



R0491

Dear National Fire Academy Student:

Congratulations on your acceptance into the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), National Fire Academy (NFA) “National Fire Incident Reporting System: Program Management” (NFIRS: PM) course.

The goal of this course is to enable you to successfully promote, support and manage NFIRS, including data collection, processing, analysis and presentation of useful, timely, and accurate information about fire department activities. You should have already taken the course prerequisite: either a 2-day basic level NFIRS class in your state **or** the equivalent NFA Online “National Fire Incident Reporting System 5.0 Self-Study” (Q0494) course found at https://www.usfa.fema.gov/training/nfa/courses/self_study.html. You may also want to complete “Management Tools for Fire and Emergency Services” (Q0880).

Before your arrival, you will need to complete the following pre-course requirements:

1. Contact your NFIRS state program manager.

The USFA and the National Fire Information Council (NFIC) websites have state NFIRS program manager contact information and links to various state NFIRS reporting websites. Become familiar with your state’s NFIRS website. If your state has one and if available, view your state’s annual report. Use these two websites: http://www.nfic.org/membership_contacts.html and <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/pocs/>.

2. Obtain an NFIRS user account from your state program manager. You will need an active user account in the NFIRS online database at USFA. The account should include the following user account permissions:

- Startup.
- Read Incidents.
- Write Incidents.
- Version Updates.
- File Transfer.
- User Validation.
- Web Page Area.
- Log Retrieval.
- Report Submit.
- Report Fetch.
- Report Templates.
- Report Generate.
- Bulk Export.

Note: If you can’t contact your state program manager, go to the general help mailbox for NFIRS at <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/pocs/>.

3. Obtain answers to the following questions from your state program manager. Bring a summary of the answers with you to class. The responses will be collected on the first day.
 - How often do they want you to report?
 - Do they have any specific reporting procedures or requirements?
 - What tools do they have that may help you with your NFIRS program?
 - How are incident report updates handled in your state?
 - Verify with your state program manager that he or she has valid, current data from your jurisdiction.
4. Review the Captivate video containing instructions on how to export your transaction file in standard format.

<https://nfa.usfa.fema.gov/ax/pcm/r0491/datadownload.avi>

Note: If you use a third-party vendor, contact your system administrator to verify that your file is in the correct format.

5. Using your NFIRS third-party software or the NFIRS Bulk Export Utility (BEU), obtain the transaction file for your jurisdiction. This file should be one year of NFIRS data in NFIRS transaction file format for your jurisdiction. State level participants should bring one year of NFIRS data from three departments.
6. Email your transaction file to nfirspm@gmail.com. If your transaction file is larger than 25 MB, please send an email requesting information on how to upload your file to Google drive.
7. Review NFIRS Acronyms and Definitions on the following pages, which will be the basis of a quiz on Day 1 of the 6-day course.
8. Bring your standard operating procedures or policies related to NFIRS, NFIRS participation, and/or NFIRS reporting.
9. Review the Captivate video, which provides an overview of pivot tables in Excel.
<https://nfa.usfa.fema.gov/ax/pcm/r0491/pivot.avi>
10. Complete the reading assignment, “The Economic Impact of Successful Commercial Fire Interventions,” published through Arizona State University and located at <http://azsmart-dev.wpcarey.asu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/PFD-Final-Report.pdf>.
11. Complete the Reading assignment “Conquering the “Unknowns” published through the National Association of State Fire Marshals and located at <http://www.nfic.org/docs/NASFMFoundationFinalReportConqueringtheUnknowns.pdf>.

In-class course requirements include:

- Successful completion of individual hands-on lab activities.
- Submission of individual written assignments.
- An average of 80 percent or better on five quizzes and a final exam.
- Completion of the final day application activity during the six-day course delivery.

You will receive a certificate after you attend class and complete the course requirements. During class, you will begin to work on, and receive feedback about, an Individual Action Plan that you will implement in your organization. You will have four months after class is completed to implement the Action Plan and to write and submit a brief status report.

