BOMB ARSON TRACKING SYSTEM:

EXPANDING THE FIRE DEPARTMENT TOOL KIT

What is BATS?

The Bomb Arson Tracking System (BATS) is a web-based case management tool for documenting any fire, arson or explosive-related incident. BATS provides you with access to current arson and explosives information from across the nation.

BATS was developed by you and for you — you administer your BATS account! The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and the U.S. Bomb Data Center (USBDC) simply keep it running.

BATS is available to all fire department and fire marshal offices — at **_no cost_** to your department!

BATS is the first place you should go during your arson and explosives investigation. Without it, you can waste precious time trying to locate other cases containing similar characteristics. But with BATS, this information is available with the click of the mouse.

Is BATS the same as NFIRS?

No, the BATS program is separate from the NFIRS database. Whereas the primary mission of NFIRS is to collect fire incident information, BATS is dedicated to documenting the "follow-up" investigation. BATS is state-of-the-art case management technology.

How does BATS work?

BATS is a secure, user-friendly, web-based computer application. All you need is a browser and an Internet connection to use it. Each agency administers their BATS account and authorized users receive User IDs & Passwords. BATS is available to you around the clock.

The BATS interface is easy to use; you enter case information into clearly identified data entry fields, and easily click dropdown menu selections. You can share your arson and explosives incidents with other BATS users across the country, and you can search and analyze national data to discover trends, patterns, and leads. You can also use BATS to create a variety of reports customized to your needs, and track and report incidents to justify budget requests.

BATS as a Case Management Tool

BATS provides a "trusted" and secure means to exchange information related to fire and explosives-related incidents across the country. This helps investigators track trends and compare incidents in real-time for similarities in motives, leads, and potential suspects nationwide while maintaining operational security. Users also have access to intelligence advisories and a comprehensive Investigative Resources Library featuring arson guides, origin and cause templates, interview guides, laboratory guides, and much more.

BATS provides your unit with state-of-the-art technology to manage and keep track of all your investigations. Users can easily create professional reports using standardized terminology for consistency. This provides the investigator with the ability to communicate investigative findings with their supervisor, other investigators, and prosecutors.

Investigators can upload photo images, audio/video files, witness statements, lab reports, diagrams, and write narratives detailing "origin and cause" and other investigative activity. BATS includes a GIS (mapping) function to provide additional analysis and assist in uncovering patterns and trends.

"The Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) for Prince George's County, MD began using the Bomb Arson Tracking System (BATS) over seven years ago. We were able to assist with the early phases of development through Beta testing of this site and have provided feedback to the BATS Administrators since the site's inception. The OFM has designated the BATS system as their primary reporting system for both fire and explosive incidents. As such, we have entered over two thousand incidents into BATS. More recently, we have expanded our use to take full advantage of the BATS Activity reporting abilities.

This system has been utilized to assist with several major case investigations which were the result of serial arson fires. These incidents resulted in over five million dollars in property loss to the citizens of Prince George's County. Often during these investigations it was necessary to research prior incidents. In cases where the incidents occurred after we began to enter cases into BATS, the process of locating the information took only a few minutes. Without BATS the same process would take several hours.

Primarily, the OFM has utilized BATS for an incident reporting system. As the features of BATS are enhanced, we are able to utilize the system as a case management system. We eagerly look forward to enhancements to BATS that assist with case management. The Prince George's County OFM could not function in our current capacity without the BATS system. We are in full support of further enhancing the system."

Lt. Colonel Scott K. Hoglander, Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department, Special Operations Command

BATS as a Unit Management Tool

As part of an ongoing effort to strengthen and enhance the work of fire investigation units across the country, BATS now offers automated reporting, which means that account managers and supervisors can request automated e-reports of their unit/agency/squad's BATS entries to include a UCR monthly return of known Arson Offenses. These reports are an ideal management tool and can be set up in a variety of ways to help keep track of your investigations and justify budget requests.

The USBDC also provides Congress with statistical reporting regarding explosives, bombing, and fire/arson incidents. Full participation in BATS enables your agency to be accurately represented and can better make a case to acquire needed resources (e.g., grant writing, statistics, mapping, identifying a community's arson problem, juvenile fire setter programs, budget accounting/requests, planning, equipment requests, meetings with municipal leaders, etc).

> *BATS expands the capability of your Fire Department*
> *At no cost and with little effort*

Who Else Uses BATS?

There are currently over 7,000 authorized BATS users from more than 1,500 local, state, trial, and federal law enforcement and public safety agencies across the United States.

BATS contains hundreds of thousands of arson and explosives incident reports within the consolidated BATS database. This includes a unique set of data associated with the tracing of explosives products from the manufacturer to the end-user in support of criminal investigations. Included in the BATS database are over 11,000 records related to explosives traces and over 4,500 records of stolen or lost explosives.

BATS is our entire records management system for the Fire Marshal's Office, and is used extensively and completely in the investigation of all of our fires and explosive incidents. We are the first state fire marshal's office in the nation to use BATS. We not only use the incident reporting capability, but we also see the value of tracking serial arsonists around the country. BATS allows fire investigators to adequately and systematically investigate the causes of fire and explosive incidents. The network of national users is what sets BATS apart from other record management systems.

Asst. State Fire Marshal Joseph E. Thomas,
Maine State Fire Marshal's Office

Does BATS Show My Information to Others?

No! Each agency maintains operation security by managing their BATS account and strict control over the level of access to their information by other local, State, and Federal agencies. Investigators have the option to specify on a case-by-case basis which user(s) and/or agency(ies) they wish to share information with, thus allowing them to work collaboratively in a "task force" setting.

San Diego Fire-Rescue Metro Arson Strike Team (MAST) has been using BATS for over 2 years as our Department's entire Incident and Activity Management Tracking System. The BATS Program is helping San Diego Fire-Rescue reach its goal of having a Paperless Report, Incident and Activity Management System. The BATS staff continue to improve the system each year to fit the needs of the various agencies while keeping it user friendly (especially Firefighter Proof) and there is NO COST to participate in the program.

The BATS program is not only an Incident and Activity Management Tracking System, it is also a resource site. It gives you External Resources Links, Information on Fire and Explosive Investigations, and Advisories throughout the Nation. San Diego Fire-Rescue is on the same page with ATF to have a nationwide system to track the various arson and explosive incidents and devices that criminals are using to reach that common goal of catching and arresting suspects.

Captain Ed Filio, San Diego Fire-Rescue

How Can I Get Access to BATS?

ATF and USBDC are dedicated to assisting fire investigators, bomb technicians and investigators, and others who strive to keep Americans safe from the criminal use of fire and explosives. BATS offers your agency state-of-the-art case management technology at *no charge*.

To obtain additional information or to request a BATS account, contact the USBDC at 1-800-461-8841 or ***apply online*** at **www.BATS.gov**.