

Hints on MEFIRS Fire Reporting Tasks

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General Hints:

How to put in a ticket to Image Trend

If you are having trouble with MEFIRS connectivity, you can call Image Trend Support at 1-888-730-3255 (remember, they are 1 hour behind us because they are in Minnesota). If you experience issues with ReportWriter or have technical trouble, you can put in a ticket to Image Trend. Once you are logged into the MEFIRS system, go to the **COMMUNITY** tab, then choose “Support Suite”, and then click on “Submit a Ticket”. Fill out the information and submit the ticket. If the icon labeled “Live Support Online” is active, you can also text message with an Image Trend representative to get your issue resolved. They are an hour behind us, so the Live Support may be greyed out in the morning until an Image Trend representative is online for the day.

Problems accessing the Help/University

If people can't get to the Help/University part of the system, they have to disengage their popup-blocker in the browser they are using.

Suggestions to make logging into MEFIRS easier

Image Trend recommends that people use **ONE browser on each computer** to access MEFIRS, so there won't be conflict between the different browser's caches (a “cache” is a place on your computer where a browser temporarily stores files downloaded to display websites). Image Trend (and we) recommend using just **Google Chrome** to access MEFIRS. Our site works best with Chrome and, if everyone uses Chrome to access MEFIRS on a computer, there won't be conflicts between browser caches.

Sometimes glitches happen when trying to access a webpage, which can store weird files in your internet browsing history. You can **clear browsing history** to remove the stored files that get you to favorite sites quickly, which will also remove the weird files. To clear the cache in Chrome, open the browser and click on the 3 vertical dots on the upper right side of the browser's screen. Hover over “More Tools” and then choose “Clear Browsing Data”. Make sure “Cached Images and Files” is checked and then choose the “Clear Data” button to clear the cache. If you use Windows on your computer, you can go to your **Control Panel** and choose “Internet Options”. Then click “Delete” under Browsing History: a box will pop up, listing the items that will be deleted. You can choose what items you want to delete (make sure “Temporary Internet Files and website Files” is selected), then click “Delete”. Once the delete process is completed, try to access MEFIRS again.

How to create an NFIRS fire report

1. Once you have logged into the system and said “yes” to the privacy warning, choose the Incidents drop-down menu and, under the “**Create New Fire**” section, choose the Fire Incident Form. **If you use CAD, choose the fire form under the “**Create New Fire From CAD**” section.
2. The report will open with the Basic module. Fill out all required fields (fields marked in RED are required fields)

3. A report will be valid in the NFIRS national database when it has a score of 100.
 4. To find validation errors that may be keeping your score below 100, click on the red Validation score at the bottom of the report. A list of Warnings and Rule errors will pop up. You can ignore Warnings (they don't take any points off the report), but Rule errors need to be fixed. Choose the arrow next to each Rule error to go to the section of the report that needs to be fixed. See information below on creating NFIRS fire reports from EMS reports.
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How to create an NFIRS fire report from an EMS report

In an EMS report, click on the **Menu** button at the bottom of the screen (it has 4 horizontal lines).

1. Choose "Associate Fire report from EMS Report". This will create a partially-completed NFIRS fire report, and the system will show you a small box with the NFIRS fire report information listed.
 2. Click on the arrow on the right side of the box, and you will be taken directly to the new NFIRS fire report. Complete the report by filling in the red-flagged fields. If the **EMS module is red**, click on it and then click on the Patient table that is outlined in RED, and fill in the RED Patient Number for that individual patient (NFIRS wants to count the number of patients in a report). The format will be 1, 2, etc.
 3. Also, if there are more than one Apparatus on the call, the additional Apparatus need to be added into the Apparatus Power Tool (if your department is using it). The Tool will not be red-flagged because the vehicle in the EMS report has already been added. Choose the green "**SAVE**" button when you are done.
 4. You can go back to the EMS side of the system by going up to the top of your account and choose "View Existing EMS" under your Incidents tab.
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How to document "No Activity" for a specific month for NFIRS

1. In the tab with your agency's name on it, open the dropdown menu and choose "Agency Information"
 2. Choose the tab named "No Incidents to Report"
 3. Under the section called "No Fire Incidents" choose the "+ **New**" button
 4. Select the year and the month for which you want to document "No Activity", and choose the OK button on the right side of the section
 5. Choose the green "**SAVE**" button when you are done.
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Validation scores for fire reports

Only reports with a score of 100 will export to the national NFIRS database as a valid report. You can check your report for errors, if your score is < 100, by clicking on the validation score at the bottom of the report when it is open. A list of errors will pop up, and you can click on the arrow next to each error so you can be taken to the section of the report that has the error. Fields that have errors will have red tabs or borders.

