



HOT TOPICS

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



2023 State Fire School

Basic Fire Investigation class taught by State Fire Marshal Doug Nelson and Chief Deputy Fire Marshal Kimberly Ersland.

photos courtesy of

Ken Hinton

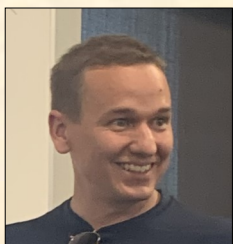
of the Minot Rural Fire Dept.





FIRE MARSHAL MUSINGS

Doug Nelson



I am hoping that this month's newsletter finds us all welcoming an early spring! This month I wanted to take the time to ensure that you know more about what the State Fire Marshals Division does.

Our office has a staff of nine total employees, which includes five Deputy Fire Marshals, one Community Risk Reduction Assistant, one Fire Data Assistant, one Chief

Deputy Fire Marshal and myself. Our Deputy Fire Marshals are located out of Dickinson, Minot, Grand Forks, Fargo and Bismarck. Our Deputy Fire Marshals focus their time on supporting fire departments through fire prevention. Usually this is in fire investigations, fire inspections, and fire code plan review of fire protection systems and other items. We are focused on providing a high-quality work product that results in being able to help you to the level requested.

Our Main Office in Bismarck hosts our administrative staff. We have begun efforts to focus more on Community Risk Reduction, fire reporting and data, and special projects with our Bismarck staff. Our special projects include the certificate of fire department existence, fire reporting, fire safer cigarettes, delegation of authority, property insurance loss reporting and emergency response guides. Another program that we have begun is our own in-house training/testing days. These are days that we try to coordinate a few times a year for us to work with a local fire department to test fire scenarios that we encounter through our fire prevention work. If your fire department has any interest in working with us to plan a training/testing day, please let us know.

Some of the training and testing that we have done in the last two years includes working with ignitable liquids and photo-ionization detectors, x-raying

burned electrical equipment, road flare fires, and utilizing the mechanical sifter for fire debris. We are continuously looking to see where we can best continue to expand and improve the work we do, but these are the main programs we are focused on currently.

The North Dakota Century Code focus of the month is the Emergency Responder License Plates program. This program is carried out by the Department of Transportation under NDCC 39-04.10.16. The century code can be found here <https://ndlegis.gov/cencode/t39c04.pdf#nameddest=39-04-10p16>. The program allows volunteer emergency responders and volunteer firefighters a special license plate at no cost that also serves as an entrance pass to North Dakota State Parks. There is current legislation on House Bill 1336 to add "Volunteer search and rescue personnel" to this program.

HB 1336 can be found [here](#).

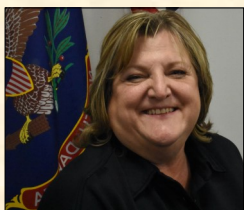
More information on the Volunteer Emergency Responder License Plate can be found [here](#).





BURNING NEWS FROM THE CHIEF DEPUTY

Kimberly Ersland



Let's talk about NFPA 1033! I know, a person shouldn't be so excited to discuss standards. But it is important to understand as NFPA 1033 is the Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Investigators if you are or plan to conduct investigations. Having the

requisite knowledge is important to ensure we are conducting investigations and determining cause correctly. If called to testify as an expert in court proceedings NFPA 1033 is the standard used by most courts and if the investigator does not meet those requirements may not be allowed to give opinion as to the origin and cause of the fire. The last thing we want is to be limited to testifying as a fact witness and be unable to give our opinion as the origin and cause of the fire in criminal court.

NFPA 1033 identifies the minimum job performance requirements (JPR) for fire investigators, and it applies to public and private entities. Some are basic requirements not fire related such as be 18 years of age, have a high school diploma or equivalent, be able to pass a background check and have acceptable character. The 2022 Edition of NFPA 1033 breaks down the fire-related requisite knowledge required into four categories: Fire Science, Fire Investigations, Fire Scene Safety and Building Systems. We will dig into the specific JPR's covered in NFPA 1033 next month.

NFPA 1033 also requires continuing education, training and remaining current. Research and testing in fire science and investigations will always be ongoing. It is one of the many aspects that make this an amazing career field.

Really, who doesn't want to learn more by setting fires for testing purposes?

NFPA 1033 is a vital document to fire investigations to ensure standards are maintained. Training through classes, seminars, publications and research documents can help develop your knowledge to ensure you meet the minimum standards of a fire investigator.





