

FP2 - TIP 'O THE WEEK #130 UPDATES AND BACKUPS

Hi Everyone,

I spent the June 21st weekend back in the classroom, doing the Basic Firefighter course with Jack Tyler at the Kootenay Firefighter Training Weekend in Castlegar. I had mixed feelings about the overall experience of the course, mainly because the course was overbooked, which made the practical sections difficult. The classroom portion was very valuable though, so I think overall it was useful.

Most Fire Department work is very practical, hands-on stuff. I like that, because I tend to deal mostly with office protocols and computer programs in my day-to-day work. The classroom portion of this course provided a good conceptual foundation for those practical tasks, getting to the why rather than the how. I find it's easier for me to remember how to do things correctly and safely if I know what I'm trying to do, rather than just trying to recall how I was told to do it.

That doesn't mean you should ignore orders, of course. Jack never said it out loud, but I got the strong impression that there are three commandments for a firefighter: one, keep yourself safe, two, do what you're told and three, tell somebody if you don't know how to accomplish commandments one or two. Which I guess all boils down to one commandment - thou shalt not be an idiot.

Since this was an introduction-level course, a lot of the participants were quite young. That's a good thing, because I get the impression that Fire Departments across the country are hurting for volunteers, but I found their attitude towards risk/reward very interesting. Even more interesting was my reaction to their stated willingness to take "heroic" risks. "That's just stupid," I thought to myself, "we'll just have to save you, too."

I'm not sure exactly at what age the heroic impulse was replaced by the "Ummm, that seems like a bad idea..." impulse. Probably about the same time I got M&M'ed (married and mortgaged), but it might have been earlier. I guess I'll just have to stick with the one commandment, which should make everyone happy - including my chief, the bank and my wife (not necessarily in that order).



Welcome New Client

We would like to welcome Prince Edward County to the group of FirePro 2 users. Prince Edward County is a large island near the coast of Lake Ontario west of Kingston, and is accessible by ferry from the west end. Before amalgamation in 1997 the area was covered by 7 different Fire Departments, which are now part of Prince Edward County.

Prince Edward County now includes 12 Fire Halls with 150 full-time and volunteer Firefighters, and emergency services covered by the Department include first response, auto extrication, fire response and increasingly, water rescue. The Fire

Protection area includes about 800 km of road, 700 km of shoreline and a number of towns, wards and large lakes. The population of the area ranges from 24,000 in the off-season to over 40,000 in the summer months.



Updates and Backups

If you only do one thing for yourself this year, make it this: back up your data file. There is nothing as frustrating as having hours or even days or weeks of work disappear in an instant. I've had that feeling before, and the worst thing is that it's completely avoidable.

In the introduction to this Tip O the Week, I talked about commandments. There is also only one commandment for FirePro. Back up your data file. How often you back up the data file depends on how much data you are willing to lose if a problem occurs. Evaluate how much head bashing you will do on the keyboard if, for example, a week of your daily data entry is lost, and schedule your backups accordingly.

It is essential that you have a working copy of your data file should your hard drive crash, should your data file be accidentally deleted or should any other problem occur. Any other FirePro 2 files can be replaced fairly easily, but the data file is unique to your department and should be treated like the valuable time investment that it is.

The main data file is called <yourtown>.df1 (where <yourtown> could be Okotoks or Nelson etc., but it will always have the file extension .df1). It might also be referred to as an Omnis Datafile. This is the only file that absolutely must be backed up, usually after compressing it so that it takes up less space. The easiest way to compress your data file is to right-click on the file, select the "Send To" option, followed by the "Compressed (zipped) folder" option.

If you use pictures or links, there will also be folders called "Pictures" and "Links" in the same folder as your FirePro 2 library.

Some alternative places for you to back it up are:

- another computer (possibly your town's server)
- another hard disk
- a tape drive
- a CD (with a CD writer)
- a flash drive or data key

We advise that you keep a couple of backups and not just your most recent one, as sometimes a backup can be corrupt and having the previous one will be very valuable. Doug uses a portable hard drive to back up our files here (approximate cost is \$200 each). They connect by USB port and are very easy to use. We keep one off site and one on site and swap them each week. We also use an automatic backup system that kicks in every night, so we get 5 back-ups a week.

As an extra measure, feel free to send your data file to our office on a regular basis (once per month would be good) and we will hold on to it for you until you send the next one. You would need to send it in .zip format for efficiency's sake. If this option appeals to you let us know, so that we can properly store your data file. We do not charge for this service nor take responsibility for your data being here. But as a last resource we should have it available for you.



Quote of the week:

In nature there are neither rewards nor punishments - there are consequences.

Robert Ingersoll - (August 11, 1833 – July 21, 1899)

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Contacting us?

For all tech support, please send the emails to fp2tech@ingenioussoftware.com

For administration or accounting, e-mail anne@ingenioussoftware.com

For training, e-mail [Jeremy at fp2train@ingenioussoftware.com](mailto:Jeremy_at_fp2train@ingenioussoftware.com)

You may also call us anytime at 866-352-9495. If for some reason you are unable to reach us, an alternate contact number is: 416-238-5333.

If you'd like to see previous tips, you can view them online at

http://www.ingenioussoftware.com/Tips_index.htm

To view or download the FirePro 2 User Manual, go to:

<http://www.ingenioussoftware.com/downloadman.htm>

If you have a general question that you want to ask the other users of FirePro or if you want to share some advice, please feel free to send to the list that the tip comes through to you on –

fp2townhall@ingenioussoftware.net – remember that everyone on the list will get your e-mail, so use this with discretion. When you reply to a message received on the list, your message will go only to "fireprotech" , unless you change the "to" field. So, if you want everyone to see your reply, change the address to fp2townhall@ingenioussoftware.net

Please let other users of FirePro in your department know about the e-mail list too! They can subscribe to the list by simply sending a blank email to

fp2townhall-subscribe@ingenioussoftware.net

We welcome all users and appreciate everyone's input.

Enjoy the week ahead!

Jeremy

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