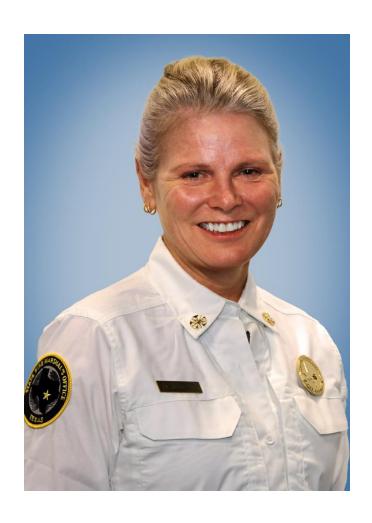


#### **Chief Debra Knight**



- State Fire Marshal
- Doctor of Jurisprudence South Texas College of Law
- Colonel, United States Army Retired in 2014
- FEMA Region VI Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officer
- Former Deputy Commissioner Compliance and Investigations, Division of Worker's Comp
- 30+ years of experience in administrative and criminal law, and insurance and compliance analysis.





#### **Assistant Chief Chuck Allen**





- Bachelor's Degree from West Texas A&M in Emergency Management
- Master's Degree from Grand Canyon in Leadership with Emphasis in Disaster Preparedness and Executive Fire Leadership
- Master Fire Inspector and Fire/Arson Investigator
- Master Peace Officer
- Certified Fraud Examiner
- Former County Fire Marshal/EMC
- Over 30 years of public safety (Municipal, County, and State)
- TFMA-Board of Directors and Assistant Chaplain
- Enjoy cruising with family and friends
- Sports official for high school athletics and serve as interim pastor at Calvary Baptist Church

**State Fire Marshal's Office** 

#### **Mission and Function**

#### Mission

The Texas State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO) will reduce the loss of life and property through prevention, education, and protection.

#### **Function**

• The primary function of SFMO is to reduce the risk and impact of fire.



# Licensing Administration



#### Licensing Administration Numbers

• Permits/Licenses Issued: 13,464

- Fireworks Permits Issued: 2,429
- Sprinkler Licenses Issued: 2,541
- Fire Alarm Licenses Issued: 5,559
- Fire Extinguisher Licenses Issued: 2,935



