

## NASFM Foundation Survey: Fire Incident Reporting Practices, Training &

National Association of State Fire Marshals Fire Research & Education Foundation, with a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Fire Prevention & Safety Grants Program, is seeking a better understanding of the reasons behind undetermined or blank/missing origin and cause entries in fire incident data. Your honest responses to this survey will give us a great deal of information about how fire incident data is collected and reported, your experiences and attitudes about reporting, and opinions about how fire incident data reporting could be improved.

If you do not participate in the fire incident data collection and reporting process for your department, please send the survey link to someone in your department who does. We ask that only one person per fire department respond to this survey.

We are collecting certain information for internal record-keeping purposes only. Individual survey results will be compiled and the consolidated data will be contained in a Final Report. YOUR INDIVIDUAL RESPONSES WILL BE HELD CONFIDENTIAL AND WILL NOT BE IDENTIFIED WITH A PARTICULAR RESPONDENT OR FIRE DEPARTMENT.

If you would like to receive a link to the final report for this study, at the end of the survey you will have an opportunity to provide your email address.

This survey will take 15-30 minutes to complete. You can monitor your progress with the progress bar at the top of the page.

Any questions marked with an asterisk (\*) require an answer in order to progress through the survey.

To move through the survey, please use the following navigation buttons:

- Click the "Next" button to continue to the next page.
- Click the "Previous" button to return to the previous page.
- Click the "Exit the Survey Early" button if you need to exit the survey. You may return to complete the survey up until September 20 if you use the same computer.
- Click the "Submit" button to submit your survey.

Thank you for your time and attention. If you have any questions about the survey, please contact us at [survey@firemarshals.org](mailto:survey@firemarshals.org).

### **\*1. What type of department are you?**

- Career
- Combination
- Call
- Volunteer

## \*2. What population does your department serve?

- 1,000,000 or more
- 500,000 to 999,999
- 250,000 to 499,999
- 100,000 to 249,999
- 50,000 to 99,999
- 25,000 to 49,999
- 10,000 to 24,999
- 5,000 to 9,999
- 2,500 to 4,999
- Under 2,500

## \*3. What state is your department located in?

State:

## \*4. What is the name of your fire department?

**(Note: This information will be used for internal recordkeeping purposes only, and will be removed from the database as soon as we record that you have responded, so that your department can't be linked with your responses.)**

## \*5. What is your position within the fire department?

- Chief officer
- Fire marshal
- Line officer
- Fire fighter
- Administrative/Secretarial/Clerical
- Other (please specify)

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## \*6. What is your role in the department as it relates to fire incident data? (Check all that apply)

- Fill out fire incident data reports (for example, run sheets)
- Input fire incident data reports into the computer
- Review fire incident data reports
- Send fire incident data reports to my State Program Manager or to NFIRS
- Analyze my department's fire incident data
- Other (please specify)

## \*7. Are there incentives or legal requirements within your jurisdiction for reporting fire incident data?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

## \*8. What incentives or legal requirements exist for fire incident reporting in your state or jurisdiction? (Check all that apply)

- Department guideline or standard operating procedure
- State requires reporting of fire incident data
- Data reporting is required in order to be eligible for federal grants
- Data reporting is required in order to be eligible for state programs or grants
- City/county/district administration requires reporting of fire incident data
- Data is used in decision-making or resource allocation by our department
- Other (please specify)

## \*9. How does your department record fire incident data?

- Software/website provided by the US Fire Administration
- Software purchased from a third-party vendor
- Software/website provided by the State
- Department's own in-house software package
- Other (please specify)

## 10. Is the software you use to enter fire incident data a stand-alone program or a package that is part of or integrates with other data collection systems (such as Computer-Aided Dispatch, or CAD)?

