



HOT TOPICS

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

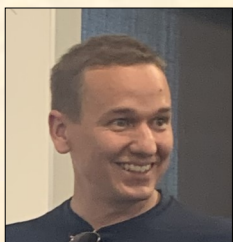


Site of a recent investigation



FIRE MARSHAL MUSINGS

Doug Nelson



With the Legislative Session in full swing and as we approach the North Dakota Firefighters Association Annual Fire School, there are a few items that I would like to pass on to you all.

The State Fire Marshals staff will be at fire school teaching classes and standing by near the NDFA registration table for anyone that has questions for us. If you need help signing into or checking your status in our Certificate of Existence System, National Fire Incident Reporting System, or Emergency Reporting, please stop in and see us on Friday. If you have not signed up for NDFA's Annual Fire School, please do and we hope to see you there.

The State Fire Marshals Office conducts plan review on new construction of fire protection systems, above-ground fuel tanks, propane tanks, and buildings as requested. Please don't be surprised if we email you the plans and results of our reviews or carbon copy you on communication regarding these. This is our

attempt to relay the information to you and ensure you know what is going on in your community and know if things are up to code.

The December 2022 Monthly Fire Report is out and available at our website. Please keep in mind that fire reporting for 2022 will remain open until the end of June 2023. You still have plenty of time to get your incidents submitted. Our preliminary numbers show that fire reporting is up to 78% so far. Thanks to all of the effort the fire departments are putting in to ensure we record every fire that occurs in North Dakota.

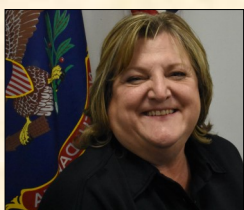
The North Dakota Century Code highlight for the month is Section 39-01-01 Motor Vehicles. This section of code (found here <https://tinyurl.com/4srb9285>) is where you can find the definitions of Class A, Class B and Class C Authorized Emergency Vehicles. If you have questions on how your fire department and vehicles can respond to emergencies, contact your local Highway Patrol or Sheriff's Office regarding rules of the road.





BURNING NEWS FROM THE CHIEF DEPUTY

Kimberly Ersland



How do I become a fire investigator? That is a question we often hear and get really excited when we do. First because that is a passion that we love sharing with more people but secondly because of the impact it has on being able to accurately determine fire cause in the State of North Dakota.

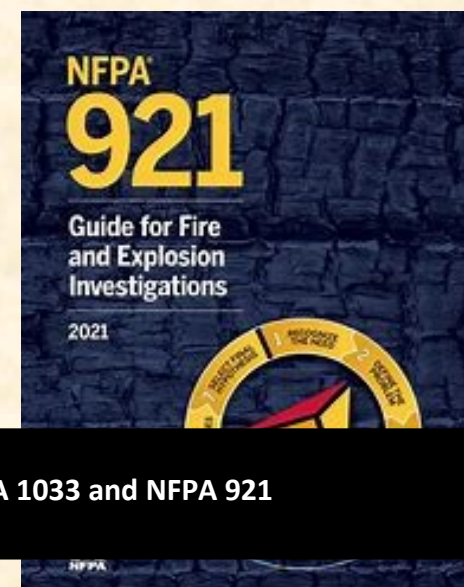
There are two NFPA documents that we will discuss this month: NFPA 1033 and NFPA 921. Let's start with NFPA 1033-Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Investigators. As with any standard, NFPA 1033 outlines the requisite knowledge needed. In this case those areas include Building Systems, Fire Scene Safety, Fire Investigation, Fire Science etc. The job performance requirements outlined cover from the fire examination, documentation, evidence collection/preservation, interviews, post scene investigation, and presentation. If called upon for courtroom testimony, this is likely the standard to which a person will be held as to whether they qualify as an expert in their field.

For many years, investigators would refer to investigations as scientific with some 'artform' to make conclusions. Today, the 'artform' and 'junk science' have been debunked by research and testing. The field of fire investigation is based on fire science only. NFPA 921-Guide for Fire and Explosion Investigations lays out twenty-nine chapters from methodology to marine fires. Two of my favorites are Chapters 5 and 6, Basic Fire Science and Fire Effects and Fire Patterns respectively. They remind me of how far this field of study has progressed, how much more research and training is to be done and how our office can contribute to those efforts. Both documents are important to know and understand if you have interest in investigations.

There are organizations that we collaborate with for investigations training. North

Dakota Firefighters Association (NDFA) offers a four hour "Fire Investigations-Where to Begin" class at Fire School in February. This class is designed to provide a basic understanding of fire investigations and methodology. This class does not result in any certification.

NDFA is currently working toward a Fire Investigator Certification. This consists of a Fire Investigator Fundamental Skills (Basic) class that is 3 ½ days of classroom, lecture, demonstration and hands on skills. The second class will be a Fire Investigator Skills Set and Testing class for 4 days ending in certification. We look forward to working with NDFA on this certification and refer to the NDFA website for further information.

