



EMERGENCY REPORTING™

Web-Based Fire & EMS Reporting and Records Management

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Why It's Important To Maintain Good Data

A White Paper by Emergency Reporting



Data integrity -- we all know it's theoretically important, but how can good or bad data really affect your department? In this white paper we'll explore the real world role that data can play in helping or harming your agency.

Defend Your Budget

One of the most important reasons that departments should maintain clean and accurate records is to defend a budget. These days budgets are tight and are becoming more and more data driven. Facts, not feelings will help decision-makers choose future staffing, equipment and apparatus needs.

Data can demonstrate how your agency has impacted the community over the past year and outline the associated costs at each level of protection. For example, if a building worth \$1 million incurred \$100,000 in fire damage before it was extinguished, a department can show that they still made a \$900,000 save. They will also be able to communicate how staffing, technology and other factors played a role in this save and demonstrate the necessity of funding departmental operations.

This information can have a big impact when defending your agency against budget cuts or requesting additional funding.

Meet the Needs of Your Community

Data can help you respond more effectively to the needs of your community. What kind of calls are you really running? Where is the optimal location for your next station? By accurately tracking your incidents and occupancies your agency can better understand the community it serves and plan for the future.

Using reporting tools, which are common in most modern day reporting systems, an agency can more easily identify hazards that exist in the community and determine if they are equipped to provide a sufficient level of service. Additionally, programs that assist in OVAP scoring of buildings can help an agency manage the risks in the community and, once mitigated, can help in the process of lowering a city's insurance rating. These systems require a solid data foundation to build upon however, poor data will cause inaccuracies in reporting and in truly assessing community risks.



NFIRS Participation for Grant Eligibility

Another important reason to maintain good records is to participate in NFIRS and thus maintain your agency's eligibility for grant funding. Grants are meant to provide financial assistance to fire departments so that they may enhance their capabilities and provide better service to their communities.

NFIRS requires all data to be submitted in a standard format. If an agency fails to maintain records that are complete and organized, it may be difficult for them to provide all the data



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required by NFIRS. Most good RMS systems allow for easy capture and organization of data for the purposes of NFIRS reporting. If your agency is on a smaller budget, check with different vendors as many offer incident records management packages at a lower cost than the full station management software.

Set Department Trends

Maintaining high quality data allows your agency to set the trends in your area rather than just trying to follow them. As the saying goes, you can't change what you can't measure. Accurate record-keeping is essential

for tracking and measuring everything from standards of cover to your agency's inventory and maintenance schedule.

Getting the full picture from your data helps your agency gain organizational insights which can lead to actionable steps for improvement. Whether this means your department will have complete incident reports or will always have the supplies you need on hand, setting and meeting your own organizational goals will improve operational efficiencies within your department, if you are able to measure your starting and ending points accurately.

Start Maintaining Good Data Today

For all the reasons listed above and many more, it's important to maintain accurate records. In the past complete record keeping used to be a time-consuming chore, but with the advancements in technology over the past decade, good data is easy to track and maintain. Starting today, work with the personnel at your agency to set guidelines and standards for data entry and agency reporting.





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About Emergency Reporting

Emergency Reporting is a web-based provider of fire & EMS reporting and records management software that supports more than 75,000 users world-wide including many Department of Defense agencies.

The Emergency Reporting system is powerful and easy to use. This affordable system is web-based so your data is always mobile -- login online via a secure connection from any device. Emergency Reporting provides automatic database backup, seamless system updates and world-class support. Allowing unlimited concurrent users means that our customers never have to worry about seat licenses or other hidden fees.

Emergency Reporting was founded in 2003 and is headquartered in Bellingham, WA.