- Stand-alone program
- Is part of or integrates with other data collection systems
- Don't know

Comment

## \*11. How soon after a fire incident is data about the incident entered into the computer?

- Same shift
- By the end of the next shift
- Within a week
- Upon completion of the investigation, if there is one
- Other (please specify)

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**\*12. Who makes the initial entries of the fire incident into the computer? (Check all that apply)**

- Firefighter
- Officer
- Chief
- Administrative person in department
- Other (please specify)

**\*13. Does anyone in the department review the fire incident reports for quality control before they are submitted?**

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never
- Don't know

**\*14. What happens to the report once it is entered into the computer?**

- It is submitted directly into the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS)
- It is submitted to the state
- It is submitted to the county or other local jurisdiction
- It is kept within the department and not submitted anywhere
- Don't know
- Other (please specify)

**\*15. Can a fire incident report be updated once it is initially input?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Comment

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**\*16. Do you ever get any feedback on fire incident reports you fill out?**

- Yes
- No

**\*17. What issues does the feedback address? (Check all that apply)**

- Incorrect codes
- Incomplete reports
- Inconsistent responses
- Additional information on the incident, such as a fire investigation report
- Other (please specify)

**\*18. Who provides the feedback? (Check all that apply)**

- Quality control person within the department
- Fire Marshal or Inspector who conducts the investigation
- State Fire Incident Reporting Program Manager
- Other (please specify)

**\*19. After an investigation, a subsequent death, or the introduction of new information about a fire incident, does someone in the department update the original incident report?**

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never
- Don't know

## 20. Who updates the report? (Check all that apply)

- Chief
- Officer
- Fire fighter
- Fire marshal
- Fire investigator
- Administrative person
- Other (please specify)

## 21. What triggers an update? (Check all that apply)

- Incorrect codes
- Incomplete reports
- Inconsistent responses
- Additional information on the incident
- A fire investigation report
- A subsequent fatality
- Other (please specify)

## \*22. If incident reports are not updated after additional information is obtained, why is that so? (Check all that apply)

- Investigators do not have access to/do not use our data reporting system
- We do not receive investigation reports
- Nobody is responsible for updating the initial incident report
- We are discouraged from updating the initial incident report
- We did not realize incident reports could be updated
- Other (please specify)

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**\*23. Does your department have in-house fire investigators or are fires referred to investigators outside the department?**

- In-house fire investigators
- Outside fire investigators
- Don't know

Comment

**\*24. Do you know of any strategies used by people in your department for completing fire incident reports quickly?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**25. What are the strategies you know about?**

**\*26. What policy best describes what fire incidents are reported by your department?**

- All fires
- All fires with a human death/injury
- All fires with a specified dollar loss threshold
- Only structure and vehicle fires
- Don't know
- Other (please specify)



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## \*27. How long have you personally been entering fire incident data into the computer?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- More than 10 years

Comment

## \*28. Do you understand why fire incident data is collected?

- Yes
- No

## \*29. What is your understanding of why fire incident data is collected?

## \*30. What type of training is given to those in the department who enter fire incident data reports into the computer? (Check all that apply)

- Self taught
- "On the job" training from others in the department
- Formal training provided by the department
- State-provided training
- Software vendor-provided training
- On-campus National Fire Academy training
- Off-campus National Fire Academy training
- Online training provided by the US Fire Administration or National Fire Academy
- Other

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## 31. What does the training consist of? (Choose all that apply)

- How to use the software and enter data
- Why data is collected and reported
- How to properly select the codes for an incident
- Other (please specify)

## \*32. Which of the following statements is closest to your own opinion regarding how your training prepared you to enter fire data into the computer?

- My training prepared me well
- My training helped, but there are still things I don't understand
- My training had no effect
- My training prepared me poorly and made things more confusing

Comment

## \*33. How easy is it to identify the correct code for a particular data element?

- Very Easy
- Easy
- Difficult
- Very Difficult

Comment

## \*34. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being "Not At All Confident" and 5 being "Very Confident," what is your level of confidence about what the code choices mean in the fire incident reporting system?