NOTE for departments that create an NFIRS report from an EMS report: once you create your NFIRS report, you are not done yet. You must go into the NFIRS report and finish filling out some fields that NFIRS needs:

this includes the Patient Number. If the **EMS module is red**, click on it and then click on the Patient table that is outlined in RED, and fill in the RED Patient Number for that individual patient (NFIRS wants to count the number of patients in a report). The format will be 001, 002, etc. You can see this error description when you click on the report score and the error list appears. Make sure to hit the green **“SAVE”** button when you are done.

How to find the correct code for a field

There are 3 ways you can find the correct code to use in fields with dropdown menus:

1. Type in the NFIRS code number and the system will pull up a short list of codes that have that number in them Example: type in “111” to find NFIRS code 111-Building fire
2. Type part of the code description in the field, and the system will pull up a short list of codes that have that term in their description. Example: type in “building” to find NFIRS code 111-Building Fire.
3. If you want to see a category list, click on the button containing horizontal lines next to the field. A list of categories will pop up on the left side of the screen. Search through the panels by using the arrows, until you find the code you want, and choose it. The code will show up in the field.

*** Note: if you want to choose “Undetermined” or “None” for a field, choose the button next to the field that has a black circle with a white line in it.

NFIRS Rule - Incident Type/Property or Contents Loss Warning on a fire report

Those errors are **Warnings**, which **don’t** keep a report from being valid. Michelle made a visibility rule that would hide the Property/Contents losses and Pre-Incident values if the incident doesn’t involve a structure or vehicle fire. We are having problems with people inserting inappropriate values into reports: for example, into a motor vehicle accident with no injuries. The Property/Contents fields are applied to **structure/vehicle fires only**. The insurance industry generally accounts for the two categories in the following manner:

Property Loss = the structure of the home or building, attached out-buildings and anything permanently attached to the structure. For vehicles, it’s the \$ loss of the vehicle itself (example: a semi’s cargo trailer)

Contents Loss = Items within the home or building or, for vehicles, the contents within the vehicle (example: the contents of a semi’s cargo trailer). **This includes contents damaged by fire, smoke, water and overhaul**. If you click on the report’s score and see errors listed with “Warning” in the description, you can ignore them.

How to find the list of fire reports that have been done

Once you have logged into the system and said “yes” to the privacy warning, choose the INCIDENTS drop-down menu and, under the **“View Existing”** section on the left side of the screen, choose the Fire link. ** If you use CAD, under the **“View CAD”** section, choose the Fire or Field Incident Cloud link.

How to view and sort reports in the Fire Incident list

Click on the “X” next to the Incident Date range to clear the dates, which will create a full list of your reports, and then click the blue **GO** button. You can use the **Order By** fields to sort reports. If you created a report but can’t see it in the incident list, it may not have an Incident Date in it, so the system doesn’t know where to put it. You can find these unfinished reports by doing the “X” step mentioned earlier, then in the **Order By** fields, choose “Incident Date” and “Ascending”, then select the blue **GO** button. This should make the reports with no Incident Dates float to the top of your list. You can choose “Descending” instead, to find “time-travel” dates that show years in the future. You can look for a specific report by doing the “X” step mentioned earlier, then put in the department’s Incident Number in the upper right search field and click the blue **GO** button next to it. You can also search using the NFIRS Incident # field.

How to delete a fire report from MEFIRS

1. Open your department’s list of reports by going to “Incidents/View Existing Fire”.
 2. Find the correct report in the Fire Incident List.
 3. Click the **Arrow** button on the right side of the report’s row. The report will open in a new tab in Google Chrome.
 4. Click on the **Menu** button at the bottom of the screen (it has 4 horizontal lines). Choose “**Delete**”.
 5. Choose “**Delete**” again when the system asks if you really want to delete it. The report will be deleted and you must close the tab you are in so you can return to the Fire Incident List. You may need to refresh your list search by choosing the blue “GO” button to have the deleted report removed from the incident list.
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How to add an exposure report to a basic fire report

An **Exposure** is defined as a fire that results from an original fire in a building, structure or vehicle. Example: if a building fire sets a truck on fire, the truck fire is an **exposure** fire from the **original** building fire. Exposure reports have the same Incident Number as the original report, but each exposure report has its own Exposure Number, starting with “001”. The original report ALWAYS has an Exposure Number of 0.

