

# NFPA's Confidential Shipment Statistics (CSS) Frequently Asked Questions

## **What is the CSS Program?**

The Confidential Shipments Statistics (CSS) Program is the only monthly source of aggregated industry data for the fluid power industry. This report presents data on monthly orders and shipments collected from our membership and helps users understand trends and anticipate change within the industry. Member companies are surveyed, data is compiled by a 3rd party, and the results are sent to participants.

## **What will I receive as a CSS participant?**

Every month you will receive an electronic version of NFPA's CSS report, fourteen pages of fluid power analysis that allows participants to take a quick and accurate look at the state of the industry and analyze products, industry, and customers in detail with trend graphs and index data. Also included are:

- Two monthly CSS data reports with aggregated dollar data for industry and product segments.
- **U.S. Customer Market File** that includes data and analysis for over 40 customer markets and leading indicators.
- **NFPA's Electronic Statistical Toolkit**. An Excel-based software package that allows users to quickly and easily analyze CSS, company-specific, and outside data sources by creating instant graphs and tables that drop right into your planning documents and presentations. Automate time-consuming calculations and analyses that are commonly used in everyday business practices.

## **What's involved with being a CSS Participant?**

As a CSS participant, you report your company's monthly shipments and orders for all fluid power products produced in the U.S., as well as U.S. exports and U.S. imports (only products that are used for fluid power applications should be reported). Both Manufacturer and Supplier members are eligible to participate; Distributor members receive a summary report.

## **Will my company data remain confidential?**

Great care is taken to maintain confidentiality by having each participating company report directly to an independent market research firm, Dieringer Research Group. If less than four participants submit data to any CSS category for a given month, the aggregated dollar data is replaced with an n/a.

## **What if fluid power products only make up a small portion of my business, can I still participate in CSS?**

Yes, as long as your company manufactures (or supplies to) fluid power products. We encourage all eligible NFPA members to participate.

## **Our customer base is dominated by one or two large companies. We can forecast our business by talking with them about their business expectations. How would CSS provide better information?**

CSS is an independent, broad-based assessment of industry conditions that provides a check on the validity of what your customers are telling you, or helps fill the gaps in what they aren't telling you. In addition to fluid power trends, you also receive data on key customer markets for fluid power.

**Am I giving my competitors an unfair advantage by participating in CSS?**

Only CSS participants receive the monthly results from the CSS program. If your competitors are participating in the CSS program, then they are contributing monthly data so they too can understand trends and anticipate change within the industry.

**Can I access a list of CSS program participants?**

Yes, a list of companies participating in the CSS program is available upon request.

**Does the CSS program offer any information on fluid power customer markets?**

Yes, the **U.S. Customer Market File** provides raw dollar data and trend graphs for a selection of markets and indicators that allows users to track monthly changes on a quarterly basis. Data from this report is easily transferred into the NFPA Statistical Toolkit.

**How much time is involved every month to report my company's data?**

On average, about 15 minutes. Multiple divisions/locations and communication between them can increase the time involved.

**What type of company staff involvement is required?**

NFPA asks that one individual is assigned as the CSS contact. This individual is responsible for reporting monthly CSS data and verifying data that the third party's data collection system identifies as questionable.

**What can I do if my company's internal data doesn't match-up with the CSS categories?**

The complexity/availability of internal data tends to dictate how difficult it is to translate your internal data to the CSS categories. In most cases, a simple spreadsheet can be constructed to do the work for you.

**What if I fall into a membership category other than Manufacturer and Supplier, but my company manufactures a fluid power product(s) I'd like to report to the CSS program?**

Contact NFPA to discuss the product(s) in question. NFPA will review the product with you and determine if it qualifies to be reported to the CSS program. NFPA encourages all NFPA members that are eligible to participate in the CSS program and take advantage of this valuable member benefit.

**I don't see my company's product in the CSS product categories. Can we still participate? Is there any value in participating? Does NFPA ever expand CSS product categories into greater detail?**

If you don't see your product specifically listed, it probably fits within a broader category. Several factors drive the number and specificity of product categories within the CSS program. There is great value in reporting even if your product is in a broader category. The trends for that broader category and other product categories provide insight into trends for your product.

**Is U.S. Production or Total U.S. Sales collected in the CSS program?**

U.S. Production data is collected in the CSS program. Total U.S. Sales tends to experience issues with double-counting concerning third-party goods.

**What do we do if our assigned CSS Contact leaves the company?**

Be sure to contact NFPA. It is important to continue reporting and maintain your company's presence within the data for industry comparisons and benchmarking.

**I would like my company to begin participating in the CSS program and need to explain the value of this information to my supervisor(s). Can NFPA help?**

Yes, we have materials that can help others understand just what to expect from the CSS program. NFPA offers a one-on-one CSS Walkthrough Webcast with an NFPA staff member.

**My company's multiple divisions/locations make coordinating data reporting difficult for programs like the CSS program. Can NFPA help?**

Yes, NFPA will work with your company to make reporting as easy and less-time consuming as possible.

**We don't have much marketing/statistical support within our company. How can we make use of the CSS data?**

CSS provides quick numeric and graphical snap-shots if you don't have the time and support to analyze raw data yourself. It only takes a few minutes to look at the fluid power industry summary and the general product trends in the CSS report.

**Can anyone at NFPA help me develop a better understanding of exactly what the CSS program is and how to report my company's data?**

Yes, to schedule a one-on-one webcast or for more information about the CSS program, please contact Eric Armstrong at 414-778-3372 or e-mail [earmstrong@nfpa.com](mailto:earmstrong@nfpa.com).

**Who can I share the CSS report and information I receive with?**

NFPA asks that you only share NFPA's market information materials internally. No one may make or distribute or reuse all or any part of this report without the written permission of NFPA.

**How do I get started?**

To get started or for more information about the CSS program, please contact Eric Armstrong at 414-778-3372 or e-mail [earmstrong@nfpa.com](mailto:earmstrong@nfpa.com) or enroll on-line at [http://www.nfpa.com/OurIndustry/OurInd\\_Toolkit\\_CSSEnrollmentForm.asp](http://www.nfpa.com/OurIndustry/OurInd_Toolkit_CSSEnrollmentForm.asp).