



Office of the State Fire Marshal National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) Coding Recommendations COVID-19 Incidents

The start to 2020 has seen a marked increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in the United States, meaning the fire service and first responder agencies are facing an increased number of calls for service. The United States Fire Administration (USFA) is recommending that users at the fire department and state levels determine what information is needed/desired for future analysis. The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) has determined that California fire departments will follow these guidelines.

The following information is intended for state and local guidance for the fire service recording incidents in NFIRS that involve the COVID-19 virus or calls that are suspected to be related to the virus.

Generally, the coding of COVID-19 incidents, suspected or confirmed, will not be any different than other types of incident coding. The fire departments and states should consider how modules and fields provide data that could be useful in their decision making and future analysis. This includes Apparatus/Resource, Personnel, EMS, and Fire Service Casualty Modules.

BASIC MODULE

- Incident Type (C): Document the type of situation found.
- Resources (G1): Include accurate counts and listings of apparatus and personnel used in response to these types of incidents.
- Fire Service Casualties (H1): Record Fire Service health exposures and potential health exposures in the injuries field. *Note: One Fire Service Casualty Module will need to be created for each injury/exposure listed.*
- Remarks: Clearly document the incident and identify COVID-19 in the text.

EMS MODULE

Use this module to document patient-specific information.

FIRE SERVICE CASUALTY (FSC) MODULE

This module can be used to capture incident scene exposures as a “first report” of contact with known or suspected COVID-19 cases. There are a few things to keep in mind:

- It is up to the fire department as to whether they wish to use the FSC module to record this information
- The number of FSC modules must equal the number of Fire Service injuries listed on the Basic Module (for example, if there are 20 personnel on the scene who were exposed to COVID-19, then 20 individual FSC modules should be completed - one for every person on the scene)
- Severity (G3) = 1 (report only, including exposures)
- All required fields will need to be completed on the FSC module, including: gender, casualty number, age, date/time of injury, severity, etc.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In addition to the above incident coding recommendations, the states could consider implementation of a Special Study.

- Users of a vendor product should contact their vendor for more information on using the Basic Module’s optional Special Studies.
- State level users can use the USFA Client Software’s System Admin Tool to create a special study once the specifics have been decided. *Note: OSFM has not implemented a Special Study for California. If this changes, participating fire departments will be notified and details will be posted to our website:*
<https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/divisions/wildfire-planning-engineering/california-incident-data-and-statistics-program/>

For more information, please contact the NFIRS Support Center at:

FEMA-NFIRSHelp@fema.dhs.gov