To create an exposure report from an original report in MEFIRS, create and save the original report. Then click the **Menu** button at the bottom of the report (**it has 4 horizontal lines**) and choose “Add Exposure”. You will see a Basic module appear with some fields pre-populated (exposure #, Incident Date and Incident #). Fill in the red areas. If it’s a building or vehicle exposure, the Fire module will show up and you can choose “Heat Source” as codes **82, 83, or 84** (these are associated with heat spread from another fire). The “Cause of Ignition” will be **0-Cause, other** if it’s an exposure fire (ImageTrend chose this code for this field when it’s an exposure report). The “Factors Contributing to Ignition” will be **71-Exposure Fire**. Then make sure to hit the green “**SAVE**” button when you are done. When you look at your list of incidents, you will see two (or more) listings for the same incident (the basic report and the exposure report(s)).

How to add attachments (pictures, additional documents) to a fire report

1. Open your department's list of reports by going to "Incidents/View Existing Fire".
 2. Find the correct report in the Fire Incident List.
 3. Click the **Arrow** button on the right side of the report's row. The report will open.
 4. Click on the **Menu** button at the bottom (it has 4 horizontal lines). Choose "**Attachments**".
 5. Choose the "+ **Add New**" button
 6. Choose the "**Browse**" button
 7. Browse to where the picture or document is located on your computer. Choose the file, and then choose the "**Open**" button at the bottom of the screen.
 8. The screen will go back to your fire report, and you will see the new file listed in the Attachment list. Choose the "**OK**" button under the listed file if it's the one you want to add to the report.
 9. The list will change and you will see a yellow "**Pending**" tab under the new file on the list. Choose the "**OK**" button at the bottom of the list.
 10. An "Incident Saving Progress" screen will appear, and will show that it's uploading the file. Don't leave this screen until it disappears.
 11. When the screen disappears, that means the file has been uploaded and attached to your report. You can check by choosing the "**Menu**" button, then go to "**Attachments**" and look for the file in the list.
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How to print a completed fire report to a local printer OR create a PDF version of the report

1. To **Print** the report, under "Incidents", choose "View Existing Fire".
 2. Find the correct report in the Fire Incident List.
 3. Click the **Printer** button on the right side of the report's row.
 4. A box will appear, so you can choose the template you want for the report and answer why you are modifying these reports: answer "QA" or something like that. Then choose "OK" and the form will open in a new tab in Google Chrome: click on the 3 vertical dots at the upper right side of the screen and choose "Print". You should see a screen that allows you to adjust print settings and print to a local printer, or you can choose to make a PDF version of the report to save onto your computer.
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Maine Forest Service and Wildland Fire reports

The Maine Forest Service has joined MEFIRS to document their fires and to view any fire department reports that involve Wildlands. **A critical part of this reporting is the answer you give to the Basic module/Location panel's question "Is this location identified only by latitude/longitude?" This question will only show up if the Incident Type is one of the following codes: 140-143, 160, 170-173, 561, 622, 631 or 632.**

If you have any type of a street address (or near a street address) for your incident location, then choose **NO** for this question. If you have only latitude/longitude coordinates for the location, choose **YES**. Forest Rangers will be answering YES to this question most often, because they have the best chance of being in a remote location found only by using latitude/longitude coordinates.

Forest Rangers have “read-only” permissions to view fire department Wildland reports: they will be able to link their reports to a department’s report within their section of MEFIRS (you won’t be able to see their linked report). The Maine Forest Service will be happy to share their reports with a fire department, but they will have to email it to you. They cannot provide direct access in MEFIRS to their linked report because of law enforcement concerns. Please contact your local Forest Ranger if you need a copy of their report.

Hints for Fire or Fire/EMS Agency Administrators:

How to add a person to your roster who won’t be doing reports

In the **Account Details** tab of the person’s MEFIRS account, set their Permission Group as “Driver”. This will allow the person to show up on a fire run form, but they won’t be able to create run reports. Make sure to hit the green “**SAVE**” button when you are done.