Completing the four-month status report, while **not a requirement for graduation**, will aid future NFIRS program managers. USFA will collect the status reports and mail copies of them, if requested, to any participants in NFIRS who could use the information. Finally, you will be expected to participate in class discussions and work with other class members on group assignments.

This class is a six day class which starts on Sunday at 8 a.m. Subsequent classes will meet daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., with evening classes possible. The class graduation ceremony is an important part of the course. You are expected to attend this event. All departing travel arrangements should be made so that you do not leave campus prior to the class graduation.

The course materials for this course are now available in a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) format which will function on any electronic device. If you own an electronic device (laptop computer, tablet, etc.) and are familiar with its document reader functions, we are asking you to download the Student Manual (SM) **before you travel to Emmitsburg** and bring the preloaded device with you. Please see the page following this letter for complete instructions on successfully downloading your course materials. Please note: If you plan to bring/use an iPad, you may experience issues saving/storing/printing course assignments since there is no USB/thumb drive capacity for these devices.

The NFA classroom environment is computer based. You are responsible for the security and maintenance of your electronic equipment. The NFA cannot provide computer software, hardware (which includes disks, printers, scanners, monitors, etc.), or technical support for your device. For your convenience, we do provide surge protector power strips at each classroom table.

Should you need to access the Student Computer Lab, it is located in Building D and is available for all students to use. The lab is open daily with a technician available Monday through Thursday from 1700 to 2100 (5 p.m. to 9 p.m.) and on Saturdays from 0800 to 1200 (8 a.m. to noon). The lab uses Windows 7 and Office 2013 as the software standard.

If you need additional information related to your course's content or requirements, please contact Dave Donohue, Planning and Information Management Training Specialist, at (301) 447-1094, or by email at david.donohue@fema.dhs.gov.

Sincerely,



Tonya L. Hoover, Superintendent
National Fire Academy
U.S. Fire Administration

Enclosures

National Fire Academy Bring Your Own Device Course Materials/Download Instructions

The **first step** is to download ADOBE Reader to your device. This will enable you to read and manipulate the course materials. ADOBE Reader can be used to comment and highlight text in PDF documents. It is an excellent tool for note-taking purposes.

For Laptops and Computers

ADOBE Reader can be downloaded from www.adobe.com/downloads/. It is a free download. Please note that depending on your settings, you may have to temporarily disable your antivirus software.

For Tablets and Other Similar Hand-Held Devices

ADOBE Reader can be downloaded onto devices such as iPads, Android tablets, and other hand-held devices. ADOBE Reader for these types of devices can be found in the device's Application Store using the search function and typing in "ADOBE Reader." Follow the instructions given. **It is a free application.** Note: In order to have the editing capabilities/toolbar, the document needs to be "opened with ADOBE Reader." There should be a function on your device to do this.

After you have successfully downloaded the ADOBE Reader, please use the following Web link to download your R0491, "National Fire Incident Reporting System: Program Management" (NFIRS: PM) Student Manual (SM). (You may copy/paste the links into your Web browser.)

https://nfa.usfa.fema.gov/ax/sm/sm_r0491.pdf

Note: Please make sure you download the ADOBE Reader first. To open the SM, you will need to open the ADOBE Reader and then open the SM through the ADOBE Reader in order for the note-taking tools to work properly.

If you need assistance, please contact nfaonlinetier2@fema.dhs.gov.

PRE-COURSE ASSIGNMENTS CHECKLIST

_____ Contact your NFIRS state program manager.

_____ Obtain an NFIRS user account from your state program manager.

_____ Obtain answers to the following questions from your state program manager. Bring a summary of the answers with you to class.

- How often do they want you to report?
- Do they have any specific reporting procedures or requirements?
- What tools do they have that may help you with your NFIRS program?
- How are incident report updates handled in your state?
- Verify with your state program manager that he or she has valid, current data from your jurisdiction.

