

PURPOSE

To establish consistent, accurate and meaningful guidelines for the completion of a Fire Department Investigation report.

To establish a cause and origin of the fire, provide an initial assessment of the fire loss and the determination of potential losses that could have resulted from the fire.

POLICY

It is the goal of the Peoria Fire Department to have an established cause and origin of all fires that occur in the City of Peoria.

- All fires will be listed into one of four causes:
 - Accidental
 - Natural
 - Incendiary
 - Undetermined

This would include a record for each fire event to be utilized for the purpose of

- Compliance with the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NIFRS)
- Local statistical analysis
- A system which will assist in the apprehension and conviction of arson.
- A system that will identify and intervene in a manner that reduces juvenile arson.
- A system that interacts and is coordinated with national, state, county and local law enforcement agencies for the reduction of arson in the City of Peoria.

PROCEDURE

It is the responsibility of the Incident Commander (IC), Company Officer or the On Duty Fire Investigator to determine fire loss on all fires in the City of Peoria.

Unless a definite save/loss value can be ascertained from the owner, or other property representative, an estimate of loss must be determined.

- This estimate is to be calculated by using \$200.00 per square foot as the multiplying factor to value structural damage (this figure estimates removal and demolition as well as reconstruction of the structure).
- Content loss can be determined by reviewing the actual contents that have been involved. Where it is impossible to determine the contents in a severe fire, an estimate can be made by assigning a content value of fifty percent (50%) of the value of the structural loss.

Fires determined to be accidental in nature with an obvious cause and an identified origin shall be recorded in the NIFRS Incident Report.

Additionally, the Incident Narrative page will be completed by the first arriving Peoria Company Officer unless reassigned by the IC. This procedure is to be used when the fire involves 100 square feet or less and is under \$10,000 in estimated loss.

The Fire Department Company Officer or Fire Incident Commander shall complete the NIFRS Incident Report for fires not investigated by the Fire Prevention Division.

- All mandatory fields on the report regarding cause, origin, and loss shall be entered in the report.

If the IC cannot determine a cause of the fire or if the fire area exceeds 100 square feet or an estimated loss of \$10,000, the on call fire investigator is to be notified.

The fire scene is to be secured and retained by fire department or police department personnel until the arrival of the investigator.

The investigator will report to the IC, receive a briefing, assume fire scene responsibility, and continue the fire investigation.

The fire investigator, with the cooperation of the IC will determine continued resources needed from the fire suppression forces on the scene to support the fire investigation. Lighting and overhaul requirements to conduct the fire investigation may be requested.

The Incident Safety Officer is to be consulted to determine scene safety prior to access being made by the fire investigator.

- Fire investigation scene safety as prescribed in NFPA 921 chapter 12 subsections 12.1 through 12.2, shall be followed.
- A Fire investigation exposure report is recommended to be filled out and attached to the fire investigation report and is to be reviewed by the Fire Marshal.

If the on scene investigator determines that the fire was criminal in nature or the possibility of arson exists, the Peoria Police Department fire investigation unit will be notified and the scene shall be secured.

- Upon arrival, the scene shall be turned over to the Peoria Police Department. The Peoria Fire Department will remain on scene to assist in the investigation.

In the event a Peoria Police fire investigator can not be reached or is unable to respond, Peoria Fire Department investigator will continue the investigation.

- Documentation of the scene, including evidence collection, photo log, and witness statements shall be obtained with the assistance of a Peoria police officer.

A complete and thorough investigation shall be conducted as prescribed in NFPA 921 Guide for Fire and Explosion Investigation.

If it is deemed by the fire investigator that additional resources are needed, with the approval of the Fire Marshal, any qualified outside agency can be called to assist in the investigation.

The Fire Marshal shall periodically review construction values in the City to determine the accuracy of the loss estimation formulas.

- Additionally, the Fire Marshall shall periodically confirm estimated save/loss values with insurance companies to confirm the accuracy of these assessments.

The Incident Commander shall request the City of Peoria On Duty Fire Investigator for for the following incident situations:

- Structural fires resulting in losses exceeding 100 square feet or \$10,000 in damages
- Fires that are known arson or suspicious in nature.
- Fire incidents involving serious injuries or fatalities to firefighters or civilians.
- Fires involving city owner or city operated facilities and equipment.
- Fires involving state regulated facilities (schools, nursing homes, etc.).

When fire incidents involve a serious injury or death of a firefighter, two investigators are to be requested to the scene.

The Fire Marshal may elect to request additional assistance from other outside agencies for investigative assistance. These agencies include, but are not limited to, the City of Peoria Police Department Arson Investigator the State Fire Marshal's Office, or other Maricopa County Arson Task Force members or departments.

- When a fire investigator is on the scene or is responding, companies shall delay non-essential overhaul until the investigator has arrived and has had time to survey the fire area.

Salvage activities, which stop further property damage, may continue as long as these procedures do not disrupt the area of origin or disturb any possible evidence related to the cause of the fire.

Should the investigator be delayed while responding, Command shall assign personnel to protect the fire scene and prohibit entry by anyone other than authorized fire and law enforcement individuals.

Command will turn over jurisdiction of the scene to the Fire Investigator as soon as possible once the fire has been stabilized.

- The fire investigator shall retain jurisdiction until he releases the scene back to Command.
- The investigator may inform Command that he intends to retain possession of the scene for further investigation.
- In this case, the responsibility for scene security becomes that of the Peoria Police Department.

The investigator may request from command any manpower or equipment required to assist in the investigation.

- Command will respond to such requests, to the extent possible, under prevailing circumstances.

Fire suppression and personnel will work closely with the Fire Investigator to ensure a thorough and accurate investigation.

Protection of the fire scene and preservation of physical evidence will be a primary concern once life safety is assured and fire control is achieved.

The Fire Investigator will conduct the investigation with the cooperation and assistance of the Incident Commander and Company Officer.

The Fire Investigator shall be responsible for the input of all fire cause and loss/save data required on the Fire Incident Report for fires, which have been investigated by the Fire Prevention Division.

- The Fire Incident Commander will also enter comments on the NIFRS Incident Narrative section of the report and will ensure that all information is correct regarding scene address, conditions, etc.

Fires involving motor vehicles must have all data fields entered. Loss values will be determined utilizing the most current available information in the Kelly Blue Book Used Car Guide (www.kbb.com). The "retail good" value of the guide is to be utilized to determine the save/loss information for the Fire Incident Report.

The On Duty Investigator shall complete a Fire Investigation Report for each incident investigated by the Fire Prevention Division. The Investigator upon completion of the investigation shall complete the NIFRS. All fields on the report regarding cause, origin, loss, and save factors shall be entered in the report.

All fires which result in serious structural damage are to be reported to the Building Safety Division. This report is to occur as early as possible following the fire. Minor fires can be forwarded to the Fire Marshal by City House Mail the following day. Severe fires where structural stability and public safety is questioned may result in requesting assistance during the incident. The Fire Marshal or Fire Investigator shall request the response of the Building Safety Department through the Peoria Police Department Dispatch Center.

Approved: _____


Stacy Irvine, Acting Fire Chief

1-25-12

Date