Tips for Completing TFIRS Reports

Updated May 2011

- The **Tennessee Fire Incident Reporting System (TFIRS)** is the Tennessee branch of the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS), administered by FEMA's U S Fire Administration (USFA). NFIRS 5.0 is a combination of web, application, and database software that facilitates the collection and processing of fire and emergency incident data and storage of the data in USFA's National Fire Database. Fire agencies send their data to the National Fire Database over the Internet either by obtaining their own software that meets NFIRS 5.0 standards or by using free software from USFA, called the Data Entry Tool (DET). The TFIRS Coordinator is Dennis Mulder, 615-532-5753 (M-F, 7:00 AM – 3:30 PM Central), dennis.mulder@tn.gov .

- The NFIRS 5.0 Complete Reference Guide(CRG) contains detailed definitions of all incident data elements, the purpose of data elements and examples of how data is to be entered. The entire CRG is available at http://www.nfirs.fema.gov/documentation/reference/ . If you download the entire CRG, you probably only want to print certain sections like those for the Basic, Fire and Structure Modules. The most important sections in the Basic Module deal with Incident Type, Action Taken, and Property Use. The most important sections in the Fire Module deal with Area of Fire Origin, Heat Source, Cause of Ignition, Factors Contributing to Ignition and Equipment Involved in Ignition.

- **TFIRS('TEE-FURS') fire reports should be submitted within 10 days of the occurrence of the incident.** T.C.A. 68-102-111(a) mandates the reporting of all fire incidents within 10 days of the occurrence of the fire. While non-fire calls are not mandated, we request their submission as well. We want you to get credit for all emergency responses, not just fires. This section also **grants civil immunity** for information reported in **good faith** and **without malice**. FEMA FIRE Act grant recipients are required to report to TFIRS. Reports submitted to NFIRS are automatically forwarded to TFIRS.

  - **Fire departments may use the USFA Data Entry Tool (DET) Version 5.8.1 to report.** To download and install the latest version go to www.nfirs.fema.gov. Click on User Section, then User Login and login. Click on Download Software under User Section. Follow the directions. If you have Vista or Windows 7 on your computer, you will have to change the permissions for two folders. See **Read Only Remove Instructions below**.

  - **Fire departments may also use the NFIRS Data Entry Browser Interface (DEBI) to report.** DEBI and the NFIRS Data Entry Tool (DET) have similar functions. However, DEBI eliminates the need to download and to install software on the user's computer. Only an Internet browser (e.g., Microsoft Internet Explorer and Firefox) and a user account are needed to log on to DEBI. To start the DEBI, open www.nfirs.fema.gov . Select Web-based Tools from the menu bar. Select Report Incidents (DEBI). Log in. Click OK on the Federal Systems Warning page to continue.

- **Password Requirement.** Passwords must be between 8 and 15 characters long, with at least one numeric character and at least one alpha character. You must login at least once every 60 days or the system will automatically deactivate your account. This requirement applies to both users of the USFA Data Entry Tool and the Bulk Import Utility.

- **Bulk Import Utility**. All departments using commercial incident reporting software should use the Bulk Import Utility (BIU). The BIU lets departments upload their NFIRS transaction files directly rather than sending them on a disk or as an e-mail attachment. Go to www.nfirs.fema.gov , click on Web-based Tools and then BIU. If you do not have an active NFIRS 5.0 account, register at www.nfirs.fema.gov . Click on User Section, then User Registration under User Section. Follow the directions. Use your FDID

for the username. Email dennis.mulder@tn.gov to notify us that you have registered. After you have been notified your account is active, you can begin using the BIU.

- **The Incident Type (IT) is the actual situation emergency personnel find on the scene** when they arrive, but if a more serious condition developed after the fire department's arrival on the scene, that incident type should be reported. Use the fire codes for incidents involving fire and hazardous materials or fire and EMS. You will have an opportunity to describe multiple actions taken later in the report. In general, use the lowest numbered series that applies to the incident.   Be specific in what is entered in the Incident Type. Do not use 100 – Fire Other unless no other fire code applies.   Fires out on arrival are reported as fires. A fire is a hostile, uncontrolled burning: building fires are IT 111, mobile home fires 121, car fires 131, grass fires 143 and rubbish fires are 151. Controlled burning with or without a permit is not a fire according to this definition: unauthorized burning is IT 561, authorized burning is 631.