_____ Review the Captivate video at <http://nfa.usfa.fema.gov/ax/pcm/r0491/datadownload.avi>.

_____ Obtain the transaction file for your jurisdiction using your NFIRS third-party software or BEU.

_____ Email your transaction file to nfirspm@gmail.com

_____ Review NFIRS acronyms and definitions.

_____ Bring your standard operating procedures or policies related to NFIRS.

_____ Review the Captivate video at <http://nfa.usfa.fema.gov/ax/pcm/r0491/pivot.avi>.

_____ Complete the reading assignment “Economic Impact of Successful Commercial Fire Interventions” at <http://media2.abc15.com/html/pdf/ASU%20study.pdf>.

_____ Complete the reading assignment “Conquering the Unknowns” at <http://www.nfic.org/docs/NASFMFoundationFinalReportConqueringtheUnknowns.pdf>.

NFIRS Acronyms and Definitions

- National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS).
- National Fire Data Center (NFDC).
- NFIRS Federal Client Software (FC or FCT).
- NFIRS Federal Client Software — Data Entry Tool (DET).
- NFIRS Web-Based Data Entry Browser Interface (DEBI).
- NFIRS Web-Based Summary Output Reports Tool (SORT).
- NFIRS Web-Based Bulk Export Utility (BEU).
- NFIRS Web-Based Bulk Import Utility (BIU).
- NFIRS 5.0 Complete Reference Guide (CRG).

NFIRS Federal Client Tool and Web-Based Tools are found at <https://www.nfirs.fema.gov/users/usersdocs.shtm>.

- The NFIRS Data Entry Tool Guide is a guide for the entry, maintenance and validation of incidents, as well as a detailed explanation and steps on how to use each tool.
- The NFIRS System Administration Tool Guide is a guide for system administrators setting up and maintaining groups of users.
- The NFIRS Configuration Tool Guide is a guide for the setup of user options and local database access.
- The NFIRS Web-Based Reporting User's Guide includes step-by-step instructions to generate, retrieve and print reports from the Web-Based Reporting Tool.

The NFIRS 5.0 Complete Reference Guide is a line-by-line guide to the completion of an NFIRS incident report. The guide defines each entry, explains a purpose for capturing that data element, lists codes for that field, and provides an entry example. This guide is also referred to as the NFIRS Handbook.

NFIRS News and Coding Bulletins contains short bulletins that provide coding help to fire department personnel using NFIRS. NFIRSGrams address frequently asked questions and common mistakes made when completing incident forms. Subscribe at https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDHSFA/subscriber/new?pop=t&topic_id=USDHSFA_105.

NFIRS Coding Questions Guide is a guide that provides information on coding NFIRS 5.0 incident reports in a question-and-answer format.

National Fire Information Council (NFIC) (www.nfic.org) was established in 1979 under the original name of National Association of NFIRS States (NANS) and was then changed in 1981 to the National Fire Information Council or NFIC. The association provides NFIRS participating states and major metropolitan areas with an organization in which to help support the existing NFIRS system, research and implement changes to improve it, and help maintain a high level of performance. Each state participating in NFIRS has one representative in NFIC, as does each major metropolitan area that serves 500,000 or more people. These representatives are responsible for incident data collection and analysis in their jurisdiction. NFIC, working closely with the USFA NFDC, has been instrumental in implementing and supporting NFIRS nationwide.

Insurance Services Office, a subsidiary of Verisk Analytics, is a provider of data, underwriting, risk management and legal/regulatory services to property-casualty insurers and other clients. Insurance Services Office collects information useful in many aspects of insurance underwriting. That information includes evaluations of public fire protection, flood risk, and the adoption and enforcement of building codes in individual communities. Information on municipal services helps the communities with their efforts to manage and mitigate their risk.

Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) is an organization whose main purpose is to improve and create accounting reporting standards or generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). These standards make it easier for users to understand and use the financial records of both state and local governments.

International City/County Management Association (ICMA) is an association representing professionals in local government management. The association conducts research, provides technical assistance and training, and promotes professional local government management.

Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) is a nonprofit organization developed by ICMA and the International Association of Fire Chiefs. It is dedicated to assisting fire and emergency service agencies throughout the world in achieving excellence through self-assessment and peer review.

The CFAI is now the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE). The CPSE promotes the continuous quality improvement of fire and emergency service agencies that serve communities worldwide by providing training and career resource information.

Complete report is an incident report that contains all required information and all essential information about an incident. All optional modules will be filled out on a complete incident report.

Consequential incident is an incident that has a high-dollar loss fire, high casualties (either civilian or firefighter or both), or significant environmental effects.

Continuous Process Improvement (CPI) is an ongoing effort to improve products, services or processes. These efforts can seek “incremental” improvement over time or “breakthrough” improvement all at once.

Essential data is any data, whether it is provided via a required field or not, that provides information or insight into the factors that contributed to the consequential or special-case incident.

Export is processing your incident data from a reporting system into an NFIRS compatible transaction file. You can export data using your FCT, the Web-Based Reporting Tool, or your third-party software.

Exposure fire is a fire in a building, structure, vehicle or outside property resulting from a fire outside that building, structure, vehicle or outside property. An exposure fire requires actual fire damage, not just smoke, heat or water.

Exposure other is types of health exposures, such as being physically exposed to elements that involve potential injury or death to humans. This type of exposure does not constitute an exposure incident under NFIRS reporting. The Fire Service Casualty module is used to document this health exposure when addressing the severity of an injury. The exposure is referring to a firefighter being exposed to toxic substances or harmful physical agents through any route of entry into the body.

Import is processing your incident data transaction file into an NFIRS 5.0 database. The import may be directly into the national, local or state NFIRS database.

Measures of central tendency are mathematical measures that describe the center or average of a series of numbers.

- Mean is the average. Add up all the numbers and then divide by the number of numbers.
- Median is the middle value in a list of numbers. Numbers must be in numerical order.
- Mode is the value that occurs most often. If no number is repeated, there is no mode for the list.

Measures of dispersion measure how spread out a set of data is. Range, inter-quartile range, and standard deviation are the three commonly used measures of dispersion.

Nominal variable is a number used only as a name or to identify something, i.e., postal ZIP code 78701.

Offline refers to the direct connection of your NFIRS 5.0 software to a local NFIRS 5.0 database.

Online refers to the direct connection of your NFIRS 5.0 software to the national NFIRS database.

Ordinal variable is a number that tells the position of something in a list, i.e., first, second, third.

Plus-one codes are custom codes created by adding an additional character to a valid code. The fields that support a plus-one code have a fixed maximum size that allows the potential extra digit of the new code. A plus-one code may be implemented to allow many additional, more specific values to be defined by local departments or states for their own uses. When a plus-one code is imported to the USFA National Database, only the national length code is used for analysis.

Reportable incident is an incident that meets the criteria outlined within NFIRS documentation describing a specific type of incident.

Required data is any data that is provided via a required field in an NFIRS reporting system.

Six sigma is a data-driven approach and methodology for eliminating defects by using qualitative and quantitative techniques to drive and improve processes.

Special case incident is an incident that has high risk for loss of life, property or damage to the environment, all of which have adverse consequences to the community.

Structures are 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.

Third-party products are hardware or software products developed to work in conjunction with the NFIRS 5.0 system by outside developers. Products may be a records management system or incident reporting software developed by vendors or municipalities. Compatibility with related NFIRS 5.0 design elements is essential.

Transaction file is the file layout that is required for incident data that is imported or exported using the NFIRS system or a compatible third-party NFIRS 5.0 system.

Typical incident is an incident with minimal dollar loss, no injuries, and no fatalities.

User injection is the process of importing information, including user accounts and passwords, from the national NFIRS system to an offline FCT database. The information is necessary for the FCT to recognize the user in the offline mode.

Valid report is an incident report that passes validation because data for all required fields has been provided.