer: Yes. Password must be 8 to 15 characters long. Passwords must include at least 1 number and 1 special character. You cannot use the following characters: @, #, or ?. Additionally, you cannot use and of your previous 8 passwords.

9. **Question:** Which electronic reporting software can be used?

   Answer: Any software approved by USFA may be used to generate and/or upload reports. NFIRS 5.0 software is available as a free desktop or web-based application from the USFA. Free software provided by the USFA may be downloaded at the following link:

   NFIRS Web Tools - User Services

   NFIRS standard-compliant products can also be purchased from approved fire software vendors. To view a list of active and registered vendors, click on the following link:

NFIRS - Vendors

10. **Question: Are fire departments required to notify BFS of fire related deaths?**

   Answer: Yes. Any fire-related civilian death must be reported to BFS within 48 hours of the death using the Fatal Fire Report. Completed forms may be sent via e-mail to the nfirs@michigan.gov account or by fax to 517-332-1427. The NFIRS Civilian Casualty Module must also be completed when completing the NFIRS report.

11. **Question: Are property and content loss values required to be documented on my incident report?**

   Answer: Yes. Property and content loss for fires must be included on your incident report. You may contact your local assessor's office for assistance with estimating property or content values. A helpful website that may aid in providing vehicle estimated values is Kelley Blue Book.

   - Kelley Blue Book – for vehicle estimates

12. **Question: Is it required to add the fire department's identification number (FDID) and the NFIRS incident report number of the fire department that <u>received</u> mutual aid?**

   Answer: At the state level, Michigan requires departments receiving aid to add the FDID number of the fire department that provided aid to their NFIRS report however, the incident number of the department that provided aid is not required to be added at this time. FDID numbers are available on the BFS website in the Fire Service Directory.

13. **Question: Is it required to add the fire department's identification number (FDID) and the NFIRS incident report number of the department <u>providing</u> mutual aid?**

   Answer: At the state level, Michigan requires departments providing mutual aid to add the FDID number and incident numbers of the fire department that they provided mutual aid to on their NFIRS report. FDID numbers are available on the BFS website in the Fire Service Directory.

14. **Question: How will fire departments be notified of any changes or updates to the NFIRS Program?**

   Answer: Any changes, announcements or updates will be posted on the NFIRS section of the BFS website or sent via e-mail to the department contact on record from the nfirs@michigan.gov account.