## **Licensing Administration Contact**

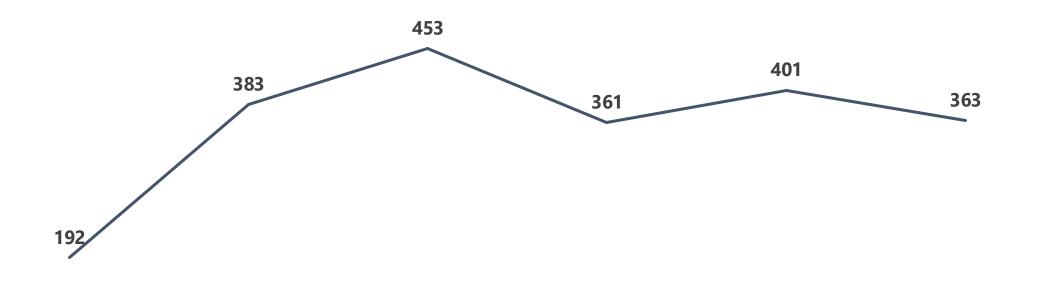




## Public Protection Classification (PPC)



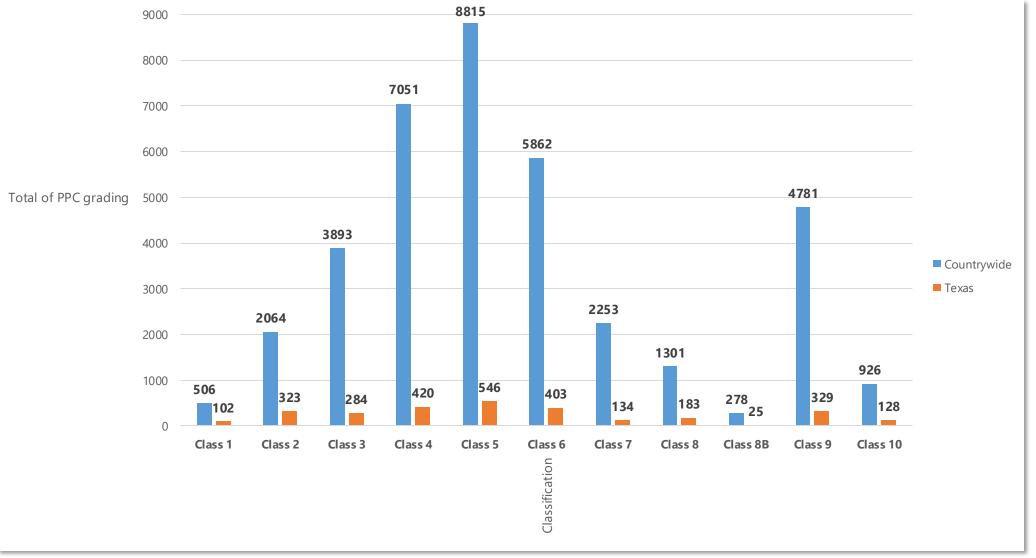
## PPC submittals by year



FY 19 FY 20 FY 21 FY 22 FY 23 FY 24

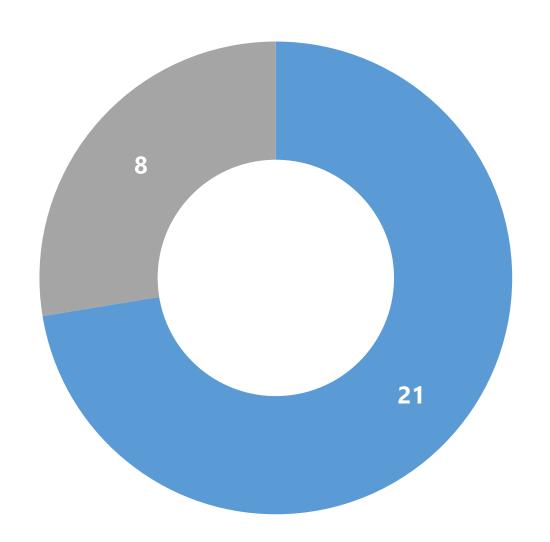
State Fire Marshal's Office

### Texas vs USA gradings



Class	In Texas
Class 1	20.3%
Class 2	15.6%
Class 3	7%
Class 4	6%
Class 5	6%
Class 6	7%
Class 7	6%
Class 8	9%
Class 8B	14%
Class 9	7%
Class 10	14%

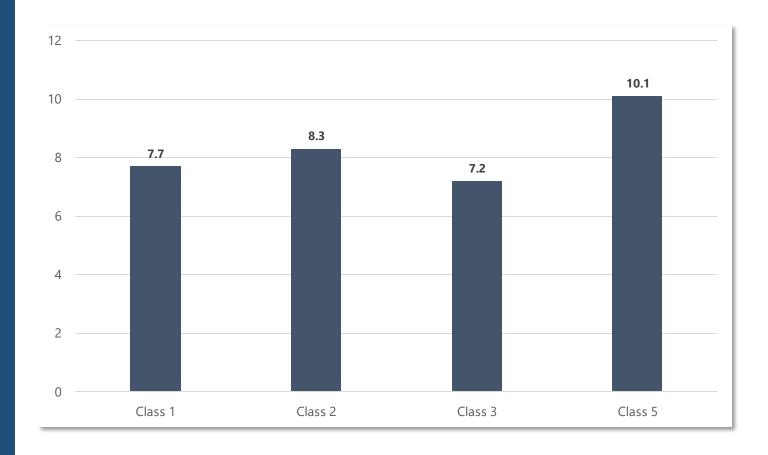
# Class 1 gradings in FY 2024



Maintained Class 1

■ New Class 1

# Average time between surveys 8.3 years



#### SFMO PPC Oversight Section

Oversees PPC surveys statewide.

Monitor ISO's evaluation process and submittals.

