CAIRS **NFIRS**

Frequently Asked Questions

What does CAIRS stand for?
"California All Incident Reporting System", which is used to reference NFIRS 5.0 data housed in the California data warehouse. CAIRS is a term used by CAL FIRE to identify their NFIRS vendor software program.

What does NFIRS stand for?
"National Fire Incident Reporting System", which has been designed as a tool for fire departments nationwide to report and maintain computerized records of fires and other fire department incidents in a uniform manner. NFIRS 5.0 was developed by the United States Fire Administration (www.nfirs.fema.gov) in partnership with the National Fire Information Council (http://www.nfic.org/).

Why should I report in NFIRS?
California law (Health and Safety Code 13110.5) mandates that each fire department operated by the state, a city, city and county, fire protection district, organized fire company, or other public or private entity which provides fire protection, shall furnish information and data to the Office of the State Fire Marshal relating to each fire which occurs within his or her area of jurisdiction. Using NFIRS 5.0 format enables the Fire Service to collect computerized records of fires and other fire department incidents to examine trends on a local, state and national level. The resulting information can be used to accurately budget and pursue strategic and organizational planning activities, such as training and risk reduction programs.

How do I get started reporting in NFIRS?
California accepts data in NFIRS 5.0 compliant format. You'll need to decide whether you'll be using an NFIRS compliant **third-party vendor** or the free **Federal Client Tool** offered by the United States Fire Administration.

Choosing a third-party vendor: To find a software vendor, we suggest that you check with other fire departments or organizations to find out what they are using and how well it works for them. Or you can go to http://www.nfirs.fema.gov/system/activevendors.shtm to visit the Federal list of active NFIRS software vendors. Up-front and extended costs for third-party vendor software vary depending on the package and the level of service provided. If your department already has an automated records management system, you may want to find out if your software has a built-in or compatible NFIRS 5.0 compliant component available.

Federal Client Tool: The Federal Client Tool is completely functional but it does not contain any special features that your department may need, such as statistic reports. The Federal Client Tool is designed for fire departments that have less than 100 incidents/calls per month. To register and receive assistance to download the software, contact Jennifer Bowman, Program Coordinator at Jennifer.Bowman@fire.ca.gov or by telephone at (916) 445-8435 to ensure your user account has been activated and to gain access to the NFIRS 5.0 software. California fire departments using the Federal Client Tool software are required to enter their incidents in the **"off line"** mode**.**

Where do I send my data?
Your NFIRS 5.0 data should be submitted to the California State Fire Marshal's Office. Complete instructions for submitting your exported NFIRS 5.0 quarterly data are available at http://osfm.fire.ca.gov/cairs/cairs.php, under "NFIRS 5.0 Required Format". This includes instructions for naming your data files and due dates. Data files can be attached to an email and sent to CAIRS@fire.ca.gov. Email attachments should be less than 5MB to ensure receipt. Larger data files can be zipped and attached to an email or mailed to:

> California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
> Office of the State Fire Marshal
> California All Incident Reporting System
> P. O. Box 944246
> Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

Will I receive confirmation that my data has been processed by the State?
Yes. After your data submission has been processed, you will receive a confirmation email which will include the validation reports created during importation of your data to the State's data warehouse.

Who do I contact for help?
You may direct any questions relating to the CAIRS Program to Jennifer Bowman, Program Coordinator at Jennifer.Bowman@fire.ca.gov or by telephone at (916) 445-8435.

Can I get specialized statistical reports for my fire department, county or state?
Yes. The statistical reports will be based on NFIRS 5.0 data that was submitted to the State and validated. Requests should be submitted to Jennifer Bowman, Program Coordinator, at Jennifer.Bowman@fire.ca.gov.

Statewide statistical NFIRS reports can be viewed at http://osfm.fire.ca.gov/cairs/cairs_nfirsreports.php.

Our department received a Federal grant that requires NFIRS reporting. How do we get started?
You'll need to decide whether you'll be using an NFIRS compliant **third-party vendor** or the Free **Federal Client Tool Software** offered by the United States Fire Administration. See "**How do I get started reporting in NFIRS?**" on the previous page.

Where can I get an NFIRS handbook?
All documentation and guidelines (i.e., the USFA NFIRS 5.0 Complete Reference Guide, Data Entry Tool User Guide, System Administration Tool Guide and the Configuration Tool Guide) are available for download at: www.nfirs.fema.gov/users/usersdocs.shtm.

My fire department needs an FDID to report in NFIRS. What is an FDID?
"Fire Department Identification" number. FDID numbers are issued to fire departments by the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM). An FDID number is assigned to a fire department to be used for incident reporting for their jurisdiction.

How do I get an FDID number assigned?
Please follow the instructions available at http://osfm.fire.ca.gov/cairs/cairs.php, under "Procedures for Requesting FDID Numbers".

My fire department information has changed. How do I update my fire department information?
The OSFM is dedicated to maintaining the most current information regarding fire departments in the FDID database. If there is a need to update your FDID information or your department has merged with another department, please notify the OSFM by submitting the completed "Fire Department Information Change Notice" available at http://osfm.fire.ca.gov/cairs/cairs.php.