

Dup.
Superseded by AS 2577.1-1992 and AS 2577.2-1992

Incorporating Amendment No 1

AS 2577—1983
UDC 614.842:001.818

Under Revision by DR 90103 DR90104

Australian Standard 2577—1983

COLLECTION OF DATA ON FIRE INCIDENTS



STANDARDS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
Incorporated by Royal Charter



This Australian standard was prepared by Committee FP/5, Reporting Fires. It was approved on behalf of the Council of the Standards Association of Australia on 21 September 1982 and published on 7 February 1983.

The following interests were represented on the committee responsible for the preparation of this standard:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Australian Fire Protection Association
- Commonwealth Fire Board
- CSIRO, Division of Building Research
- Experimental Building Station
- Fire Brigades
- Fire Protection Industry Association of Australia Ltd
- Insurance Council of Australia

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This standard was issued in draft form for comment as DR 78118.

AUSTRALIAN STANDARD

COLLECTION OF DATA ON FIRE INCIDENTS

AS 2577—1983

First published	1983
Amended (corrections)	August 1983
Reprinted incorporating amendment	1983

2 11 5 1983

PUBLISHED BY THE STANDARDS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
STANDARDS HOUSE, 80 ARTHUR ST, NORTH SYDNEY, N.S.W.



ISBN 0 7262 2766 8

PREFACE

This standard was prepared by the Association's Committee on Reporting Fires.

In the past there has been no method by which detailed statistics of fires can be obtained on a national basis in Australia, but for some time the Board of Fire Commissioners, N.S.W. has used a reporting method which produces statistics relating to building fires. Other firefighting authorities initially adopted this method and later modified it to suit their own requirements.

In the preparation of this standard, account was taken of the National Fire Incident Reporting System Handbook compiled by the National Fire Data Center, United States Fire Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, July 1978 and acknowledgement is made of the assistance received therefrom.

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STANDARDS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

Australian Standard for COLLECTION OF DATA ON FIRE INCIDENTS

FOREWORD

This standard has been based on a model form for reporting fires. It is designed to enable information to be processed by computer. Although it is not necessary for the model form to be used by the firefighting authority, the instructions in this standard are related to that form. The form is designed to be completed by a fireman on the scene.

It is appreciated that more detailed statistics could be of value for research purposes. Against this, however, is the limitation in time available to complete the form and the expertise necessary to make some assessments. As an example, if it were desired to include details of the behaviour of fabrics in fire, a fireman would be required to make assessments which are in the province of a textile technologist.

This principle is accepted in the portions of the report relating to casualties and cause. In regard to casualties, a fireman is not expected to make a medical assessment, but is asked to make a reasonable judgement. In regard to the cause of fire, the fireman is required to insert 'supposed' cause. Neither of these entries is expected to be an assertion which can be challenged.

Local information required by a fire authority for its internal operation may be completed on the reverse side of the model form or on a separate form.

So far as the coding system is concerned, brigades are advised not to use any omitted numbers for their own purpose. A fire authority should add a second or third digit to an existing code number to indicate their own subject matter.

Although the system is seen as being used primarily by firefighting authorities it may be that other agencies such as police, forest departments and insurance companies may wish to report fires in the future. In that case, this standard should be used and all reference to firemen, firefighting authorities and brigades, etc should be interpreted to include such other agencies and persons.

STANDARD

1 SCOPE. This standard identifies a set of common data elements relating to fires for collection on a national basis together with the codings for this information and a model form on which the information can be recorded. Provision is also made for the collection of data for fire-related casualties. The data elements are compatible with those of the United States National Fire Incident Reporting System and the New Zealand Fire Incident Reporting Scheme.

2 APPLICATION. The information required shall be provided for each fire incident. The method of data collection shall be determined by the firefighting authority concerned. A model form is illustrated in Fig. 1 but it is not necessary to use that form. Data forwarded to a Central Processing Office shall be presented either in the codings listed in the Appendices or in a form which is acceptable to the Central Processing Office.

3 THE REPORTING SYSTEM.

3.1 General. The system of reporting fire incidents is based on the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) compiled by the National Fire Data Center, U.S. Fire Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, with the assistance of the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

3.2 Form of Report. The model form used for reporting fire incidents is illustrated in Fig. 1. Although it is not necessary for this form to be used by the firefighting authority (see Clause 2), the instructions in this standard are related to that form.

3.3 Coding. The model form provides space for brief narrative answers to the questions asked. The codings may be completed on the fire ground, at each fire station or at a headquarters, at the discretion of the firefighting authority concerned.

4 COLLECTION OF DATA.

4.1 General. The method used for the collection of data shall be determined by the firefighting authority concerned. The Appendices of this standard relate the data elements to the lines on the Model Incident Report Form (see Fig. 1).

4.2 All Incidents. The data required in Appendices A, B, C, D and E, shall be collected for all incidents.

4.3 Incidents Involving Alarms from Automatic Detection Systems. The data required in Appendix F shall be collected for all incidents involving alarms from automatic detection systems.

4.4 Incidents Involving Casualties. The data required in Appendices G and H shall be collected for all incidents involving a casualty.

4.5 Incidents Involving Mobile Property. The data required in Appendix I shall be collected for all incidents involving a mobile property.

4.6 Incidents Involving Fire. The data required in Appendices G, H, J, K, M, N, O and P, shall be collected for all incidents involving fire.

The data required in Appendix L shall be collected for all incidents where equipment was involved in the ignition process.

4.7 Incidents Involving Structure Fires. The data required in Appendices Q, R, S, T and U, shall be collected for all fires involving structures.

4.8 Description of Incident. A brief description of all incidents shall be collected to enable verification of the data and to supplement the coded information.

MODEL INCIDENT REPORT FORMS. Completed forms based on simulated incidents are provided in Appendix V to exemplify how the data elements relate to the lines of the Model Incident Report.