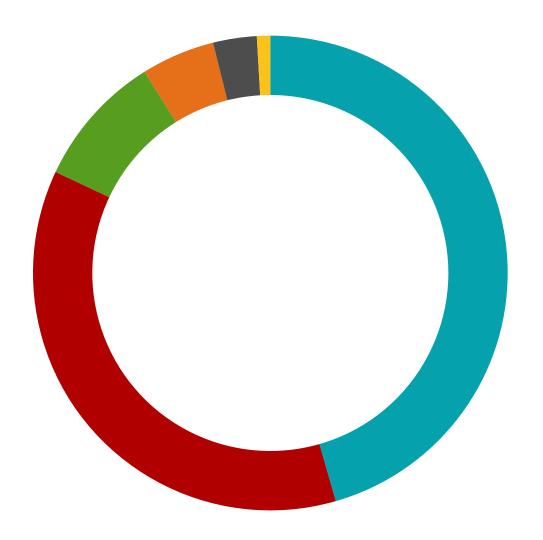
Mediates appeals.

Approve/disapprove assessment criteria and findings.

Assists fire departments and municipalities.



#### **FSRS Point Value**



#### Maximum points by category

Туре	Points
Fire departments	50.00
Water supply and distribution	40.00
■ Emergency communications	10.00
Community risk reduction	5.50
■ Texas exception: training*	3.26
Texas exception: compressed air foam system	1.00

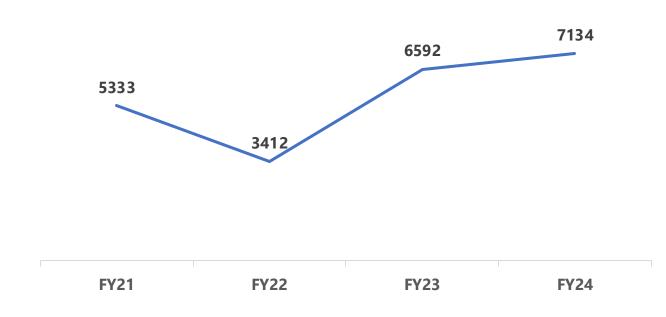


# Fire Inspections

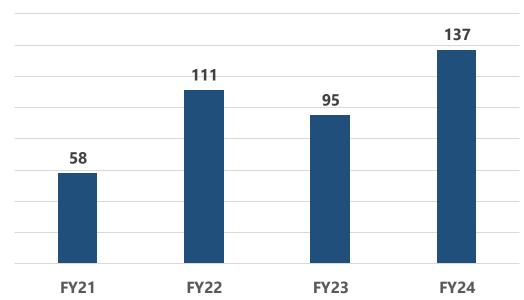


#### Inspections

#### **Buildings inspected or reinspected**



#### **Square feet inspected (in millions)**





#### Inspections in FY 2024

- 7,134 buildings inspected
  - 137 million square feet
- 6 full campus inspections
  - 293 buildings; 6 million square feet
- Completed Texas A&M and UT Austin Campus Inspections



#### **County Fire Marshals**

• Local Government Code 352.016 (b) In the interest of safety and fire prevention, the county fire marshal may inspect for fire or life safety hazards any structure, appurtenance, fixture, or real property located within 500 feet of a structure, appurtenance, or fixture. The marshal shall inspect a structure for fire or life safety hazards if called on to do so. In the absence of a county fire code, the county fire marshal may conduct an inspection using any nationally recognized code or standard adopted by the state. If the marshal determines the presence of a fire or life safety hazard, the marshal may order the owner or occupant of the premises to correct the hazardous situation. If ordered to do so, an owner or occupant shall correct the hazardous situation in accordance with the order.



#### Complaints

- State Fire Marshal will inspect in unincorporated areas on a complaint or when a facility needs a fire inspection for a state license (considered a fee-based).
- 14 fire inspectors scattered across Texas.
- People assume they do not have to conform to a fire or life safety code.
- Local Fire Officials without an adopted code instruct the citizens there is no adopted code, when in fact there is in the event of a complaint.
- We can develop a program to inspect certain types of occupancies if we determine that we are having certain issues in a particular occupancy.

