

	 <b>ALBEMARLE COUNTY</b> <b>STANDARD ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY</b>	
	<b>Subject:</b>	Incident Reporting
	<b>Reference Number:</b>	SAP-DEP-027
	<b>Effective Date:</b>	1 February 2006
	<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	N/A
	<b>Signature of Approval:</b>	 <b>J. Dan Eggleston, Chief</b>

**Purpose:**

To establish procedures for the Albemarle County Fire and Rescue Services regarding data entry, system security, and appropriate release of incident documentation.

**Background:**

The County as a whole and each station individually is responsible for planning and managing its operations so that personnel can perform their roles in public safety most effectively and efficiently. The availability of accurate information about fires and other incidents is vital in achieving maximum performance. Patterns that emerge from the analysis of incident data can help personnel focus on current problems, predict future problems in their communities, and measure their programs' performance. Incident data are used at all levels of government. At the local level, incident and casualty information is used for setting priorities and allocating resources. The data now being collected are particularly useful for designing fire prevention and educational programs and emergency medical service (EMS)-related activities specifically suited to the real emergency problems the Albemarle County community faces.

Albemarle County's records management system, FireRMS, operates over a wide area network, with terminals in each station. The information collected fulfills data reporting requirements of several Federal, State, and local agencies and programs including the Department of Homeland Security, the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS), the Virginia Department of Fire Programs, and the Virginia Department of Health.

This policy was adopted at the January 2006 meeting of the Fire Rescue Advisory Board.

**Policy:**

1. **General:**

- a. An Incident report must be completed for every incident dispatched by the ECC.
- b. A Unit report must be completed for every unit dispatched on an incident. A unit report should include unit times, personnel assigned, and a narrative (optional).
- c. The Incident Commander is responsible for ensuring the incident report is completed.
  - i. If the call is canceled after dispatch, but before units arrive on the scene, the officer of the first due unit is responsible for the Incident Report. All other units responding must complete their individual Unit Reports.
- d. FireRMS is not the primary reporting system for Western Albemarle Rescue or Charlottesville Albemarle Rescue Squad at this point in time. Responses involving only those agencies will be included in FireRMS but may not include a full incident or patient care report; however CAD data will be available in FireRMS regarding these incidents.
- e. Recording personnel other than those assigned to apparatus
  - i. Personal Vehicle (PV): Those personnel who respond to the scene in their private vehicle should be recorded in the incident report under unit PV.

2. **Timely Reporting:** The ACFR Operations Chief or the Station Chief, as appropriate, must ensure that all reports in their district/department are completed in a timely manner.
  - a. Incident report – The incident report must be completed within 48 hours of the conclusion of the incident. Responsibility for the incident report is described in section I above and in the FireRMS Manual page 5 “What you are responsible for.”
  - b. Unit report – All stations/units shall use the same incident report and incident number in FireRMS for reporting purposes. This requires all units involved in an incident to report in a timely manner so that the person responsible for the incident report may mark a report complete once she has completed it. Unit reports simply include assigning personnel to the unit and writing a unit narrative and are described in the FireRMS Manual page 5 “What you are responsible for.”
    - i. Unit reports must be completed within 24 hours of the unit returning to service.
3. **FireRMS Authorization Tab:** This information is used to assist with tracking and reporting the completeness of incident reports and their readiness for submission to state and national reporting databases. The fields on the Authorization Tab are relatively straightforward. The key fields for tracking and reporting are the Complete and Reviewed check boxes.
  - a. Marking a report complete: The Unit Officer or Incident Commander responsible for completing the report shall check the complete box once he has finished the report.
    - i. If all units have not completed a unit report, contact the station or unit officer for those units and request that the outstanding report be completed as soon as possible.
    - ii. If after attempting to contact the station or unit officer and a reasonable amount of time has transpired for completing the unit report the unit report is still not complete, the report shall be marked complete.
  - b. Marking a report reviewed: After a report has been reviewed by Fire Rescue staff as part of the QA/QI process it shall be marked reviewed. Once a report has been marked reviewed, it is ready for submission to state and national reporting databases.
4. **System Management:** Albemarle County Fire Rescue is the official custodian of records and is responsible for the operation and administration of the Records Management System. This responsibility shall include
  - a. Ensures compliance with policies and procedures;
  - b. Submits budget requests annually and as needed for improvements to the Record Management System;
  - c. Provides for sufficient staff to administer and maintain the RMS hardware and software components;
  - d. Will authorize the release of reports, as appropriate, pursuant to legitimate requests
  - e. Submits all County Fire reports to state and national databases as required.
  - f. Maintains a program for quality assurance and improvement (QA/QI)
    - i. To ensure data integrity and uniformity Fire Rescue staff shall review all incident reports and report the following to the ACFRAB monthly
      1. System statistics (to include call load, response times, call types, etc.)
      2. Reporting compliance – number of incident reports incomplete by station for the previous month.
        - a. On the first of every month a list of incomplete incidents for the previous month shall be e-mailed to the Chief of every station providing an opportunity for stations to ensure 100% of reports are complete.
        - b. On the day of the ACFRAB meeting (generally the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month), the same report will be run to determine the number of reports still incomplete for the previous month.
      3. Report on common reporting errors
  - g. Encourages and reviews suggestions from system users for improvements and/or changes to the Records Management System.