  Structure Fires are fires inside a structure whether or not the structure is involved, or any fire under or touching a structure that involves the structure. A structure is an assembly of materials forming a construction for occupancy or use to serve a specific purpose. This includes, but is not limited to, buildings, open platforms, bridges, roof assemblies over open storage or process areas, tents, air-supported structures, and grandstands. A building is a structure enclosed with walls and a roof and having a defined height.

  Fire in structure other than a building (IT 112) includes fires on or in piers, quays or pilings; tunnels or underground connecting structures; bridges, trestles, or overhead elevated structures; transformers, power or utility vaults or equipment; fences and tents

  Mulch Fires should be captured as Incident Type 142 – Brush or brush and grass mixture, including ground fuels lying on or immediately above the ground, such as roots, dead leaves, fine dead wood and downed logs. The item first ignited would be 72 – light vegetation, not crop, including grass, leaves, needles, chaff, mulch and compost.

  Clothes Dryer Fires are considered building fires unless such fires occur in mobile property used as a fixed structure, such as manufactured housing (the 120 series) and it is possible to have a dryer fire on a ship. On the Basic Module, the dollar loss would be for "contents" only. A Fire Module should be completed, and the "Equipment Involved in Ignition" section (including the make and model of the dryer) should be coded as an 811.

- **All civilian *fire* casualties are required to be reported to the State Fire Marshal** by using the NFIRS-4 Civilian Fire Casualty Module. A *fire casualty* is a person who is injured or killed as a result of a fire, including escape from the fire. If a victim dies after the original fire incident has been filed with the state, a CHANGE transaction must be submitted for that incident changing the injury to a death.

- **The Fire Service Casualty Module is required for ANY firefighter injury**, regardless of whether it is associated with a response, training, or working on trucks in the station, etc.

- **Estimated Property & Contents field (G2) required for all fires in your jurisdiction**. T.C.A. 68-102-111(a) requires an estimate of dollar loss for all fires in your jurisdiction. If insured, you may use the insurance adjustor's estimate or your own estimate. Possible methods of estimation are outlined below.

- **For structure fire loss**, multiply pre-incident value of the structure by the percentage of area damaged. Estimate the area damaged and divide by total area to get percentage damaged. Then multiply structure value by percentage damaged to get structure loss. Pre-incident value and total area are available at http://www.assessment.state.tn.us/ . Search by owner last name or address by county. Improvement value is structure value. **Main floor size** (Structure Fire Module, Section I4) is also available at this site.

- **For contents loss,** "Where it is impossible to determine the actual contents, an estimate can be made by assigning a content value of 30 to 40% (50% in upper end homes) of the value of the structural loss", Colorado Division of Fire Safety, Partners in Fire Safety, February 20, 2006 p.19   If loss is confined to

specific item, estimate for only that item; go to www.shopping.yahoo.com for price ranges for consumer products.

- **For estimates of smoke damage only,** use 16¢ per sq. ft. to estimate cleaning cost. Multiply perimeter by height and add area of ceiling to get total area of walls and ceilings damaged. Then multiply total area damaged by 16¢ per sq. ft. to estimate of smoke damage.

- **For properties not on the Comptroller's site or properties exempt from tax,** go to www.zillow.com or to www.saylor.com/lacosts/index.html and adjust for Tennessee. To estimate loss for manufactured homes not found on the Comptroller's site, multiply average sales price by percentage of damage. Average sale price from 1980 – 2008 can be found at www.census.gov/const/mhs/avgpricebystate.html . For example, the 1980 average Tennessee sale price of a single-wide was $12,500 and the average for a double-wide was $20,900.

- **For vehicle fires**, get average retail value at www.nadaguides.com or www.kbb.com . Estimate loss at 100% of value for damage to engine compartment **and** under dash or passenger area; 50% for engine compartment only; 25% for passenger area only light damage and 50% for passenger area only heavy damage. For commercial trucks and trailers, go to www.truckpaper.com and for farm equipment got to www.machinefinder.com.