  State Fire Marshal's Office

## **Eagle Pass Complaint**







# **Complaint Continued**





**State Fire Marshal's Office** 

#### Complaints

- Misinformation leads to fire injuries and deaths.
- County Fire Marshals may use the current state adopted code -Local Government Code 352.016 (b).
- Lack of buildings with the required features of fire protection as required by the fire/life safety codes.
- If a complaint is received by the SFMO, and dangerous conditions are identified, the facility may end up spending hundreds or thousands of dollars to retrofit to bring the facility up to code at the time it was built.



#### The Word!!

- While there is no plan reviews or permitting performed by the SFMO, there is a nationally recognized fire and life safety code to be followed.
- No matter where you live in Texas, if there is no local authority, then the codes adopted for inspection by the SFMO would be the codes required to be followed.
- Contact your local city office or county judge office to determine if there is a local fire marshal or adopted fire/life safety code.
- If not, then the adopted codes of the SFMO shall be followed.



### Helpful Point!!

- If someone plans to build in an unincorporated area, they are strongly encouraged to have a third-party inspector review and conduct inspections before and during construction to avoid problems later.
- Ensures all systems are code compliant, including plumbing, electrical, a fire protection systems, construction, etc.



#### **State-Owned or Leased**

- Local Government Code 417.0081. Inspection of State-Owned or State-Leased Buildings
  - Shall periodically inspect public buildings under the charge of a state agency or buildings leased by a state agency.
  - Assign a safety risk to each building.
  - Provide a report to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House, and appropriate standing committees of the legislature on the findings of the inspections.
  - Estimated 20,000 buildings we are responsible for.



# Fire Protection Industry Licensing Investigations



# Industry licensing and investigations







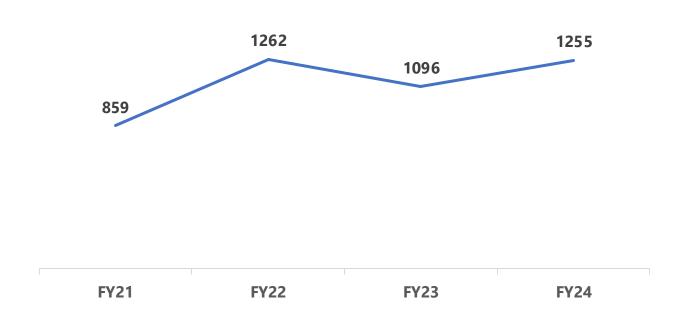


- Regulates the planning, selling, installing, certifying, and servicing of fire extinguisher, fire alarm, and fire sprinkler systems.
- Regulates the sale and display of fireworks.
- Statewide registration and licensing of firms and individuals who provide these services.
- Conducts investigations of fire alarm, extinguisher, and sprinkler systems. This section also inspects fireworks stands to ensure compliance with adopted safety standards.

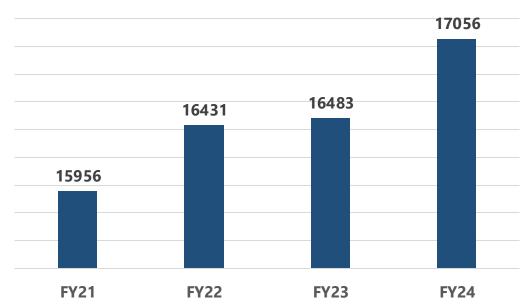
**State Fire Marshal's Office** 

## Industry licensing and investigations

#### Total investigations and inspections of fire protection and fireworks industries



#### Licenses, registrations, and permits issued





### Dealing with State Agencies

- Systems be installed per code.
- Any deviations from code must be approved by SFMO.
- Fire alarm/fire sprinkler system notification and delaying response of fire department.
- If state agency wants you to do something different, notify SFMO.



#### Local AHJs

 You shall communicate and coordinate with the local fire marshal's office.

 You shall notify the local AHJ via the means established to report red and yellow tag/label notifications.

 If there is no local AHJ, and you have a red/yellow notification, you can submit it to SFMO at <u>FireInspection@tdi.texas.gov</u>



#### **Use of Contractors**

Must be a regular employee

Can contract with another licensed and certified firm.

