

# SUBLIMITY FIRE DISTRICT

## Operational Guide

<b>SUBJECT:</b> Fire Investigation Procedures	O.G. NUMBER:
<b>PURPOSE:</b> To describe the Districts Fire Investigation Procedures	Original Date: 5/10/98
	Revision Date:

### Fire Investigation Procedures

The purpose of Fire Investigation is to determine fire cause at fire incidents as accurately and efficiently as possible. This often will be accomplished by using the team or task force approach with the Fire Department and Law Enforcement Agencies working as a team.

The Fire Chief shall serve as the Chief investigator for the District. All Duty Officer and Officer in Charge shall conduct preliminary investigations. At anytime, the Officer in Charge may request additional assistance from within the Districts members in the Investigation, or may request the assistance of the MCFIT and/or the Oregon State Fire Marshalls Office.

#### PROCEDURES:

A. The Officer in Charge will investigate, or cause to be investigated, all fires in which there is a reported fire loss or personal injury, even if it did not require apparatus response. If no investigators are at the scene, the officer in charge will call for one. If it is determined by the on scene investigator or officer in charge that additional investigators are needed, the officer in charge shall call for them. This may be other member of the District, or the MCFIT or the Oregon State Fire Marshals Office

B. The first investigator on the scene will be in charge of the investigation, and it is his responsibility to:

1. Request additional investigators if necessary through Dispatch.
2. Determine cause and origin.
3. Notify other agencies and fire chief as necessary. Any fire with a fatality or serious injury, the Oregon State Fire Marshals Office and the MCFIT are to be notified.
4. Determine materials and/or equipment involved in ignition.
5. Determine factors influencing the development of the fire.
6. Record the extent of damages.

7. Conduct interviews as required to determine cause and origin.
8. Sketches and photographs as required.
9. Keep hand written notes on all pertinent information.
10. Complete the required reports.
11. File all records and reports in the fire investigation file.
12. Exchange information with the police agencies and other investigators as necessary.
13. Report findings to the fire chief upon completion.

C. Fires found to have originated by other than natural or accidental causes or in which a cause cannot be determined or at anytime during the investigation that the cause is found to be suspicious, shall cause immediate notification of the appropriate law enforcement agency, the Oregon State Fire Marshals Office and the MCFIT. The fire investigator will assist the law enforcement agency or agencies as much as possible during the course of the entire investigation.

D. In the event that physical evidence is to be taken, it shall be done whenever possible, by a law enforcement evidence coordinator.

E. Whenever evidence is taken, it shall be put in appropriate containers and marked with name of person taking evidence sample, time, date, and incident number. Whenever evidence is transferred from one person to another, the person who receives the evidence shall provide a receipt for it, with his or her name, date, time, and incident number. When evidence is to be stored before going to lab, it must be under lock and key and be kept where it can be vouched for by a person or persons that it has not been tampered with while in their custody. A supply of evidence containers will be kept at the police department. Contact them to provide containers when needed.

F. Copies of the completed investigation reports, of suspicious and incendiary fires, shall be forwarded to the proper police agency. (In the case of the City Police Department, it will be the officer in charge of the Operations Unit.) There will also be copy of policy agency report file with Fire Investigation Report.

G. When there is a fire death the following procedures will be followed:

1. The scene will immediately be secured, and the body will not be moved unless the body would be further damaged by spread of fire or possible building collapse. When possible, if a body has to be moved, it should be photographed before the moving of the body.
2. When the normal removal of body is taking place, it will be done whenever possible by the law enforcement agency in conjunction with the coroner and according to the following procedures:
  - a. Photograph of body from at least two angles. (If body is covered with debris, it will first be photographed with debris in place.)

- b. Then debris will be removed keeping debris separate from other debris preferably in can or container.
  - c. When body is being removed, it should be outlined with chalk or marking tape first.
  - d. Then a picture or pictures showing the normal escape route victim should have taken and also picture of anything preventing exit.
3. The fire officer in charge of the fire will immediately notify the following people or agencies:
- a. Police or appropriate law enforcement agency.
  - b. Coroner.
  - c. Oregon State Fire Marshals Office and the MCFIT.
  - d. Fire Chief.