

**National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) Coding  
Questions and Answers  
March 2009  
United States Fire Administration**

**QUESTION 1:** I get a critical error on unit times when they are returned prior to arrival of the first unit. The coding is asking for a 93-cancelled in route which then errors on any action taken. What is the best way to code a multiple unit response that has one unit arrive on the scene after the other incoming units have been returned?

**ANSWER 1:** On the Basic Module, the Arrival Date/Time should be the date/time that the FIRST unit arrived on scene, and the Clear Date/Time should be date/time that the LAST unit clears the scene. The Alarm Date/Time is the date/time that the initial units are alerted to a call.

On the Apparatus and Personnel Module, individual units should enter the date/time they are alerted (ALARM DATE/TIME) as long as it is not BEFORE the alarm date/time on the Basic Module. They should then enter the date/time they arrive on scene (ARRIVAL DATE/TIME) as long as it is not BEFORE the arrival date/time on the Basic module. And they should enter the date/time they clear the scene (CLEAR DATE/TIME) as long as it is not AFTER the clear date/time on the basic module.

When you have multiple units responding to an incident and an arriving unit cancels the remaining units, you should enter the time that the cancelled units are cancelled as the clear time on the apparatus module for those units. This time cannot be prior to the arrival time on the basic module but it can be prior to the clear time on the basic module, as long as you select "93 - Cancelled in Route" as the actions taken on the apparatus module for the cancelled unit.

If your software vendor does not allow this, contact them for an update or fix as this is a new rule as of January 2009.

**QUESTION 2:** I would like to be more accurate in my input data for dollar loss for fires. Do you know of a web site or program, preferably free, that I can get this info from?

**ANSWER 2:** Dollar Loss is a rough estimation of the total loss to the structure and contents, in terms of the cost of replacement in like kind and quantity and includes contents damaged by fire, smoke, water, and overhaul. It does not include indirect loss, such as business interruption. An accurate estimate is extremely helpful since it illustrates the magnitude of the fire problem, provides an additional indicator of the incident severity, and can be used to evaluate progress in fire protection. This information can help local communities, states, and the country determine the amount of money that should be spent on fire protection.

To better estimate your fire loss amounts, you can download the Building Valuation Data guide found on the National Fire Information Council website:

[http://www.nfic.org/exes\\_downloads/Downloads/ICBO%20Bldg%20Valuation%20Table.pdf](http://www.nfic.org/exes_downloads/Downloads/ICBO%20Bldg%20Valuation%20Table.pdf)

This guide provides a standard formula for determining the cost per square foot of different building and construction types as well as modifiers for each region of the country.

For further assistance, you could also contact your state NFIRS program manager.



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