To all State Program Managers, Users and Vendors,

The clarifications below will assist fire departments in recording responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in a nationally consistent manner. The special study (ID 9244) will document fire department calls to suspected or confirmed incidents involving the sudden and nationwide spread of COVID-19.

All fire departments reporting to NFIRS are asked to use the Special Study for all incidents. The Special Study ID is 9244 and it has 4 code options.

The Special Study is part of the Basic Module. No other modules are required to respond to a special study.

- Most vendors have added the Special Study and its codes in their programs. Contact your vendor on locating it in your software.

- Users of the USFA Software in the Data Entry Tool or Data Entry Browser Interface (DET or DEBI) will:

- Fill out the incidents basic details.

- Select the Special Study Tab.

- In the Special Study ID field, select ID 9244.

- In the Special Study Codes field, select the code that best answers the question, Was COVID-19 a factor in this incident?

Because incidents in the national database are used daily for various output reports, please submit incidents as soon as possible to the NFIRS national database.

General information for all users:

- The Special Study can be documented on all Incident Types, not just EMS type calls.

- The Special Study is not required for a valid status incident.

- In incidents where code 1 is used (Yes, COVID 19 was suspected) or code 2 is used (Yes, COVID 19 was confirmed), the user can report the health exposure in the Fire Service Casualty modules Severity field, using the code for 1 - Report only, including exposure.

- For 611 Canceled en route, the best response is code 3, COVID 19 was not a factor. This is the appropriate response because there was no interaction between the FD and a potential patient.

- The code 4, Unknown, should be used if the department arrived at the incident and was unable to determine if COVID-19 was a factor.

- Choose the best Property Use code that fits the incident.

- On the Fire Service Casualty Module, protective equipment sections (Sections K1-K4) apply ONLY when reporting failure or a problem with an item that was present and in use.

- When several personnel are at the scene but only one person was potentially exposed to COVID 19, report only one fire service casualty (injury) in the Basic Module, and complete the Fire Service Casualty Module for that person.

- The Remarks narrative can be used for PPE details, (such as the type N95 mask), its availability and use.

- As always, an incidents data and status can be updated after it is submitted to the NFIRS national database until it is set to released status by the state program manager.

As the USFA works with these data at the national level, no specific incident data will be shared. Special study data are not included in the annual public data release.

Completeness, accuracy and timeliness return beneficial data for your own output reports. New COVID-19 reports for the Special Study data are available for NFIRS users, via the NFIRS Data Warehouse (DW). Contact your state program manager for DW access information.

In NFIRS, COVID-19 Special Study quick facts, as of Sunday, May 3, 2020:

- 87,826 incidents contain the Special Study data reported by 2,960 fire departments in 43 states (including the Department of Defense).

- Of the year-to-date incidents, 6% were responses to fire calls, 61% were responses to EMS calls, and 33% were responses to other calls.

- COVID-19 was confirmed in 927 incidents, and it was suspected in 6,241 incidents.

- COVID-19 was reported as either not a factor or unknown in the remaining incidents.

- For the incidents with confirmed and suspected special study codes, a total of 26,263 fire service personnel responded. Of that total, 22,838 were reported in incidents where the COVID 19 factor is suspected, and 3,425 were reported in incidents where the COVID 19 factor is confirmed.

- The top five incident types with confirmed and suspected COVID-19 factors were (1) EMS call (excluding vehicle accident with injury); (2) Medical assist, (3) Dispatched & cancel en route, (4) EMS, other, and (5) Rescue, EMS call, other.

Thank you,

NFIRS Support Center

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