



# HOT TOPICS

The latest news and updates from the North Dakota State Fire Marshal's office



Hallway in an occupied apartment building



## Inspections get interesting!

Some of the things our deputies have spotted have to be seen to be believed.

photos by  
**ND SFM Deputies**



# FIRE MARSHAL MUSINGS

Doug Nelson



Greetings and happy Spring to you all. We have recently closed our Fire Department Certificate of Existence process for the year 2022. We received Certificates of Existence from all fire departments that we have record of, except for three. Our Community Risk Reduction Assistant Marcy Ost helped a great deal with the program this year, and we appreciate her efforts to ensure as

many fire departments as possible completed their certificates.

Also new this year with the Certificate of Existence program is that we began notifying fire departments if they were listed as a class 10 Public Protection Classification (PPC). With the assistance of the Insurance Services Organization (ISO), we were able to notify and work with a number of fire departments to get them in contact with ISO and help address their PPC. This was a reminder to us, that we are all working towards the same goal in the fire service, safer communities in North Dakota, and that it takes a team approach to create the best possible outcomes.

The Century Code that I would like to bring to your attention this month is NDCC 48-01.2-2.1 found [here](#). Under Senate Bill 2347 which was heard in the legislature this session, the threshold for a public building or improvement to require architectural or engineering designs would be raised. I want to ensure that local fire departments and communities are aware of this code and know that it may apply to your local buildings including schools, State buildings, and many other examples. Though building and fire code plan review is still necessary on every project, architects and engineers can help ensure buildings are designed safely and meet minimum code requirements.





# BURNING NEWS FROM THE CHIEF DEPUTY

Kimberly Ersland



As we discussed last month, NFPA 1033 Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Investigations outlines the job performance requirements to meet the standards for fire investigations. Let's look at that a little closer.

Fire science includes fire chemistry. Did you flashback in panic to high school chemistry class when I said that? It might surprise you to know that understanding the fire tetrahedron is part of fire chemistry. Fire science also includes fire dynamics (how a fire develops and spreads), thermometry (the study of temperature measurement) and explosion dynamics. Does that mean we have to have an advanced degree to be able to conduct investigations? No, but we need training, education and to commit to lifelong learning to remain current in the field of fire science.

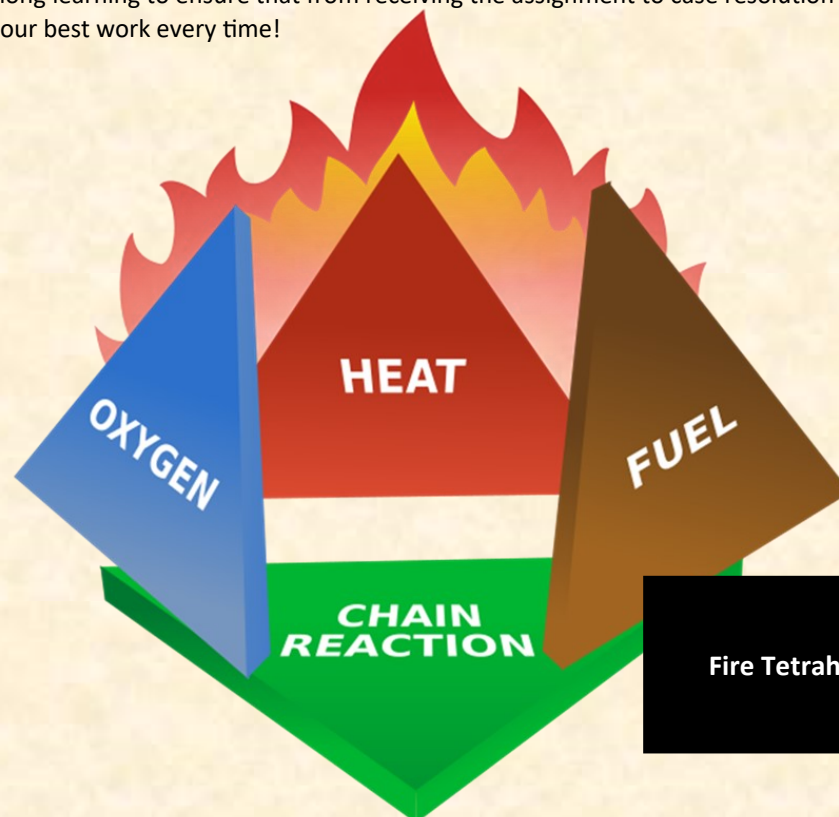
Job Performance Requirement's (JPR) for building systems include construction type, fire protection systems, electrical systems, and fuel gas systems. Understanding all of those factors is necessary to being able to determine flame spread, fire behavior, origin and ultimately cause determination.