1 - Not at all confident	2	3	4	5 - Very confident
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comment

## NASFM Foundation Survey: Fire Incident Reporting Practices, Training &

**\*35. Would additional training on fire incident reporting be helpful to your department for improving the quality of fire incident data collected?**

- Yes  
 No

Comment

**\*36. What are the most realistic ways for personnel in your department to get training on fire incident reporting? (Check all that apply)**

- Classroom  
 Online  
 One-on-one  
 Other (please specify)

**\*37. Which of the following fire incident reporting training and support programs are you aware of? (Choose all that apply)**

- State fire agency  
 US Fire Administration/National Fire Academy  
 Private software vendor  
 None

Comment

**\*38. Have you ever received any refresher training since the first time you were trained to enter fire incident data?**

- Yes  
 No  
 Was never trained in the first place

## 39. How often have you received refresher training?

- Annually
- Every few years
- Just once since I was first trained
- Learning about how to report is a continuous process for me

Comment

## \*40. Does your department use fire incident data for staffing, resource allocation, or other purposes?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

## \*41. How does your department use fire incident data?

## \*42. Do you know of other groups that use your fire incident data?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Comment

## \*43. What other groups use your department's fire incident data? (Check all that apply)

- City/county agencies
- Insurance companies
- State fire protection agency
- Federal government
- National organizations
- Other (please specify)

**\*44. How well do you think your department does at reporting fire incidents?**

- Very well
- Fairly well
- Not so well
- Poorly
- Don't know

Comment

**\*45. Choose the phrase that best describes how you feel about fire incident reporting**

- It's a good use of my time
- It's a necessary evil; I would rather be doing other things
- I don't see the value in the time spent on it

Comment

**\*46. Choose the phrase that best describes how most of your colleagues in the department feel about fire incident reporting**

- They see it as a good use of their time
- They see it as a necessary evil; they would rather be doing other things
- They don't see the value in the time spent on it

Comment

## NASFM Foundation Survey: Fire Incident Reporting Practices, Training &

**\*47. Within your department's fire incident reports, why would "undetermined" be entered in one or more of the "causal factors" sections (for example, ignition source, heat source, factors contributing to ignition, area of origin, equipment contributing to ignition)? (Check all that apply)**

- Fire incident reports are not updated after the investigation is complete
- People making entries are discouraged from entering specific fire causes
- Concern about fire department findings contradicting insurance company findings
- No investigation was done
- Cannot determine cause or origin after investigation
- Don't know
- Other/Comment

**\*48. If personnel in your department who make fire incident report entries are discouraged from entering specific fire causes, why do you think this is the case? (Check all that apply)**

- The incident did not warrant an investigation, so the cause was left undetermined
- The personnel entering the data are not qualified fire investigators
- A determination on causal factors can be used against the department and/or its personnel in court proceedings
- If we can't be 100% sure of causal factors, we put down "undetermined"
- This does not happen in our department
- Other/Comment

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**\*49. How do you think your department could reduce the number of "undetermined" or missing/blank responses in the "causal factors" sections of the fire incident reports? (Note: causal factors sections pertain to factors such as ignition source, heat source, factors contributing to ignition, area of origin, equipment contributing to ignition) (Check all that apply)**

- Reduce the number of codes/options in the fire incident report
- Improve the software to make it more user friendly
- Provide additional training
- Change the system to allow for answers with different confidence levels (for example, "We think it's smoking materials, but are not 100% sure at this time)
- Update the causal factors fields after the investigation is completed
- Increase awareness within the department of the importance of data collection
- Allow personnel to get some sleep after a call that ends in the middle of the night rather than requiring them to immediately input fire incident data into the computer
- This is not a problem in our department
- Other/Comment

**50. Is there anything else about the subject of fire incident reporting that you would like to share with us?**

Thank you for your time and attention to our survey! If you are interested in receiving a link to our final report (available in the first quarter of 2014), please enter your email address here.

**51. Yes, please send a link to your final report to this address:**