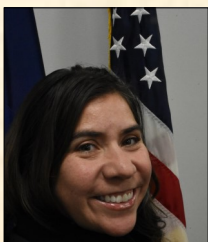


NFPA 1033 and NFPA 921



ON THE ROAD WITH DEPUTY FIRE MARSHAL

Jess Sinerius — District 1



Hello All,

I am Jess Sinerius, Deputy Fire Marshal out of the Minot office.

My family and I moved to the Minot area in 2007. Shortly after moving to Minot, I joined the Minot Rural Fire Protection District (MRFD) where I started my career as Firefighter/EMT and Inspector I. When I joined MRFD I had no fire related experience. I had the best time

learning all things related to firefighting from the ground up and I had the best instructors! I then joined the Fire Marshal's Office In December of 2019. Since I started my career at the Marshal's Office I have received my Inspector II, Fire Plans Examiner, and Fire Investigator Technician certificates. I continue to work towards receiving my Certified Fire Investigator certification.

In the past three years I have had the opportunity and joy of working with several fire departments and other agencies throughout the state regarding fire investigations, plan reviews, and inspections. I would have to say my entire job happens to be my favorite. I thoroughly enjoy learning about fire protection systems and digging into the fire code. In 2022 I had the opportunity to be the lead investigator for 21 fires! We have kicked off the new year with our list of assigned inspections that need to be completed this year and I look forward to working with all our Fire Departments to ensure fire safety and code compliance.

This year I will be co-instructing the Introduction to Fire Safety Inspections class at the NDFA Fire School and look forward to seeing you all. Please bring your burning questions and concerns regarding inspections!



Deputy Sinerius on scene



ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT AREA

Marcy Ost



Hello and welcome back!

Last time we met I promised more information on the State Fire Marshal's special programs. This month we're going to cover Delegation of Authority (DA). The State Fire Marshal has five deputies in the field. North Dakota Century Code states schools and non-residential state buildings (ex: visitor centers) need to be

inspected every three years and residential buildings (ex: dorms) need to be inspected annually. Last year over 300 inspections were completed. Never mind the fire investigations, and plan reviews. The math just doesn't work and that's where the DA comes in.

The DA encompasses any fire code authority or enforcement that should occur within department/district boundaries. The State Fire Marshal's Office is always available to assist, but if the Delegation of Authority is signed, code responsibility is delegated to the local Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ).

Basically what this means is that 11 of the larger departments in North Dakota do their own inspections, plan review and fire investigations.

Early in the year we send the AHJ's with a signed Delegation of Authority a list of the schools and state buildings statutorily required to be inspected. The AHJ's return the list (with corrections) so we can stay updated and verify we're compliant with Century Code.

And that, in a nutshell, is the Delegation of Authority program!

As the Fire Marshal mentioned, we'll be at Fire School. Friday, February 24th Lydia and I will have a table right by the registration area and we're excited to meet you! We'll also have computers ready to help if you're struggling with reporting your incidents or submitting your Certificate of Existence.

February Social Media Focus

The social media focus for February is space heaters

Suggested posts:

- ◆ Space heaters cause 1/3 of home heating fires and 4/5 home heating fires deaths. Protect your family with tips from USFA [#WinterSafety](http://www.nfpa.org/public-education/by-topic/top-causes-of-fire/heating)
- ◆ Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet away from a fireplace, wood stove, or space heater.
- ◆ Watch this short video from @usfa to learn how to prevent portable heater fires in your home this #Winter: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9AMQ1ASnmNU>

⇒ USFA has Heating Fire Safety outreach materials including graphics [here](#).

Organizations you should be following:

- * Ready.Gov
- * NFPA



FIRE DATA ASSISTANT ZONE

Lydia Citta



So far, the statistics for 2022, with incidents still coming in, we are at 78% of the fire departments in North Dakota reporting and climbing! That is amazing! You probably have either gotten emails or a phone call from me offering my help or letting you I'm here to help.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have a question

on reporting.

Something I want to touch on is 'No Activity' reports. These reports can only be entered directly into the National Incident Reporting System(NFIRS),

Emergency Reporting (ER) does not have this capability. 'No Activity' reports count towards your reporting for your Certificate of Existence. Some things to remember when entering these are: enter the last day of the month that you are reporting for and remember to check the check box that indicates that it is a 'no activity' report. If you need to report this and do not have an account please reach out, and we will get you set up.

Remember I will be at State Fire School, Friday morning, and will be willing to help you get set up in NFIRS and answer any questions about NFIRS and ER. Remember to bring your username and password for both NFIRS and ER.

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.



- Heating equipment is a leading cause of fires in US homes.
- Nationally, a vast majority of home heating fire deaths (88%) involved stationary or portable space heaters.
- Nearly half (46%) of all home heating fires occurred in Jan, Feb, and Dec.

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 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.