5. **Fire Marshal Responsibilities:** The Albemarle County Fire Marshals will utilize FireRMS as their primary reporting database. The Fire Marshals will use another database for and data reporting pertaining to a criminal investigation. As such, specific information contained within the FireRMS incident report may be changed or updated by a Fire Marshal. The sections of the incident report that may be utilized by the Fire Marshal are listed below.
  - a. **Report Sections or Tabs the Fire Marshals may input or change data:**
    - i. Basic>Location Tab
      1. **Specific Fields only:**
        - a. Estimated Dollar Loss
        - b. Estimated Pre-Incident Value
    - ii. The Fire>Property tab
    - iii. The Fire>Involved tab
    - iv. The Structure>Description tab
    - v. The Structure>Systems tab
  - b. Procedure:
    - i. Should a Fire Marshal respond to the scene and/or open an investigation you may find information already filled in for the sections of the report listed above. If so, leave the information as is, the FM has taken responsibility for the data.
    - ii. If this section of the report is incomplete fill in the appropriate data (assuming you are responsible for completing the incident report and not simply a unit report.) Keep in mind that the Fire Marshal may change any or all of the information contained in these tabs or specific fields if subsequent follow-up or investigation provides additional information or more accurate data.
6. **Key fields:** The following table outlines the key fields required for system management and reporting. These fields are used by Fire Rescue staff and the ACFRAB to produce key reports necessary for monitoring the efficiency and effectiveness of our Fire and EMS system. These fields are found within the FireRMS reporting system; refer to the FireRMS Users Manual for further information.

Location in Report	Field	Description/Importance
Basic>Response	Incident Type	Ensure the incident type is accurate. The incident type should indicate the type of situation found at the scene as opposed to the incident type that was dispatched. For example, if the dispatch was for an alarm activation but the situation was actually a building fire, the appropriate incident type is building fire.
Basic>Response	Priority check box	If the incident required a priority response (emergency lights and sirens) ensure this checkbox is marked. This is important so that response times to calls for service that are not emergencies (i.e. bat in a house) are not included in total reflex time (response time) calculations.
Basic>Location	Estimated Dollar Loss and Estimated Pre-Incident Value	<p>These fields are very important for helping Albemarle County report it's overall fire problem. This is a recognized national statistic, and it often utilized to help justify grants or for inclusion into specific government programs. Additionally, it will help us describe our service and/or effectiveness to the County Board of Supervisors.</p> <p>Personnel are often reluctant to provide an estimate for vehicle or building value pre-incident, or damage estimates. It is important to know that this is only an estimate and that it does not effect owner insurance in any way. It is simply a ruff estimate to help measure the magnitude of the fire and subsequent loss.</p> <p>Keep in mind-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The dollar loss is two estimates, one for how much damage the fire caused to the property and/or building, the other is an estimate of how much damage the fire caused to the contents.</li> <li>2. The pre-incident value is an estimate of how much the property and contents were worth <b>PRIOR TO THE FIRE.</b></li> </ol>
Resources>Apparatus	Priority Response check box	Though an incident may have required a priority response, not all apparatus may have responded under emergency conditions; other units may have continued in under non-emergency conditions while the first arriving unit continued to investigate. The response times for those units coming in under non-emergency conditions will be longer and should not be included in total reflex time (response time) calculations.
Resources>Apparatus	From Quarters check box	For the purposes of reporting total reflex times from a station, it is important to utilize this check box. Total reflex time may be reported in various ways. For example, without utilizing this check box we will not be able to differentiate between total reflex times from the station and total reflex times including a zone car strategically located in the response area. Using this check box allows us to run total reflex times for both scenarios, showing the impact the zone car is having on total reflex time.

Resources>Apparatus	First Arriving Unit check box	This check box should indicate which unit arrived first on the scene. More importantly, the box should be checked for the first appropriate unit on the scene. In other words, if a car fire is dispatched, this box should be checked for the first arriving engine. If a zone car arrives first, that information is still captured in the report through the response time; the check box allows us to answer the question, how quickly are we getting the appropriate unit on the scene?
Resources>Apparatus	Cancelled en-route check box	If a unit is cancelled prior to arriving on the scene <b>BUT DID MARK IN ROUTE</b> this check box should be marked. If this box is checked it allows us to eliminate cancelled responses from the total reflex time calculations. Obviously, if a unit does not arrive on the scene you can not measure how long it took the unit to get to the scene. If the unit never marked in route (responding) DO NOT mark the unit cancelled en-route, even if a Chief Officer put the unit in service prior to the unit responding.
Resources>Personnel	Ensure personnel are assigned to appropriate apparatus	It will be increasingly important to ensure that the appropriate personnel are assigned to the apparatus responding to an incident. Activity reports can be generated that will assist us in the justification of equipment purchases, budgets, and other projects.
Narrative	Main Narrative	For every incident, the primary Narrative should be titled "Main". This is the narrative that includes the "Auto Narrative". Other narratives should not include the "Auto Narrative". Every incident shall have a Main narrative.
Authorization	Report Complete check box	The Incident Commander or Unit Officer responsible for the incident report as a whole shall mark the report complete.