You will hear us discuss (many times!) fire scene safety and the JPR's in NFPA 1033 include hazard recognition and mitigation procedures, hazardous materials, and safety regulations. Investigators need to be aware of their surroundings, protect themselves and others, and understand the hazards involved in the investigation. It's not just about physical hazards! But more about that another time 😊

Fire investigation requires knowledge of proper methodology, use of technology and analysis of data collected throughout the investigation. That includes documentation, collection and preservation of evidence. We can't forget that some cases may need to be retained for months or years if involving criminal or civil court proceedings.

Taking the data collection and analysis to create a presentation through report writing and possibly court testimony is never anyone's favorite, but it is a vital part the process. Remember, it is just telling the story!

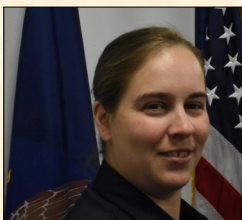
So what does that all mean? You can be an investigator and you can meet the minimum qualifications of NFPA 1033! It's a commitment to training, education and lifelong learning to ensure that from receiving the assignment to case resolution we do our best work every time!





# ON THE ROAD WITH DEPUTY FIRE MARSHAL

Kirstin Greaney-Stanger — District 4



Greeting All,

I am Kirstin Greaney-Stanger, Deputy Fire Marshal out of the Fargo office. I moved to the Fargo area in 2011. I am originally from Rockville, MN where my beginnings in the fire service began with the local volunteer fire department in 2008.

Upon moving to Fargo, I took a leave from the fire service when I started working at Minnesota State University Moorhead with their Public Safety Department as a Sergeant. My leave from the fire service ended in 2019 when I joined the West Fargo Fire Department, where I am currently a part time Captain. I have a bachelor's degree in Community Health and a master's degree in Public Safety Executive Leadership.

I started with the North Dakota Fire Marshal's office in February 2021. I have my Inspector I and Certified Fire Technician certificates. I am working towards my Inspector II and Fire Plans Examiner certificates.

The favorite part of my job is twofold, I enjoy digging into investigations and attempting to place the pieces back together of what happened and why the fire started. I also enjoy working with the local fire departments. Each department has their own viewpoint and

seeing those viewpoints, whether it's in inspections, plan review, or investigations allows for me to serve the fire departments in my district at the level that they deserve.

My favorite piece of equipment to use while on investigations is my Theta 360° camera. Sometimes a fire pattern is too large to effectively obtain with my standard camera. The Theta 360° camera allows for me to obtain one picture of the entire room, including floor and ceiling which captures the pattern as a whole in one photograph instead of a couple photographs.



Theta 360° photo



# ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT AREA

Marcy Ost



Hello again! Hopefully this finds us all inching toward Spring.



In any case—continuing our journey through the Special Programs the North Dakota State Fire Marshal's office administers!

This month we're going to cover one that takes a lot of time every few years and then it's really quiet for a few years—the Emergency Response Guidebook (ERG) program.

According to the US Department of Transportation (DOT) website the ERG “provides first responders with a go-to manual to help deal with hazmat transportation accidents during the critical first 30 minutes.”

