



Coffee Break Training - NFIRS Series

National Fire Incident Reporting System – the Summary Output Reports Tool

No. NFIRS-2013-1 August 15, 2013

Learning Objective: The student shall be able to explain what the Summary Output Reports Tool (SORT) is, how it works, and how it helps in the decision-making process.

What is the SORT, who can use it, how do you get access to it, how does it work, and how does it help you? These are some of the questions surrounding the U.S. Fire Administration's (USFA's) SORT.

What is the SORT? The SORT is one of the USFA's public domain applications designed to foster the use of fire data to fight fires with facts. It has been designed for use at the local, state and national levels. The SORT has been developed primarily for fire departments that participate in the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) and state-level organizations that manage NFIRS. The SORT provides summary and statistical reports using NFIRS data in the national database submitted from participating fire departments.

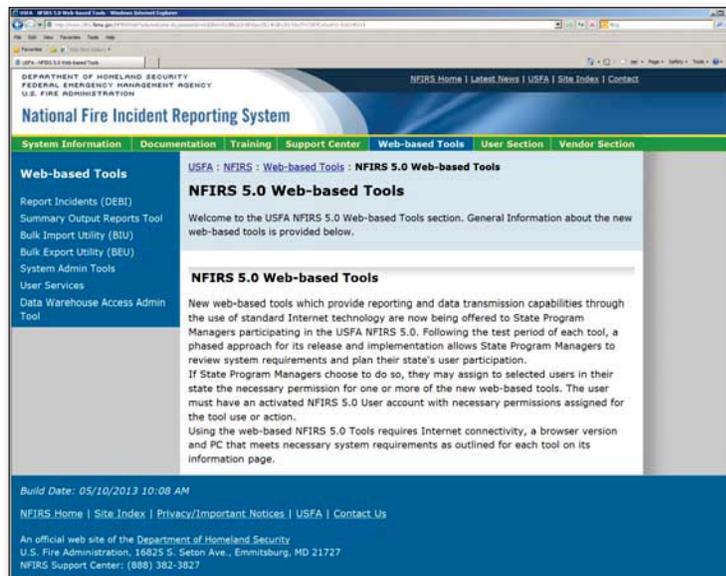
Who can use the SORT? All fire departments that participate in NFIRS and all state-level organizations that manage NFIRS can use the SORT.

How do you get access to the SORT? The state-level organization that manages NFIRS in your state provides users with an NFIRS account. The account is set to grant permission to access the SORT. Contact the NFIRS Help Desk if you do not know who your state NFIRS program manager is: fema-nfirshelp@fema.dhs.gov or 888-382-3727, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., EST. Once you have an account, go to www.nfirs.fema.gov to access the web-based tool.

How does the SORT work? The NFIRS report database contains multiple years of incident data from fire departments. The SORT consists of 24 reports that summarize data in charts, graphs and tables. Information about call types and volume, response times, and resource utilization are examples of information available using the SORT. The SORT provides filters and parameters to look at subsets of the data. When you log into the SORT, you only have access to data for your level of authority (e.g., a member of a fire department can only see data from the member's fire department and a state-level user can only see data from the user's state). It has been designed to be easy to create, save and download reports.

How does the SORT help you? Since the SORT is web-based, you have access to your data anytime and anywhere you can log on to the Internet. The SORT has management reports, data quality reports, and other reports to help manage fire departments and assist other data users in the decision-making process. For example, it can be used to support budgetary proposals. The SORT provides a way to confirm that your data at the national level is the same as your data at your level. The SORT provides reports that summarize critical factors for fire suppression, education and prevention (e.g., causes of fires, civilian and fire service casualties, incident response measures).

Data is a critical business asset in this world of information. The SORT is an asset and a tool. It provides you with a way to access and use your data to fight fires with facts. For more information about the SORT or any of the NFIRS tools, contact the NFIRS Help Desk, visit the NFIRS website (www.nfirs.fema.gov), or write me (Marion A. Long, Fire Program Specialist — NFIRS, USFA, marion.long@fema.dhs.gov).



This National Fire Incident Reporting System portal provides access to data stored in the national database (www.nfirs.fema.gov).