ON THE ROAD WITH DEPUTY FIRE MARSHAL

Kaylyn Lucas — District 3

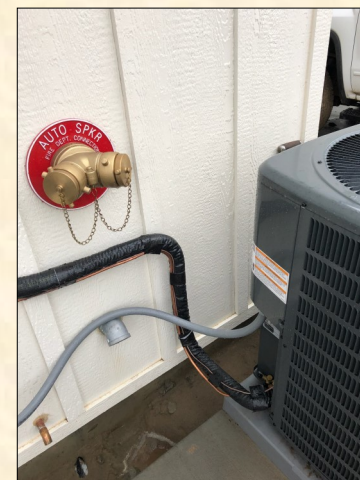


I am Kaylyn Lucas and am located in the Dickinson office. I have been with the Fire Marshal's Office for three years. I am originally from Montana and moved to Dickinson for the opportunity to work with this office and assist the agencies making the communities in North Dakota safer.

I have a Master's Degree in Fire Science from the University of New Haven and Bachelor's degrees in Criminal Justice and Sociology from the University of Great Falls.

I am certified through International Code Council as Inspection I, II, and Plans Examiner, and am currently working on the Certified Fire Marshal designation. I am a Fire Investigation Technician certified through the International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI-FIT) and continually working toward Certified Fire Investigator. I also serve as the secretary for the ND Chapter of IAAI.

The part of my job that I enjoy is working with multiple agencies and jurisdictions to create a safer environment for the communities.



Some of the more interesting inspections done by Deputy Lucas



ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT AREA

Marcy Ost



The special program we're spotlighting this month is Property Loss Insurance Reporting (PILR). According to NDCC 18-01-05:

Each insurer authorized to transact fire insurance business in this state is hereby required to report to the state fire marshal, either directly or through an approved agency, fire losses on property insured in the company, giving the name of the insured, the date of

the fire, the amount of loss, the loss paid, the character of the property destroyed or damaged, and the supposed cause of the fire.

Currently we get direct reports from a couple of companies but most companies rely on ISO to submit their information. This information generally comes in the first week or two of the month and we do some data entry on our end. We're hoping to eventually have more of a system in place that will allow us to create reports and get a better understanding of the monetary losses experienced in North Dakota. Honestly the process is a little rocky and needs some attention but there is a system in place and we're working with what we have for now.

As we continue to dip our toes in the waters of Community Risk Reduction (CRR) we're subscribing to mailing lists that send us interesting and often time sensitive information. Most recently we've gotten recall information on candles and kids pajamas that don't meet flammability standards. In order to get this information out as quickly as possible we'd like to start an email group for those interested. This is an opt in group.

If you want to be on the list please let me know by calling the office at 701-328-5555 or emailing infofm@nd.gov.

March Social Media Focus

Escape Plans: Special Needs

Suggested posts:

- ◆ Practice the home fire escape drill and include walking and assisting people who use a mobility device.
- ◆ People who are blind or have low vision may be disoriented when they can't hear the common household sounds that are used to navigate through the home over the continuous high-decibel smoke alarm sound. Practice the home fire escape drill to make sure you can escape while the smoke alarms are sounding.
- ◆ Install a bedside alert device that responds to the alert sound of the smoke alarms and provides a bed shaker to wake you up.
- ◆ Sleep with your mobile phone and your hearing aids or implants close to your bed.
- ◆ March is Red Cross month
- ◆ March 12th is Check your Batteries Day

⇒ USFA has Escape Plan outreach materials including graphics [here](#).

Pages you should consider following:

- * Sparky the Fire Dog
- * Consumer Product Safety Commission



FIRE DATA ASSISTANT ZONE

Lydia Citta



This month I would like to talk about Emergency Reporting. Did you know that for your incidents to be counted the padlock icon next to your incident needs to be green? If this is not green, we cannot count your incidents. To fix this issue you need to go in and 'Review' the incident. Simply click on the incident and follow the

prompts, that simple!

Emergency Reporting (ESO) sent out a communication in February and we forwarded it on to the emails we have on file. No big revelations but if you didn't get it let us know and we'll send again.

A disturbing statistic recently came to my attention. Since the beginning of 2023 five firefighters have died in the line of duty. All but one was from cardiac arrest **while at the station**. Please take care of yourselves.

Another topic I would like to talk about is escape plans for residential buildings. Last year there was approximately 580 fires reported in residential buildings alone in North Dakota. That means there were 580 fires where people sleep. Having an escape planned and practiced is important, even when that building is a hotel or motel, which were 13 out of those 580 fires.

Know others limitations. Do you have a nursing home in your responding area? What's their plan on evacuating residents? Things to practice and work with other agencies to become efficient!

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.

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.