STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND INSURANCE
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PAULA A. FLOWERS
COMMISSIONER

Dear Fire Service Member,

While we have made great strides over the past three years, Tennessee's fire death rate is still troubling. In order to make further progress, we need to target those most vulnerable to residential fire death. The best tool to understand who is dying and why are the reports to TFIRS, the Tennessee Fire Incident Reporting System. This is why the State Fire Marshal's Office wants to achieve *100 percent TFIRS compliance,* and we're gearing up to help you meet this important goal.

Reporting is **necessary** to get the data we need to address Tennessee's fire death problem. The TFIRS data identifies who is dying and common factors of causation – knowledge we all can use to implement targeted, issue specific public awareness campaigns. But without the data, we can only guess what approaches will make a difference.

State law **requires** every Tennessee fire department to report fire incidents to this office within 10 days of the fire's occurrence. We worked with the Governor to pass legislation in 2004 to clarify that fire departments are **shielded from liability** when they report in good faith the suspected cause of a fire to the Fire Marshal's office. There is now no potential legal excuse for not reporting this crucial information. All departments who accept federal fire grants are required to report to TFIRS. *The failure to report, subsequent to receiving a grant, could jeopardize grant funds.* This department also releases a quarterly list of non-compliant departments that can be found here.

While reports may be filed on paper, we prefer fire departments report electronically. Through a partnership with Dell Computers, fire departments can receive state of the art computer equipment at 25% off the market price (add link for this information). The TFIRS/NFIRS system software and online tutorial are **free.** Low-cost training is available through the Tennessee Fire Service and Codes Enforcement Academy, and TFIRS Coordinator Dennis Mulder (615.741.2981) will assist with trouble-shooting or instruct regional TFIRS training sessions.

I know you are dedicated to protecting the lives of the citizens of your community, and our office exists to help you do that. Please help us help you by complying with the law and reporting to TFIRS.

Warm regards,

Paula A. Flowers

Paula A. Flowers
Tennessee State Fire Marshal
Commissioner, Commerce and Insurance