If you wont allow that company to work, that is between you and them, not a licensing issue. Unless the firm or licensee has broken our rules.



### Licensing Investigations

- Have to report to SFMO, improperly completed certificate of materials.
- If you allow distraction devices for lockdown drills, have plan to deal with alarm systems.
- Improper implemented positive sequence alarms and not reporting to central station.
- We do not write legislation, we enforce it.
- Locals have power to issue and rescind permits.
- Appear to be out of the supply chain pipeline problems.



#### Licensing Investigations FY24

- Initiated 1,255 investigations or inspections.
- Conducted several compliance inspections.
- Filed several criminal cases.
- Referred several cases to Enforcement.
- SOAH Hearings.



# Fire Investigations



# Fire and explosion investigations



- Fire Investigations
  - Origin and cause investigations
  - Accelerant detection canine unit
- Firefighter fatality investigations
- Forensic Science Commission/Science Advisory Workgroup



#### Request contacts

• Fire Investigations - 512-676-6780

• Drones - 512-676-6780

• Licensing Investigations - 512-676-6802

• Fire Inspections - 512-676-6795



#### **FY 24 Statistics**

- Fire Investigations Initiated: 383
- Canine Only: 65
- Undetermined: 172
- Fatality Fires: 60 (17% of investigations, several were multiple fatality)
- Incendiary: 42
- Accidental: 68
- Under Investigation: 123
- Criminal Charges Filed: 13
- Assist Only (no O/C): 42



## Fire Investigations

#### The SFMO investigation team can assist you with:

- Drone Operations
- Body recovery
- Scene safety
- Diagramming
- On scene interviews
- Fire debris removal
- Fire pattern analysis
- Interview/Interrogation
- Two sets of eyes often better than one set



## Wildland Fire Investigations



- F110-29 fire investigators completed the course put on by Texas Forest Service
- F210-35 fire investigators will attend in the coming weeks.

 Augment Texas Forest Service wildland fire investigations



# Canine



#### **Accelerant detection canines**



The SFMO Canine team locates and collects evidence on a fire scene.

The team can also assist with:

- Scene safety
- Diagramming
- On scene interviews
- Fire debris removal
- Fire pattern analysis



#### **New Canine-Linus**



- Handler-Thomas Cooley
- Master Trainer-David Rives

- Second Master Trainer-2025-Tommy Hubertus
- Retired Canine Willie in December.

#### **Drone assistance**



 SFMO deploys drones for scene documentation and other investigation/inspection assistance.

FAA-107 Pilot Certified.

 Available for local response to assist AHJ.



#### **FY 24 Statistics**

- 225 Flights
- Assisted with several lost or wanted persons
- Assisted with Blue Alert a couple weeks ago for DPS
- We are statutorily required to submit a report to the Office of the Governor bi-annually in the odd numbered years.





## Firefighter fatality investigations



If a firefighter dies in the line of duty or if the firefighter's death occurs in connection with an on-duty incident in this state, the state fire marshal shall investigate the circumstances surrounding the death of the firefighter, including any factors that may have contributed to the death of the firefighter.



### **Firefighter Fatality Investigations**



In conducting an FFF investigation, the state fire marshal has the same powers as those granted generally to the state fire marshal under Section 417.007 of the Texas Government Code

The state fire marshal shall coordinate the investigative efforts of local government officials and may enlist established fire service organizations and private entities to assist in the investigation

# Firefighter Fatality Investigations

















These investigations are conducted in cooperation with fire-service organizations such as, but not limited to, the State Firefighter's & Fire Marshals' Association, Texas Fire Chiefs Association, Texas State Association of Firefighters, Texas Fire Marshal's Association, Texas Commission on Fire Protection, Texas A&M Forest Service, Texas Chapter International Association of Arson Investigators, and Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service.





### The Investigation Process



- Notification of an FFF/Critical Injury
- Scene response-if Fire Suppression related or warranted
- Origin and Cause Investigation-if warranted
- FFF Investigation
  - Tactics Review
- The FFF Report
- FFF Annual Report



### Firefighter Fatality-When to Notify

If you have a critically injured firefighter or death, immediately notify the SFMO.

