



## *2019 Predictions*

# **FIRE**

What does 2019 have in store for fire departments? Our ESO fire experts have weighed in and compiled these predictions and trends we believe are the most important to pay attention to in the coming year. Accompanying each prediction or trend is a recommended action you can take to ensure success in 2019 and beyond.

# 1.

## Visibility and accessibility to data will continue to increase in importance

### W H Y

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Last year, we predicted access to and the use of data was going to become more and more essential for fire departments (as well as EMS agencies and hospital emergency departments). In 2019, we expect the value and importance of data and data insights to increase even more as departments across the country leverage data to determine long-term impacts of code changes and to help shape implementation of service delivery enhancements. Additionally, data will help fire departments create a narrative that can easily be shared with government officials and citizens.

### A C T I O N

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- ✓ Document beyond the minimum required information. Enter accurate information in as many fields as possible when filling out an incident report. This will ensure the quality and completion of the data that is submitted and analyzed. Provide checklists and quick reference guides for end users entering data to develop constant data entry of NFIRS codes and actions.
- ✓ Stay ahead of this trend and ensure the use of accurate data by identifying and implementing a software program that allows for quick and easy reporting, and captures the data necessary for fire protection efforts. A software program, such as [ESO Incidents](#), captures all of the details of an incident in a quick and simple process. As a bonus, all of the data entered is submitted to your state for you so you can get back to the job you love.

# 2.

## Awareness of mental health and overall wellness will be an area of focus

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While wear and tear for firefighters is not new, increased acknowledgement of wear and tear (especially around cancer and suicide since they are the top two killers) - and ways to address the issue - continues to gain momentum. Departments will need to create programs to prepare, educate, and respond to mental and physical health needs, including budget consideration, preventative measures, and the potential impact on other resources. From a software perspective, we will begin to see functions and features that create reporting and automatic flags to help agencies develop proactive programs for responders.

### A C T I O N

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- ✔ Be proactive and intercept early. Your crews see and are exposed to a lot in their job, so identifying any red flags early can make all the difference. Use software to document exposures to carcinogens and the length of exposure time, which will help with cancer research over time.
- ✔ Develop a program that will identify and alert you of any mental struggles or physical wellness issues affecting your firefighters. This could be a cancer screening, a counselor, one-on-one conversations, or even an anonymous survey.
- ✔ Provide firefighters with a response program, complete with what they need to improve their health, such as appointments with an oncologist or psychologist. These resources require budget allocation, so it is important to meet with city officials to discuss the issue, propose programs, and prepare to show data supporting your programs.



# 3.

## Large-scale events will continue to happen and place funding challenges and response times in the spotlight

### W H Y

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While the fires in California in late 2018 likely garnered the most press coverage, other large-scale events around the country occurred as well. These types of events will continue to occur and bring into sharp focus funding challenges, response times, mutual aid resources, etc. Data will play an increasingly important role to help firefighters improve response planning and objectively provide responses to criticism of managing large-scale fires. Data sharing for all responders at a major event, as well as the ability to rapidly collect event loss data, creates the ability to request and obtain federal resources and funding more quickly.

### A C T I O N

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- ✓ To be most prepared, ensure that your response plan for large-scale events is current and sound. To help with this, you can analyze prior large-scale events and identify lessons learned as improvements to add to your plans. Meet with other departments in your area, as well as city council to share the proposed changes and attain approval.
- ✓ Additionally, you should develop detailed pre-plans and store occupancy data so you have improved situational awareness during events. Consider investing in software, such as [ESO Properties and Inspections](#), to collect, monitor, and be prepared to improve your response. Capturing this data will be important for future response planning, affirmation of actions, and attaining resources and funding with less delay.
- ✓ Work with other public safety agencies and responders to discuss the information you offer from your preplans and inspections of buildings, so all responders can have shared building/occupant intelligence during major events.



# 4.

## Budget scrutiny and pressure will continue to increase



### W H Y

We predicted in 2018 that budget scrutiny would be an issue. It will continue to be an issue in 2019 and will ratchet up. Per the 2018 [ESO Fire Trends Report](#), we saw that fire-related calls accounted for 30% of all calls while EMS-related calls accounted for 60% of all calls (with 10% of calls left blank), which will increase scrutiny around investments and budget dollars related to fire. Tracking of dollars to create benchmarks and measure relevant outcomes, including anticipating needs during large-scale events, will improve conversations with city council and local governing bodies. “What if” scenarios will continue to be a larger question for fire administrators to answer. The ability to show return-on-investment for code changes, station location/staffing, and new response equipment will be imperative.

### A C T I O N

- ✓ Create an inventory to document all dollars spent, from equipment, to software, to health and safety programs. Run reports in your NFIRS reports to show improvements over time due to dollars spent, such as response times, property losses, and large-scale event losses and outcomes.
- ✓ It is impossible to know all potential scenarios that could occur at an incident or large-scale event but preparing to show dollar spending of all past events, and as many potential scenarios as possible, can help with planning and preparation when discussing anticipated needs with the city.
- ✓ Use the data you’ve collected on buildings and properties to show the return of investment for dollars spent to prevent fires, compared to the value saved every year from fire.

### About ESO

ESO is dedicated to improving community health and safety through the power of data. The company pioneers innovative, user-friendly software to meet the changing needs of today's EMS agencies, fire departments, and hospitals, including the industry-leading [ESO Electronic Health Record \(EHR\)](#) and [ESO Fire](#).

To learn more about ESO's fire software solutions, visit:

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