HANDLING THE BAD & ERR FILES

You've uploaded your transaction file to the NFIRS database and you've received an e-mail with your confirmation and a zip file which contains the ".bad" and ".err" files. Now what?

The users of the Federal Client Tool need to know: there is no quality assurance (QA) check with this program. Most of the third party vendor programs do have a QA check process but does not guarantee that all errors will be found.

The BAD and ERR files contain information on warnings and critical errors noted during the import of your data set to the National Database. **ALL** errors should be evaluated.

Warnings indicate something is not correct or there was an omission and it should be evaluated to see if a correction is warranted. If nothing is done, the incident will be 'counted' in the database though it may not be accurate information.

Critical errors indicate a major error (incorrect, conflicting or incomplete required data) has occurred in the incident's data and that incident will NOT be counted in the database. Critical incidents must be corrected and resubmitted.

The .err file indentifies the error, if it is a critical or warning, module(s) were the error occurred, and what the specific error was. The .bad file contains all the incident modules for the incident involved and has more extensive information. The .err file is the file to work with as it contains sufficient information and you can usually disregard the .bad file.

The best way to "view/work with" the .err file is in an Excel (2000 or newer version) spreadsheet. Listed below are the steps to convert the .err file to a useable Excel format.

- Make sure you know where the .err file is located so you can access it in a few minutes. You might want to move it to a location that is easy to find, such as the "My Documents" file (you can use copy/paste to put a copy in My Documents).
- The first step is to 'Open' the .err file as an Excel file (File -> Open, or <Ctrl> O). Click on the down arrow to the right of the box labeled "Files of Type:" and move the right scroll bar up. Click on "All Files" and you should see the .err file in the list of files above.

Either double click on the file name or click the file name and then “Open” at the bottom right of the box.

- The “Text Import Wizard” should pop up on Step 1 of 3. Make sure the “Delimited” radio button is marked. Click “Next” at the bottom right of the box.

- You should at Step 2 of 3 in the Text Import Wizard. The “Data Preview” area at the bottom of the screen will show all the characters of the .err file run together on each line. In the “Delimiters” area, uncheck the “Tab” box. Check the “Other” box and your cursor should move to the blank box to the right of “Other." In this box, type the caret - ^ (<Shift> 6) character. After entering the caret in the box, you should see the Data Preview area converts to columns. Click “Next” at the bottom right of the box.

- You should be on Step 3 of 3 in the Text Import Wizard. The Data Preview should still show the columns with all the headers reading “General.” If the first column is not highlighted, click on it (should be black with white letters at the top of the column). In the “Column data format” section above, click on the “Text” radio button (the column header should change to Text). Click on the third column and then click on the “Date” radio button (the column header should change to MDY). Click on the fourth column and then click on the text radio button (the column header should change to Text). Slide the horizontal scroll bar at the bottom of the Data Preview area all the way to the right. Click on the third column from the right and then click on the “Do not import column (skip)” radio button. Do the same for the second from the right and last columns (all three column headers should be changed to Skip). Now click the “Finish” button to complete the Text Import Wizard.

- The .err file should now be in a readable Excel format. Expand out your columns. The best way is to highlight Columns A to H (click on “A” to highlight that column, hold down the Shift key and click on the “H” to highlight all these columns). Move your cursor between any line separating columns on the same line as the letters. You should see a double arrow upright line. Now, double click and your columns should expand out (except Column E). Click anywhere in the spreadsheet. Scroll over the upright line between E and F till you get the double arrow upright line. Click and hold the left mouse button and expand the column to the right.

- Insert a blank row at Row 1 (Right-click on the #1 row and choose Insert from the drop down list). Now enter these Row Headers. Column A = FDID, Column B = State, Column C = Date, Column D = Inc #, Column E = Exposures, Column F = Module, , Column G = Error, Column H = Type Error, and Column I = Module Section/Line

- Now you can easily evaluate your errors.

- Unfortunately the NIFRS Database doesn't know how to handle the Plus-one codes if used by your department, so you can ignore the "Plus-One Code May Not Be Defined" errors. If your department doesn't use the Plus-one and you get this error then an extra number has been keyed into the field. You can use the Excel to "filter" out the Plus-One Code error. Under the Data tab or list, click on "Filter." Drop-down arrows should appear on the right of each column. Click on the down arrow on the "Error" column (Column G). Click on the check-mark in the box to the left of "Plus-One Code May Not Be Defined" and then click OK. Your list should now to display everything EXCEPT for the Plus-One Code errors.

- To bring back all the errors, click on the down arrow on the "Error" column (Column G). Note that the "Select All" box will have a solid black box in the center. Click on the box to the left of "Select All" (this should return the check-mark – if it goes blank, click the box one more time) and then click OK. Your list should now display all errors.

There are generally two common errors, the first being "Aid Given to FDID Requested" which indicates the system is looking for the FDID number for the fire departments/districts to whom your department/district provide aid. Please contact the State NFIRS Program Manager (information listed below) to obtain the FDID number for your surrounding departments/ districts.

The second common error is "Aid Given to Incident Number Requested" which indicates the system is looking for an incident number. You department/district should contact dispatch or the department/district itself to obtain that information at the end of the call.

With the information from the .err file, you can go into your system and make the appropriate changes and resubmit your corrected data during the next NFIRS Database bulk import.

Contact the State Program Manager with any NFIRS questions or issues:

Frank Fisher, State NFIRS Program Manager
(602) 364-1083 (Office)
(602) 364-1084 (Fax)
aznfirs@dfbls.az.gov (e-mail)