How to adjust the User list to see certain people or permission groups

Using the different buttons at the **top of the User list**, you can select who you want to show up in the list. For example: if you don’t want to see System Administrators in the list, but need to see your users who are Agency Users or Drivers, you can choose those permissions groups in the drop-down list next to the “**Permissions Group**” field and then choose the blue “**GO**” button in that grey bar on the right side. The list will automatically adjust to show just those people in the Agency User or Drivers permission groups. To quickly see only those people who show up in the EMS run form, select “YES” in the “**Show in EMS Run Form**” button selection and then choose the blue “**GO**” button. I don’t believe the list can be “frozen” into a certain selection at this time: you would have to make your adjustments when you open the User list.

If you need to keep the User list showing the groups you have chosen, but also need to open a certain person’s account in that modified list: right-click on the person’s name and choose “open link in new tab”. The person’s information will show up in a separate tab in the browser (click on the new tab to see what’s in it). Make your updates in the person’s account, click the green SAVE button, and then close the tab (click the “X” on the tab) and you will be taken back to your User list that still shows just the groups you have chosen.

How to activate people so they can use inspection forms

** People need to be activated in their accounts if they are going to use Inspection forms as part of a department’s use of the Locations/Occupants/Inspections modules.

1. In a person’s **Employment** tab, in the “**Other Duties as Assigned**” box, in the **Inspector** line- click the “Yes” button to allow the person to use an Inspection form. Make sure to hit the green “**SAVE**” button when you are done.
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How to unlock someone's MEFIRS account so they can log in

Go to their fire department, click on the person's name in the User list, choose their **Account Details** tab, go down to Login Access, choose "**Yes**" to unlock them, and hit the green "**SAVE**" button.

***Note: neither FMO nor the Maine EMS people will unlock a user's account, because there may be a very good reason why that user has been locked out and we wouldn't know about it. That's why it is the local Fire Agency Administrators who must unlock a user's account- so there won't be any mix-ups.

How to deactivate someone so they can't access your department's MEFIRS account

Click on the person's name in the User list for your department, choose their **Account Details** tab, go down to Agency Status, choose the "**Inactive**" button, and hit the green "SAVE" button. This will prevent the person from accessing your department's MEFIRS account, but it will let them access other Fire/EMS department MEFIRS accounts they have access to.

How to make the FMO Incident List View the default for your department's fire report list

Go into the drop-down list under your department's name, choose "**Configuration**", and then choose "**Incident List Views**". Click on the arrow on the far-right side of the row that contains the "FMO Fire Incident List". When the Configuration window opens, click on the drop-down arrow on the "MORE" button on the upper right side of the page, and choose "Make this your default view" and click the green "**SAVE**" button.

When you go back into your Incident List, the "FMO Fire Incident List" should be the default view (it has a black star next to it) and you shouldn't have to change views in the future.

How to set up your supporting agencies for Mutual Aid, Transfer/Transport, etc.

1. In your department's Resources tab, choose "**Supporting Agencies & Units**". When the list loads, you will see all the agencies that are in MEFIRS. There are over 500 of them in the system, so you will eventually use the "forward" and "back" buttons down in the bottom right corner to flip through the list.
2. Click on the grey section of the "**Name**" column, so the list of agencies will sort alphabetically.
3. The easiest way to manage this process is to inactivate all the agencies on a page and then activate only the ones on the page that your department works with. So, you would go to the far-right column called "Status" and click the "Inactive-Select All" box: this should turn all the buttons underneath to "Inactive". Then you can look at the list on that page and click the green "Active" button in that "Status" column for any fire department your department uses as mutual aid, etc. Some choices will be greyed out because your department won't have access to certain agencies.
4. Now you can click within each column of an agency's row and choose YES or NO for each category that the agency may work in with your department. For example, if Acton Fire-Rescue only does Mutual Aid for your department, all the **BLUE** buttons in its row will be set to **NO**, except for the **Mutual Aid Dept.** button, which will be set to **YES**. Click the green "SAVE" button in the upper right corner of the list before you

move to the next page. Remember to use the “forward” and “back” buttons down in the bottom right corner to flip through the list.