Our Standard Operating Guideline (SOG) states *The North Dakota State Fire Marshal's Office will assist the US DOT by distributing information regarding ERGs and physical books to first responders, Emergency Managers, and other organizations identified to be assisted by the use of the ERG's.*

Basically, every four years the US DOT sends us a bunch of ERG's (in 2020 it was over 5,000) and we do our level best to get them distributed. Our goal is to get 90% out the door within the first year and then we keep the remainder for requests that filter in. The vast majority go to counties for distribution on the local level.

It is worth noting there is an app! You can find more info on ERGs and the app [here](#) and while there is only a year left on the current edition we still have some if you need them!



**\* We're adding a new page this month! Check the very last page for the website addresses for the links we've used throughout and additional resources.**

## April Social Media Focus

*Have a Home Fire Drill*

### Suggested posts:

- ◆ Practice what to do in case there is a smoke. Get low and go. Get out fast.
- ◆ Teach children not to hide from firefighters.
- ◆ Practice using different ways out.
- ◆ Practice feeling your way out of the house in the dark or with your eyes closed.
- ◆ Practice your home fire escape drill at least twice a year with everyone in your home. Practice at night and during the daytime.
- ◆ After you have practiced your home fire escape drill, evaluate it and discuss what worked and what needs to be improved. Improve it and practice again.

- ⇒ USFA has Escape Plan outreach materials including graphics [here](#).
- ⇒ Ready.Gov has lots of suggested posts [here](#).
- ⇒ NFPA's Public Education page can be found [here](#).

### Pages you should consider following:

- \* International Association of Fire Fighters
- \* International Association of Fire Chiefs



# FIRE DATA ASSISTANT ZONE

Lydia Citta



Did you know that the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) has a [Guidebook](#) that is helpful for both NFIRS and Emergency Reporting? It explains the fire codes better for understanding. NFIRS also has training videos on how to report in their system. Emergency Reporting also has training videos. Search @emergencyreporting to find them on YouTube. If you are having issues or need help, please feel free to contact us.

## Reminders:

1. The SFM requests all fire injuries, including firefighters, and fatalities be reported to the SFM.

The State Fire Marshal's Office can only accept fires reported in a manner that is compliant and compatible with the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS).

There are four options available to meet this:

- Report fires directly into eNFIRS
- Report using a third party software that is compatible and current with NFIRS
- Report using State (Department of Forestry) contract with Emergency Reporting (ER)
- Report using the NFIRS paper form (acceptable but does not get entered into state or federal database)

Our office will release submitted incident reports into the NFIRS Database monthly.

**If you report fires directly into eNFIRS** (<https://www.nfirs.fema.gov/NFIRSWeb/login>)

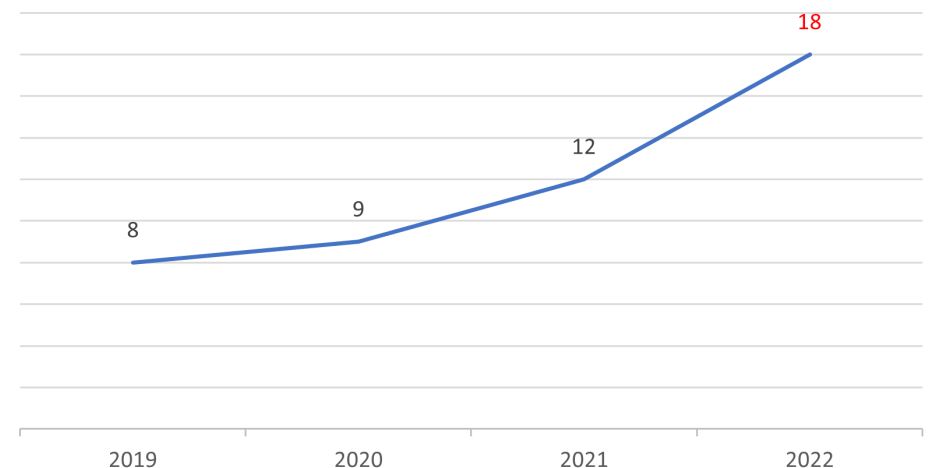
For questions or support for ER (844)253-9337 or [support@emergencyreporting.com](mailto:support@emergencyreporting.com).

