

About NFIRS/Release Notes

The National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) is a program of:

The Federal Emergency Management Agency
United States Fire Administration
National Fire Data Center
<http://www.usfa.fema.gov>

Additional information and documentation on the NFIRS are available here:

<https://www.usfa.fema.gov/NFIRS>.

Release Notes

RELEASED 2/28/2022

National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS)
2020 Public Data Release (PDR)

This is the initial release of the 2020 NFIRS PDR database tables. The USFA releases two versions of the NFIRS PDR. The Fire and Hazardous Materials PDR includes all incidents where the incident type corresponds to a fire or hazardous materials incident (100 and 400 series) and the records from all modules that correspond to those incidents (available on CD). The All-Incident PDR includes all incident types (available on DVD). Additionally, downloadable NFIRS PDR files from 1980 to 2020 are available at: <https://www.fema.gov/about/openfema/data-sets/fema-usfa-nfirs-annual-data>. For 2020, the fire and hazmat PDR data were extracted from the NFIRS national production database on 1/15/2022 and the all-incident PDR data were also extracted on 1/15/2022.

FILE FORMAT:

The NFIRS PDR file format changed starting with the 2012 data year from dbase table files to delimited text files. Fields are separated by the "^" character, text fields are enclosed by double quotes, and the file uses Latin-1 encoding. Note that these files can be opened directly in Microsoft Excel but if the row count exceeds 1,048,576, some of the data will be truncated. Most database and statistical tools support loading of this delimited text format.

In 2019, a primary id key (INCIDENT_KEY) field was added to the PDR files. This field uniquely identifies each incident and consists of the following 5 data fields: STATE, FDID, INC_DATE, INC_NO, and EXP_NO. Except for this primary id key field, the format of the files and the data fields is the same in the dbase table files and the delimited text files.

The NFIRS PDR file format provides the field name, field description, data type, and field length for all data elements in each data table. The file format is found in the "Public Data Release Format v1_8.pdf" file.

QUALITY CONTROL NOTES:

In October 2020, an NFIRS modernization release included a new data entry interface and additional system validation checks to enforce the NFIRS 5.0 Design Specification January 2015.1, the current version at the time. A small number of incidents were adversely affected as users became familiar with the new interface. These incidents are noted in the "Data Quality Errata Addendum_PDR2020.pdf" document. Efforts to refine field checks to improve data quality will continue with the collection of 2021 NFIRS data.

Please see the "2020 NFIRS Data Quality Notes_02-24-2022.pdf" file included in this release. Additionally, see the "Data Quality Errata Addendum_PDR2020.pdf."

OTHER NOTES:

The NFIRS Structure Fire Cause codes are included as a table in the "causes.txt" file. It may be matched with the other tables on the NFIRS key (INCIDENT_KEY). Documentation is included in the "Structure Fire Cause.pdf" file. Beginning with 2016 NFIRS data, the cause file was modified to include only structure fire incidents versus all fire incidents as in the past, and the OLD_CAUSE and OLD_PCC fields were retired and are no longer included on this file.

The "NFIRS and PDR Overview 2020.pdf" guide provides a brief overview of the NFIRS, its data, and its limitations in data analyses at the state and national levels, as well as analytic resources. A brief overview of the PDR files is also discussed.

A guide to analyzing the NFIRS fire data is also included. The file is: "NFIRS 5.0 Fire Data Analysis Guidelines and Issues.pdf."

For information about how the files in the PDR relate to one another, please refer to the NFIRSRelationDiagram.pdf file. For information about the data elements and lookup codes within each PDR file, refer to the codelookup.txt file. Also, please see the NFIRS Complete Reference Guide (CRG) for answers to questions about code descriptions and field definitions.

The number of records included in each delimited text file for the 2020 PDR is shown below.

PDR File	Fire and HazMat PDR	All Incident PDR
arson.txt	77,781	83,300
arsonagencyreferral.txt	32,321	37,524
arsonjuvsub.txt	2,480	2,481
basicaid.txt	268,652	1,261,707
basicincident.txt	2,181,870	26,959,630
civiliancasualty.txt	8,872	8,925
ems.txt	2,031	1,177,990
fdheader.txt	39,054	39,054
ffcasualty.txt	8,922	87,723
ffequipfail.txt	214	4,783
fireincident.txt	542,192	542,252
hazchem.txt	11,080	12,083
hazmat.txt	12,035	13,071
hazmatequipinvolved.txt	12,035	13,071
hazmobprop.txt	12,035	13,071
incidentaddress.txt	2,181,870	26,959,630
wildlands.txt	69,093	69,129
causes.txt	301,007	301,007

USFA NFIRS DATA DISCLAIMER:

Caution: The NFIRS is not a repository of all incidents that occur in the United States. The NFIRS is a voluntary system, and it includes only those incidents reported to the system by fire departments that participate in the NFIRS. The PDR contains incidents that have been released by state NFIRS program managers, which may be different than the incidents reported by fire departments. In most years, all states, the District of Columbia, and many Native American Tribal Authorities report to the NFIRS, but not all fire departments that report to the NFIRS within a state necessarily report all their incidents. Also, some fire departments that report fire incidents do not report associated casualties or estimated dollar losses. States and/or fire departments that report in one particular year may not report to the NFIRS the following year. Therefore, the NFIRS is not a census of all incidents or casualties.

NFIRS Support Center

Hours of Operation - Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. ET.

Call 888-382-3827 or email FEMA-NFIRSHelp@fema.dhs.gov.