- **Amount of Insurance required for all building and manufactured home fires where property has been destroyed or damaged** (*not required for aid given calls).* T.C.A. 68-102-111(a) requires the amount of insurance, if any, for all building and manufactured home fires in your jurisdiction for which there is fire-related damage. **If there is no fire-related damage to the building or manufactured home, the amount of insurance is not required.** Since there is no special field to capture amount of insurance, please enter this information in the Remarks, Basic Module, Section L. For consistency in reporting, please use the following format. Enter "Insured Y$" (without quotes) followed the amount of insurance, if any. For example, enter "Insured Y$100,000" (without quotes) to report that the amount of insurance was $100,000. If uninsured enter "Insured N$" (without quotes). If unable to determine, enter "Insured U$" (without quotes). Use whole dollars only, no cents.

    - **Location of Incident -** Basic Module, Field B. When either "Directions" or "Intersection" is selected for the location of an incident, one street name should be entered on the "Street or Highway" line and the directions or cross-street should be entered on the "Cross Street or Directions" line.

Vehicle Fires – If the VIN (Vehicle ID Number) is obtained, you can find the year, make and model from the internet. A free VIN decoder is available at http://www.analogx.com/contents/vinview.htm. Another website with more info on VINs is http://www.autohausaz.com/html/vehicle_identification_numbers.html.

- If a vehicle on fire is located in or on a building or other structure it would be coded as a vehicle fire, unless the structure becomes involved; then it would be coded as a structure fire.   Once the incident is coded as a structure fire, the vehicle(s) would be considered contents. The Remarks Section would be used to identify the vehicles involved. If an incident is coded as a vehicle fire and the vehicle was involved in ignition, report make and model in the Mobile Property Section.

- **Cancelled en-route** - If your fire department is dispatched and cancelled enroute, the Incident Type should be 611, the Arrival Time should be the same as Cleared Time, and the Incident Action Taken should be 93 (cancelled enroute).

- **Aid Given -** If aid is given (codes 3, 4 or 5), then only the information on the Basic module through block G1 (Resources) must be completed by the department giving aid unless a fire service casualty also occurs; then the giving department must also complete the Fire Service casualty module. If the receiving department does not arrive, use code 5.

    - **Resources** (Basic Module, G1) The total number of fire department personnel and apparatus (suppression, EMS, other) that responded to the incident whether they arrived at the scene or were

canceled before arrival. <u>Do not count non-fire department vehicles or personnel</u>. POVs and the chief's car should be entered under Other. Do not enter apparatus ID numbers here.

- **Exposures** - are limited to fire incidents only (not haz mats). The exposure number is a sequential number assigned by the officer in charge to each exposure fire resulting from the original fire. <u>Enter "000" if the incident is the primary fire or a non-fire and not an exposure fire</u>. The number "001" should be used for the first exposure fire, "002" for the second exposure fire, etc. In a fire involving exposures, <u>an additional Basic Module must be completed for each exposure</u>.

- **The use of exposure fire** is limited to situations where there is actual flame damage. If the adjacent property is damaged due to water, heat, smoke or fire control, include the damage in the primary report (Exposure 000). An example of non-fire damage would be vinyl siding on adjacent structure melted but not burned. The non-fire damage information can be captured in the Remarks section of the Basic Module. Multiple person and entities involved can be documented in Section K1, Person/Entity Involved of the Basic Module. The number of buildings involved should be captured in the Fire Module, B2

    - **Vehicle fire exposure** - If a vehicle parked in a parking ramp catches fire and two other vehicles with separate individual owners catch fire from the first vehicle, treat each of the two other vehicles as a separate exposure. If, instead, a fleet of vehicles is involved and they all have the same corporate owner then they may all be treated as a single exposure.

    - **If your fire department has "no activity"** for an entire calendar month, open up a new incident, fill out Section A, check the "no activity" box and SAVE. This response will indicate your department is actively participating in the TFIRS 5.0 system. The incident date should indicate the last day of the calendar month in which your department had "no activity". For Example, 07/31/2010 would be the date for a "no activity" report for July 2010.

Read Only Remove Instructions for Vista and Windows 7