2. In Emergency Reporting we have 511 incidents that need to be reviewed for 2022, by you. Check your incidents to make sure all padlocks are green with the status saying 'Reviewed'. This needs to be done as soon as possible.
3. If you have not had any incidents for the month of January or February, please enter those into the NFIRS system or email me!

Have you practiced a home fire drill recently? There have already been 635 fire deaths nationwide in 2023. Last year North Dakota had 18 fatalities due to fire. Most were where the person lived. It's extremely important to know your home layout and where to meet outside.

As firefighters we should be talking to our community about fire drills at home and stressing how important they are.

Fire Fatalities in North Dakota



# MONTHLY REPORTING INSTRUCTIONS

## **If you report fires directly into eNFIRS**

Ensure reports are entered, complete and submitted.

In eNFIRS this means to SAVE a lot and make sure that your incident page says “successful” once complete and saved.

If no fires or incidents occurred in the previous month, please enter a “no activity report” by completing the following steps:

In eNFIRS, click on the “Incidents” Tab

Click “Create Incident” from the dropdown menu

Check/mark the “No Activity” box

Fill both the incident number and exposure fields with zeros.

The incident date field should be the last day of the month of no activity.

SAVE the incident

Now your department/District will count as actively reporting even though no incidents occurred.

## **If you report using a third party software compatible with NFIRS:**

Ensure your reports are entered, complete and submitted.

Submit your incidents to [nfirs@nd.gov](mailto:nfirs@nd.gov) in a .txt file that can be imported into eNFIRS.

We will report back to you with any discrepancies or notification of successfully completed import.

\*FEMA releases NFIRS updates every year in October. It is a good idea to contact your third party software and make sure they are compliant with NFIRS updates.

## **If you report using the State provided contract with Emergency Reporting:**

Ensure your reports are entered, complete and “reviewed” (i.e. the “Lock” Logo is GREEN). If not reviewed, they cannot be released to the SFM’s Office or imported into eNFIRS.

In Emergency Reporting, you MUST ensure that the “Lock” Logo is GREEN in order for your incident to be complete and available for our office to export.

### **• If reporting fires using the NFIRS paper form:**

(acceptable but does not get entered into state or federal database)

Ensure all required modules on report are complete and legible.

Required modules for all fires include:

Basic Module

Fire Module (Wildland Module may be used with this for applicable fires)

Structure Fire Module

Civilian Fire Casualty Module

Fire Service Casualty Module

Mail or email completed paper forms to the State Fire Marshal’s Office.

Paper reports submitted without all required incident information will not be accepted.

For any questions on this process, reporting of fire incidents, or eNFIRS user account assistance, please contact the State Fire Marshal’s Office.

# RESOURCES

Links used (in order of how they're found in the newsletter)

NDCC 48-01.2-2.1 — <https://ndlegis.gov/cencode/t48c01-2.pdf#nameddest=48-01p2-02p1>

ERG — [www.phmsa.dot.gov/training/hazmat/erg/emergency-response-guidebook-erg](http://www.phmsa.dot.gov/training/hazmat/erg/emergency-response-guidebook-erg)

USFA Home Fire Escape Plan Outreach Materials — [www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/outreach/escape.html](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/outreach/escape.html)

Ready.Gov — [www.ready.gov/home-fires](http://www.ready.gov/home-fires)

NFPA Public Education page — [www.nfpa.org/Public-Education](http://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education)

NFIRS Documentation (Reference Guide) — [www.usfa.fema.gov/nfirs/documentation/](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/nfirs/documentation/)

USFA's Digital Media Library has social media toolkits, an image gallery, b-roll footage and pictographs. Pictographs can help overcome literacy barriers by communicating fire safety messages with pictures like the series below.