Need to secure all their equipment.

Need to be able to document apparatus and hose placements if suppression related.

Calling 512-676-6780 will get immediate response from SFMO.



### **Critical Injuries-Notification ASAP**



Severe Burns



Multi-System Trauma



Heart Attack/Stroke where on life supports



Any injury or illness that is defined as critical by medical staff



#### **Suicides**

Increasing number of both on duty and off duty suicides

Currently no tracking of suicides in the fire service

Notify the SFMO of any suicide whether they were on duty or off duty.



## SFMO Response

#### We will

- Communicate with other State Partners
  - Texas LODD Task Force
  - Texas Fire Chiefs Association
- Communicate with the Department

Note: The SFMO response for firefighter fatalities may vary greatly. For example, a medical incident at the station will not usually warrant the same response as a FFF while engaged in fire suppression operations





#### After SFMO notification

- Secure the Scene
  - Establish a security perimeter with the assistance of local Law Enforcement
- Notify next of Kin, in person
  - Follow your department SOP

**NOTE:** If a fire is determined to have been intentionally set, the death of a firefighter or civilian may lead to a homicide investigation, where every bit of evidence is important, and must be protected.



- Do not disturb the scene except to the extent necessary to complete extinguishment of any fire.
- Do not conduct any salvage and overhaul operations other than that required to complete extinguishment.
   Attempt to leave furnishings and building contents in their original location.



 Do not move any firefighting hand tools, hose lines, or other portable equipment in the area of the incident.





Any personal equipment removed in resuscitation efforts away from the incident scene should be collected, handled carefully, and stored in a secure, locked location. Any equipment that is wet should be allowed to air dry.







## Firefighter Recovery

- If the body must be removed from the scene prior to the arrival of the SFMO investigative team, please photograph the location of the body and surrounding area before removal.
- Do not mark the body location with paint-it may cause false positives for flammable liquids if samples of fire debris are taken.
- SFMO prefers that our Investigators are present to document the deceased and surrounding area.



## Autopsy

 Misconception that an autopsy must be performed to be eligible for Public Safety Officer Benefit (PSOB).

 In the case of a medical death, it is presumed that the death occurred on duty because of the actions they were taking at work.

Death certificate is required for PSOB.



### **Tactics Review Team**

- The team will be responsible for reviewing and analyzing all aspects of the fire suppression response during a FFF that occurs on a fire scene.
- Shall provide invaluable assistance in evaluating and better understanding the events and circumstances that led to the FFF.
- The team will provide a written report of their findings and recommendations to the FFF Coordinator.
- The team will review incidents in which a fire department has experienced an FFF.



## **Firefighter Fatality Review Panel**



After completion of the FFF Report, the Review Panel will

- Provide suggestions
- Feedback
- Critical Insight into the
  - Findings
  - Recommendations
  - Overall Report Content



# Firefighter Fatality Report Process

- Initial Draft Report
- Review by FFF Review Panel
- Administrative Review
- Chief Officer Review
- Preparation of Final Report
- FFF Investigation Report Distribution



# Firefighter fatality investigations

- Lt. Todd Johse
  - 512-676-6780- Main
  - 512-417-7385-Cell
- Chief Chuck Allen
  - 512-417-7443

- Chief Debra Knight
  - 512-567-8482





### **FY 24 Statistics**

- 4 FFF Investigations Initiated
- 1- Responding to station
- 3- Medical



# Firefighter fatality investigations



FY 2024 Firefighter Fatality Annual Report is available:

https://www.tdi.texas.gov/fire/documents/fmff f2024.pdf





# Texas Fire Incident Reporting System (TEXFIRS)



#### **NFIRS**

- The current National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) is being replaced with a newer, more complete system that will improve data quality and be easier to use that is called the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS).
- Texas has utilized the USFA's NFIRS reporting system, without modification, for Texas fire incident data.
- Incident reporting in Texas, and therefore participation in NFIRS/NERIS, is not state-mandated, however, fire departments that receive AFG grants must report during the grant's period of performance. If a grantee stops reporting during their grant period of performance, their award may be modified or withdrawn.
- Texas fire departments are encouraged to participate in the NERIS.



