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JON M. DAVINE
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To: Heads of Fire Departments

From: Derryl Dion, DFS Research Analyst / MFIRS Manager

Date: September 19, 2025

Re: NERIS Onboarding

The National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS) is coming to the Massachusetts Fire Service in October. Below is all the information your department needs to be ready for onboarding in October and transition to live incident reporting in November, December, or January.

Onboarding to NERIS

The onboarding process is the first step to transitioning from NFIRS/MFIRS over to NERIS. Staff at the Fire Safety Research Institute (FSRI), the organization contracted by USFA to create and host NERIS, have coordinated with DFS and will be sending out emails to all chiefs and identified administrators during the first few days of October. Please be on the lookout for these emails and check your spam or junk folders too. It's suggested that, in addition to the chief, each department has at least two administrators in NERIS (this is separate from your RMS). If you would like to pre-approve any administrators for your department, please email me at Derryl.Dion@mass.gov with their name, rank and email address. I will add them to your department information.

NERIS Initial Invite & Department Information

The FSRI emails will be invitations asking you to log into NERIS for the first time using a temporary password and ask you to create a new password. Once that is complete, the system will ask the chief or any administrators to go through the department information and make any changes, updates, or additions to it. The department information fields are listed below:

1. Add your department logo.
2. What level entity you are (local, tribal, transportation, state, etc).
3. Add your department website.

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4. Confirm the department HQ address and time zone.
5. Confirm your department's mailing address.
6. Population protected.
7. Map of your jurisdictional boundaries.
8. Add all the services your department provides.
9. Shifts (this isn't mandatory and generally applies only to departments with full time staff).
10. Staffing.
11. Dispatch (A list of all Massachusetts PSAPs is available on our [NERIS webpage](#)).
12. Software Integration – Enter your CAD and RMS software.
 - a. There is a separate video on how to do this under User References and then NERIS Training Videos: NERIS – Site Administrator Tasks: API Vendor Integration.
13. Assessment.
14. Data Accuracy.
15. Clicking on the confirmation statement changes the department's status form Unverified to Verified for the department information.
16. Stations.

Confirm that all your department's substations are listed and at their correct addresses. You can delete any stations not still in service and add any new stations. By clicking on the 3 dots to the right, you can edit the stations. This allows you to enter all the units and apparatus at that station.

DFS has sent FSRI a state map of all fire department and local fire district boundaries. Please confirm your department's boundary and if it is incorrect please place a support ticket with FSRI by clicking on the Helpdesk icon on the far left. If you also need help from DFS, please add Derryl Dion to the ticket.

Live Incident Reporting to NERIS

Once the above actions are completed, you have successfully onboarded your department in NERIS. The next step is to go live with incident reporting. For compliance tracking and analytics, and because NFIRS and NERIS are not backwards compatible (leading to two separate counts) we are asking all departments to **start reporting to NERIS on the first of a month – November, December or January.**



Once you start reporting, please email Derryl.Dion@mass.gov of the date your department went live and the first incident number logged in NERIS. You will not be able to go back to NFIRS after reporting to NERIS. If you are using a third-party vendor RMS system, you'll have to check with them about going live with your data. All vendors that have been approved to submit data to NERIS via their API will have a NERIS-Compatible vendor badge.

NERIS is designed to send data from your RMS directly to the federal database. You'll be able to choose the frequency at which your incidents are submitted. You will not have to create monthly files and submit them to DFS anymore.

No RMS? Use the NERIS App Directly

If your department does not have third-party vendor software compatible with NERIS, then you'll have to use the NERIS app itself. Once you login and your department information has been confirmed, please send a request to the NERIS help desk to turn on "Direct Incident Logging." There are no paper forms in NERIS and DFS personnel won't be able to enter your incidents, so all incident reports must be entered directly into the NERIS app by your department staff. You (as chief) or any of your designated NERIS administrators will have to invite department members into NERIS and assign them the roles of superuser or user to be able to enter incident reports.

If this applies to your department, please email Derryl.Dion@mass.gov as soon as possible to set up training for your department and its members. There is also a training department site that will allow you to create "dummy" incidents and work in NERIS without affecting the live data side.

NFIRS is Ending

NFIRS will be decommissioned by the USFA as of January 1, 2026. The system will not accept any incident reports dated after December 31, 2025. Every department will have to migrate to NERIS for their incident reporting by January 1, 2026. If your department is still using NFIRS in December 2025, then you must have the December incident file to us before the end of January 2026. NFIRS is a state database and DFS will have historical NFIRS records going back to 1988 for an indefinite period.

Records Retention: Keeping NFIRS Reports

According to the Massachusetts Municipal Records Retention Schedule, local fire departments and fire districts must keep their incident reports for at least 10 years. Because of this, and for analytical purposes, many third-party RMS vendors are keeping the NFIRS side available for indefinite periods. If you switch vendors at any time, you can get your historical NFIRS records from the Fire Data & Public Education Unit at DFS just by requesting them from Derryl.Dion@mass.gov or MFIRS.FireSafetyDivision@mass.gov. We will create the files in the standard NFIRS format and send them to you to forward to your new RMS vendor.

If you or any of your staff have any questions on the transition to NERIS, please contact me at Derryl.Dion@mass.gov or (978) 567-3382.