

## INTRODUCTION

This manual is designed to support Local Assistants to the Fire Commissioner and fire departments in preparing fire incident reports. It provides guidance in entering required information on fire incidents, sets forth the fire data codes used in fire loss reporting and provides a location code directory for reporting within your jurisdiction.

The manual is designed to be self-contained, providing sufficient information to Local Assistants to meet their responsibilities in fire reporting established under the *Fire Services Act*. Additional information or assistance in preparing fire reports may be obtained by contacting their respective regional Office of the Fire Commissioner, or by contacting the Fire Reporting Systems Officer in Victoria.

This manual is user oriented. Input regarding its quality or completeness in treating the subject is welcome by sending comments to the Office of the Fire Commissioner in Victoria. User input and feedback will work to improve the manual over time as new editions are developed and published.

In making changes to the Fire Reporting System, the fire report has been separated into four incident types to simplify reporting of fires:

- Structure
- Vehicle
- Outdoor
- Person

Some parts of the Fire Incident Report form(s) require data that is straightforward and easily determined. Other parts require data that can only be determined by a proper investigation of the fire and determination of the various factors involved. The original report(s) should be completed by the person who gathered the data. It should reflect what was actually seen or done at the incident. The Fire Commissioner therefore urges that Local Assistants complete only those fire reports for which they have conducted the investigation as per the *Fire Services Act under Part 1, Section 9*:

- (1) *To ascertain whether a fire was due to accident, negligence or design, a local assistant shall, within 3 days after the fire, excluding holidays, investigate or have investigated in a general way the cause, origin and circumstances of each fire*
  - (a) *occurring in the municipality, district or part of the Province for which he is local assistant; and*
  - (b) *destroying or damaging property or as a result of which death has occurred.*
- (2) *Immediately after an investigation under subsection (1), the local assistant shall submit to the fire commissioner a report containing*
  - (a) *all facts ascertained about the cause, origin and circumstances of the fire, and*
  - (b) *any further information required by the fire commissioner.*
- (3) *The report required under subsection (2) shall be submitted in a format and by the means approved by the fire commissioner.*

The Fire Reporting code structure used in British Columbia was established by the Council of Canadian Fire Marshals and Fire Commissioners (CCFM & FC) and has been adopted by most provinces and territories in Canada. This provides for uniform reporting from province-to-province and ensures uniformity in statistics compiled at the national level.

Further adjustments were made to the Fire Reporting Code Structure to meet the needs and requirements of British Columbia. These were done by the Incident Reporting Task Group which is comprised of representatives from the Fire Chiefs' Association, Volunteer Fire Chiefs' Association as well as the Fire Prevention Officers' Association.

## **PURPOSE**

Fire prevention regulations and public fire safety education programs often reflect problems that have been identified through fire reporting. Knowing the trends and problems identified through statistics, effective public education programs can be designed.

Fire statistics also help set standards and fire regulations. In B.C. we use our statistics to establish the *Fire Services Act*, B.C. Fire Code and B.C. Building Code.

The fire loss reporting system provides a data resource that supports a wide variety of efforts in fire prevention, including the development of public education materials and programs, research into trends, identification of emergent risk areas, and statistical support of legislative initiatives or changes to the fire code to reduce fire losses and casualties. The system also provides data for the annual fire loss report published by the Office of the Fire Commissioner.

In addition, there are many other users of fire loss statistics data, including fire departments, insurance companies, the real estate industry, architects, building designers, building inspection departments, academic and medical researchers and other government agencies. Fire loss statistics data is public property and is available to the private sector companies, to schools and research organizations.

## **FIRE DEFINITION**

A fire is defined as any instance of destructive and uncontrolled burning.

Fire does NOT include the following, EXCEPT where they cause fire or occur as a consequence of fire:

- a. Lightning or electrical discharge;
- b. Explosions of steam boilers, hot water tanks or other pressure vessels due to internal pressure and not to internal combustion;
- c. Explosions of ammunition or other detonating material;
- d. Accidents involving ships, aircraft, or other vehicles;
- e. Overheat condition (*The alteration of material by heat without self-sustained combustion. Removal of the heat source will stop the alteration process. It may also be described as the stage before ignition. Examples include discoloration of a counter top caused by a hot cooking pot or browning of a wall surface by heat from a free standing space heater or an adjacent flue pipe.*)