## **NFIRS**

#### **Legacy System NFIRS**

#### **NFIRS Begins**

America Burning released in 1973 lead to the establishments of USFA in 1974 with the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act in 1974. NFIRS launches in 1975.



1985



First public release of NFIRS collected data.

#### **NFIRS 5.0**

NFIRS becomes an "all-hazard" data collection system with the addition of EMS data, wildfire data, and juvenile firesetter module.



2025



#### **Sunsetting NFIRS**

Driven by security concerns, outdated data models, and costs in maintaining code base, at the start of calendar year 2026, NFIRS will sunset, and decommissioning will begin.



#### **NERIS**

- A user experience and walkthrough demo of NERIS V1 was provided via a webinar October 29, 2024.
- 100 fire departments nationwide were chosen for the NERIS Version 1 launch in November of 2024. Three of the departments were from Texas (Frisco (prototype), Hutto and San Antonio).
- January 2025, Fire Marshal Offices Nationwide were invited to USFA's National Fire Academy for training and onboarding into NERIS.
- This month, March 2025, an additional 350+ fire departments who were "early adopter" departments from 2024 will onboard.
- In May 2025, fire departments will begin onboarding to NERIS in phases by FEMA regions.
- Texas/FEMA Region 6 is scheduled to onboard July 2025.



#### **NERIS**

The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) in collaboration with U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate (S&T), and the Fire Safety Research Institute (FSRI) team is conducting the transition from NFIRS to NERIS on a very short and tight timeline.





#### **NERIS**

#### **Regional Roll-Out Schedule**

Month in 2025	# of Fire	e Departments
May		
FEMA Reg	ion 2	2,385
June		
FEMA Reg	ion 4	5,009
July		
FEMA Reg	ion 6	3,632
August		
FEMA Reg	ion 7	2,400
September		
FEMA Reg	ion 3	3,080
October		
FEMA Regions 1	& 10	2,496
November		
FEMA Regions	8 & 9	2,701
December		
FEMA Reg	ion 5	5,460

<sup>\*</sup>Dates and timeline are subject to change.

Texas fire departments will receive an email invitation into NERIS from NERIS Registration during the designated phase for Texas.

## NFIRS TO NERIS TRANSITION

- NFIRS is planned for sunset and decommissioning January 2026.
- NFIRS data from 1998 to 2025 will not be transferred to NERIS.
- NERIS will not connect with historical NFIRS data.
- NFIRS historical data (1980 –2025) will only be available through the Public Data Release (PDR) on OpenFEMA. <a href="https://www.fema.gov/about/openfema/data-sets/fema-usfa-nfirs-annual-data">https://www.fema.gov/about/openfema/data-sets/fema-usfa-nfirs-annual-data</a>
- Data for 2024 and 2025 will be packaged and released on OpenFEMA.



## NFIRS TO NERIS TRANSITION

#### Data Preparation for NFIRS to NERIS Transition

- 2024 incidents must be in NFIRS and released by April 1, 2025.
- 2025 incidents must be in NFIRS and released by January 31, 2026
- Fire departments who exclusively use eNFIRS for incident reporting will want to use the Export Incidents Utility or the Data Warehouse Excel Export report to retrieve their historical raw incident data from NFIRS for record retention purposes.
- Fire departments who begin reporting incident data into NERIS should not also report to NFIRS. DO NOT REPORT IN BOTH SYSTEMS. Contact <u>FEMA-NFIRSHELP@fema.dhs.gov</u> with any questions.
- All fire departments nationwide, starting January 1, 2026, will exclusively submit incident data in NERIS.



#### **NFIRS TO NERIS TRANSITION**

#### Call for Action: Records Retrieval

- Ensure your fire department understands the local records retention policies and confirm how you are implementing and complying with those policies for fire incident reports/records.
- Determine if your department is "at risk" and may need to download your historical incident records from NFIRS.
- Establish a download schedule to meet your local or state records retention requirements and policy be completed by end of November 2026.
- Fire departments who maintain their incident records via a Records Management System (RMS) or other local storage may not have to retrieve data from NFIRS.