How to add an agency location to a fire report for call attendance data

1. In your department’s Resources tab, choose “**Agency Locations**”.
 2. Click on the “+ **New**” button to add an agency location, and fill out at least the first 4 fields in the form (make sure to fill in the Agency Location # field)
 3. Click the green “**SAVE**” button in the upper right corner of the page. The location will show up in your Incident reports under “Primary Station” so you can choose it for the report. You must choose a Primary Location in each fire report in order for your personnel to get credit for time/pay they did for the incident.
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How to adjust the auto numbering field in a fire report

You can adjust the “NFIRS Compliant Number” in your fire reports. This is the read-only number that NFIRS receives for your fire incidents when Michelle exports files to the NFIRS database. This can be adjusted in your department’s main tab, under **Configuration/Auto Number/Fire Auto Number**. You can modify the “NFIRS Compliant Number” in two ways:

1. In the **Fire Auto Number** section, you can choose to have the system automatically generate an “NFIRS Compliant Number” based on a setup that you choose. These are the steps to take:
 - a. Set the “NFIRS Compliant Number” to **Auto-Generate**
 - b. Adjust the fields to the format you want (remember that the “NFIRS Compliant Number” cannot be larger than 7 digits)
 - c. Preview the auto-generated number and adjust accordingly
2. In the **Fire Auto Number** section, you can choose to have the system automatically generate an “NFIRS Compliant Number” based on your department’s Incident Number (this is the number for your fire incidents that is either assigned by CAD or you choose to manually type in-and it’s also known as “Other System Number”). **Use this choice if your department’s Incident Numbers have special characters (like dashes) or letters**. These are the steps to take:
 - a. Set the “NFIRS Compliant Number” to **Generate from Other System Number**
 - b. Enter a sample number to preview it (remember that the final “NFIRS Compliant Number” cannot be larger than 7 digits)

*** More information on how to do this can be found in the Help/University under the CONTENTS tab--- Incident Settings---General Incident Settings---Auto Numbers---Fire Auto Numbers.

How to Add Apparatus and Personnel in the Apparatus Power Tool

Setting up apparatus to use in the Apparatus Power Tool

** To view the current list of vehicles in your department, go to the **Resources** drop-down list at the top of your department's account, then choose **Vehicles & Call signs**. Critical fields that need to be completed for a vehicle's setup include the *Fire Apparatus Type* and *Fire Apparatus Primary Use* fields.

*** You can view Apparatus setup information in the Help/University in the CONTENTS tab, by going to System/Agency Setup---Resources---Vehicles and Call Signs. ***You have to set up the Apparatus first before you can use them in the Apparatus Power Tool.***

Using the Apparatus Power Tool to add an apparatus to the report

1. Select the Apparatus Power Tool icon in the lower right corner of the fire run report.
2. You will see a blank Apparatus screen. Choose the "New" button.
3. Then a list of Apparatus appears. Select the one you want.
4. Activity details for that Apparatus will appear. Choose activities for this apparatus. Then choose the "Edit Details" button on the right side of the screen in the gray Apparatus bar.
5. Choose the Apparatus Type in the first row of buttons (if the Type isn't already filled in). Fill in any other information for this apparatus (response mode, times, narrative). Be sure to click on the green "**Save**" button on the upper right side of screen when you are done. You will be returned to the Apparatus Power Tool main page.

Adding personnel to an apparatus in the Apparatus Power Tool

******You have to set up your Users in your department and make sure they can be viewed in a Fire Run Report before they can be used in the Apparatus Power Tool (see my document online "How to Add or Inactivate a Person's MEFIRS Account" located at: <https://www.maine.gov/dps/fmo/about/incident-reporting>).***

1. In the Apparatus Power Tool, choose an apparatus and click on the "Edit Apparatus" button assigned to it.
2. To add Personnel to this apparatus, you click on the "Edit Details" button in the "Current Personnel" white row. Then you will see a screen where you choose "Add Personnel" button, and then you will be able to choose the Personnel that were on this apparatus for this incident. Choose the green "**Save**" button.
3. Choose the "Back" button to go to the "Edit Current Personnel" page with the new personnel added. Fill in the information for this person. Choose the "**Save**" button will take you back to the Apparatus Power Tool main page. Choose "OK" on the Power Tool main page to go back to the fire incident form.

*** You can find more step-by-step guidance in the Help/University in the CONTENTS tab: Documenting Incidents---Power Tools---Using the Apparatus Power Tool.

Documenting Apparatus for Standby vs. Dispatch Events

If you are trying to document a standby situation in the station, it is recommended that you document the equipment that is in standby mode (engine, tanker, etc.) and these should have Fire Apparatus Type fields filled out (from when you originally set up the apparatus). Then add the personnel who are standing by with the apparatus.

If you have a couple of people who stay in the station and man the radios for dispatch (as happened with a fire department during a recent windstorm), you would use the Incident Type plus-one code 5711, the Actions Taken plus-one code 921, and you would use apparatus coded as personal vehicles; list the apparatus' Actions Taken as 70- (Assistance, Other) and then add the personnel for each personal vehicle.