

# FIREHOUSE®

## Weekly Drill

### DRILL #107: NFIRS

#### Introduction

The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) implemented the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) in 1976 and six states aided in a piloted program to help jump start the program. NFIRS has since grown and is used in all 50 states. Major participants consist of more than 40 major metropolitan areas, and more than 15,000 fire departments.

#### National Database

This system serves as a database for gathering fire incident information within the United States. Local fire departments fill out the NFIRS reports and forward them to their state's fire prevention office. This is usually the state Fire Marshal's office. After this information is gathered and tabulated, it gets passed along to the USFA.

On a yearly basis, approximately 600,000 fire incidents and more than 5 million non-fire incidents are added to the database, making the NFIRS the world's largest collection of incidents to which fire departments respond. At the local level, these NFIRS reports are used for assisting fire departments with setting priorities for their fire prevention and educational programs.

At the state level, NFIRS is employed in many capacities. One valuable contribution is that NFIRS data can be used to aid state legislatures when they are trying to justify budgets or pass important bills on fire-related issues such as sprinklers, fireworks and arson.

#### Detailed Information

More than 12,000 fire departments participated in NFIRS in 2001. The data that these departments supplied was used to identify the kinds of incidents that were responded to, where they occurred, what resources were needed to handle the incident, the losses that were incurred, as well as any other specific information such as Hazmat.

Depending on the fire departments capabilities, the data is either entered manually or via a computer. The information is routed through the state and up to the federal level, where the data is then used to develop national public education campaigns, influence and recommend national codes and standards, aide in allocating federal



## National Fire Incident Reporting System

Complete Reference Guide

January 2012



U.S. Fire Administration  
National Fire Data Center

funds and assist with identifying research.

#### Benefits

How do firefighters benefit? All fire departments participate in some sort of planning and managing their operations to make them more effective and efficient. Having data from the NFIRS showing accurate information about the fires and other incidents available to them the will help them achieve their greatest performance. Additionally, if a pattern is identified indicating that a problem exists, efforts can be made to resolve them from reoccurring in the future.

If you're not utilizing the data from the NFIRS, stop and ask yourself why. The information is there to assist your departments; take advantage of it, you'll be surprised what you might find!

—Prepared by Russell Merrick