



Dear National Fire Academy Student:

Welcome to the U.S. Fire Administration's National Fire Academy's (NFA) *National Fire Incident Reporting Systems: Program Manager* (NFIRS:PM) (R491) course. The goal of this course is to enable you to successfully promote, support, and manage NFIRS, including data collection, processing, analysis, and presentation of useful, timely, and accurate information about fire department activities. This 6-day course will allow you to apply knowledge learned during the course in small group sessions.

To ensure maximum application of your knowledge, you will need:

- To complete the Precourse Reading Assignments and Assessment.
- An active user account in the NFIRS online database at USFA. Your State NFIRS Program Manager can create the user account.
- At least, the following user account permissions:
 - Startup
 - Read Incidents
 - Write Incidents
 - Version Updates
 - File Transfer
 - User Validation
 - Web Page Area
 - Log Retrieval
 - Report Submit
 - Report Fetch
 - Report Templates
 - Report Generate
 - Bulk Export
- To bring on CD a database or file(s) containing all incidents for at least 1 year. Acceptable formats are:
 - NFIRS Version 5 Transaction File Format (export file to the State)
 - NFIRS Version 4.1 Transaction File Format
 - NFIRSdataV54.mdb (with an active off-line user account in the database)

Students using acceptable 3rd-party NFIRS software (FireHouse, FirePrograms, Tiburon, etc.) can bring a copy of their 3rd-party NFIRS databases on CD, along with one of the three options above. A list of acceptable 3rd-party NFIRS vendors can be found at www.nfirs.fema.gov/vendors

- To contact your State NFIRS Program Manager within 1 month prior to class. Please advise your Program Manager that you will be attending the NFIRS course at the NFA; you may call concerning data issues. A list of State NFIRS Program Managers can be found at www.nfic.org

During class, you will begin work on and receive feedback about an Individual Action Plan (IAP) that you will implement in your office. You will have 4 months after class is completed to implement the IAP and write and submit a brief status report.

You will receive a certificate after you attend class and complete the following course requirements:

- **NOTE: This class has required evening sessions;**
- Attain 80 percent or better on the final examination;
- As a member of a small group, complete a group project, which includes a technically acceptable paper and group presentation.

You will be able to apply the concepts learned during class in both the group project and IAP. The projects are an integral part of the course, and you will receive feedback from your instructors and your peers during class.

Completing the 4-month status report, while not a requirement for graduation, will aid future NFIRS Program Managers. USFA will collect the status reports and mail copies of them, if requested, to any participants in NFIRS who could use the information. Finally, you will be expected to participate in class discussions and work with other members of your small group on the group project. You will have time to work on the group project during regular class hours (8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.), but your group may need to meet in the evenings. Your group should expect to spend 6 to 8 hours total on the group project.

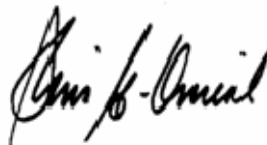
It is important to note that this is a 6-day class, and the first day of class will begin on Sunday at approximately 8 a.m. Subsequent classes will meet daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with graduation occurring on Friday at 4 p.m. Because of this schedule, you will be provided lodging for Friday night. Evening classes may be required.

End-of-class graduation ceremonies are an important part of the course and you are expected to attend. Please do not make any travel arrangements to leave campus until after you and your classmates graduate.

Increasing numbers of students and instructors are bringing laptop computers to campus. You alone are responsible for the security and maintenance of your equipment. The Academy cannot provide you with computer software, hardware, or technical support to include disks, printers, scanners, etc. There is a limited number of 120 Volt AC outlets in the classrooms. A Student Computer Lab is located in Building D and is available for all students to use. It is open daily with technical support provided in the evenings. This lab uses Windows XP and Office 2003 as the software standard.

Should you need additional information related to course content or requirements, please feel free to contact Ms. Colleen Heilig, Planning and Information Management Curriculum Training Specialist, at (301) 447-1613 or email at Colleen.Heilig@dhs.gov.

Sincerely,



Dr. Denis Onieal, Superintendent
National Fire Academy
U.S. Fire Administration

Enclosure

NFIRS PROGRAM MANAGEMENT PRECOURSE MATERIALS

Precourse Readings

There are five precourse reading assignments.

1. [*How to Think with Your Gut*](#), by Thomas A. Stewart for CNNMoney Business 2.0. (Click on the article name above to download the article.)
2. Anatomy of Excel Data Analysis: Advanced Graphs and PivotCharts, by Scott Lowe.
3. Anatomy of Excel Data Analysis: Restructure Information with Pivot Tables, by Scott Lowe.
4. Anatomy of Excel Data Analysis: Sorting and Filtering Information
5. 75 Essential Excel ® Tips, compiled by Jody Gilbert and Bill Detwiler.

Articles 2-5 can be accessed by logging into the TechRepublic site at:

<http://techrepublic.com.com/2001-6240-0.html>. Copyright ©2005 CNET Networks, Inc. All rights reserved. You will need to create a new user account and search for the four articles listed above by name.

Precourse Assessment

The precourse assessment is available through NFAOnline. Follow these steps to access the assessment:

1. Type <http://www.nfaonline.dhs.gov/> into your web browser and click Enter.
2. Click on the "Registered Student" link.
3. If you are not already registered in NFA Online, follow the New Student links to complete the registration process. Upon completion of the registration process contact Diane Close at diane.close@dhs.gov and request that you be assigned the "U491 Precourse Assessment". (Skip to #5)
4. If you are already registered in NFA Online, email Diane Close at diane.close@dhs.gov and request that you be assigned the "U491 Precourse Assessment."
5. When you receive your notice back from Diane Close that you have been assigned the U491 Precourse Assessment, return to the log in screen and enter you User ID and Password. When you have successfully logged in you will find the U491 Precourse Assessment by selecting the Learning Tab at the top of the page and then the "My Courses" option.
6. Locate the U491 Precourse Assessment. Click "Go to Content".
7. Complete the Assessment and submit your answers.
8. If you successfully pass the assessment, congratulations, you are ready to come to class!
9. If you do not successfully complete the assessment (please only take the exam one time), you will need to complete the Q494 NFIRS Self Study course, You can access the Q494 course be selecting the "Catalog" Tab and then "Planning and

Information Management" Subject Area. When you click on the Subject Area the course should pop up in the window to the right. Select "Go To Content" and complete the Q494 course materials and exam.

Note: You do not need to be assigned the Q494 course. It is available to the general public. The U491 Precourse Assessment is only available to R491 students.