#### STAY INFORMED

To stay updated, sign up for our email list:



To learn more about NERIS, visit our program page:



Watch the NERIS DEMO:

NERIS Demo- Published by FSRI -Presented by Craig Weinshenk, Ph.D, NERIS Principal Investigator, Fire Safety Research Institute

NERIS CONTACTS: FSRI.org/programs/NERIS NERIS@ul.org



# Who will be able to access the NERIS platform? Is it free?

Access to the NERIS platform will be provided at no cost to verified fire departments, first responders, and emergency response teams.

In addition to fire department access, aggregated analytical views and API data services will be available at no cost to other authorized stakeholders, such as state and federal agencies, for research, analysis, and policy development. Overall, the aim is to make NERIS a comprehensive, secure, and accessible platform for all key stakeholders.



#### Will individual firefighters input data into NERIS?

Yes. NERIS will be designed for easy data entry with a focus on a clean, intuitive, and mobile-friendly user experience. The NERIS data capture app will be accessible on mobile devices, tablets, laptop, and desktop computers. The NERIS website will be accessible on a web browser using any type of internet connection.

Further, to help minimize data entry by firefighters, NERIS will be able to consume data services from local CAD and RMS providers. For departments without CAD or RMS, the NERIS-provided data capture application will be available. Our goal is to minimize duplicative data entry through seamless API data integrations from CAD and RMS providers, as well as providing a simple and easy NERIS-provided data capture application.

# So, I will be able to use my smartphone or tablet, as well as a desktop computer?

Precisely. NERIS is being designed with a mobile-first approach and will be compatible with various operating systems, any type of internet connection, various web browsers, and is fully accessible across all types of devices including desktop and laptop computers, smartphones, and tablets.



# Will we be able to pull data from this new system ourselves? What analytical tools or resources may be available to the end user?

Yes, authorized users will be able to directly access data in NERIS via tailored views and dashboards for their department. Your data will also be available as interoperable data services via APIs in multiple formats. This will allow you to perform advanced queries more easily, enabling easy integration with other software and systems you may use for analysis and reporting. Our goal is a user-friendly and efficient data access experience.



# Will NERIS be designed to integrate with existing third-party RMS and CAD systems?

Yes, NERIS is being engineered to consume data from existing, local CAD and RMS systems in use today.

Local fire departments interested in ensuring applicable data form their CAD and/or RMS provider automatically feeds to NERIS should begin talking with their providers. CAD and RMS providers are encouraged to review and use the most current versions of the NERIS Data Schemas (Entity Specification, CAD interface, and Incident Data schemas) to understand how data elements align across different modules and will include all necessary element definitions, as well as API documentation and example payloads. The beta versions of these three schemas are slated for public release in May 2024.

#### **TEXFIRS Contact Information**



Texas State Fire Marshal Office
Texas Fire Incident Reporting Program (TEXFIR)
State Program Manager
O: (512) 676-6800; option 7 | D: (512) 676-6787

<u>TEXFIRS@tdi.Texas.gov</u>

<u>Cecilia Munoz@tdi.texas.gov</u>



#### **Contact SFMO**

Main

**Media Relations** 

**Fire & Life Safety Inspections** 

**Licensing Administration** 

**Licensing Investigations** 

**Fire/Arson Investigations** 

**Outreach, Policy, and Research** 

**TEXFIRS** 

**PPC Oversight** 

**Open Records** 



512-676-6800, Fire.Marshal@tdi.texas.gov

512-676-6595, MediaRelations@tdi.texas.gov

512-676-6795, FireInspection@tdi.texas.gov

512-676-6800 (option 1), FMLicensing@tdi.texas.gov

512-676-6802, SFMOLicensingInvestigations@tdi.texas.gov

512-676-6780, FireInvestigations@tdi.texas.gov

512-676-6800 (option 2), Fire.Marshal@tdi.texas.gov

512-676-6800 (option 4), TEXFIRS@tdi.texas.gov

512-676-6800 (option 3), PPCOversight@tdi.texas.gov

Openrecords@tdi.texas.gov



