

Peoria Police Department Policy and Procedure Manual

Policy 4.34 Reckless Burning and Arson



**“Our Community...
Our Commitment”**

I. POLICY

It is the policy of the Peoria Police Department to coordinate with the Peoria Fire Department in the investigation of fires or explosions within the City of Peoria. The policy of the Peoria Fire Department is to rule on fires or explosions and classify them in the following categories:

- A. Accidental;
- B. Cannot Determine Origin;
- C. Reckless Burning;
- D. Suspected Arson.

II. PURPOSE

A. To establish formalized protocol so that a structured transition of incidents between the Fire and Police Departments may occur, and to establish guidelines for requesting fire department and or police department qualified Investigator/s to fire or explosion scenes.

B. Responsibilities

1. Peoria Fire Department Investigators will respond to the following incidents:

- a. All working structure fires.
- b. All fire incidents involving injuries to civilian or fire personnel.
- c. Fires that are suspicious in nature or have an unknown origin and cause.
- d. All fires involving State regulated facilities (i.e. schools, nursing homes), regardless of severity.

e. If fires are ruled Cannot Determine Origin, Reckless Burning or Suspected Arson, a Fire Department investigator will contact the on-duty Police Department supervisor and advise them of their findings as well as their recommendations.

2. Police Department employees will not rule on fires or explosions as to origin and cause, or take disposition reports on these incidents without the technical expertise of a Fire Investigator or qualified Criminal Investigations Bureau (CIB) Arson Investigator. CIB Arson Investigators will respond and conduct criminal investigations regarding the following fire and explosion situations:

- a. All fires and explosions where a severe or life threatening injury has occurred;
- b. All fatalities caused by a fire and/or an explosion;

c. When criminal activity is suspected as a cause of the fire or explosion, based upon a Fire Department Investigator's initial investigation.

d. Clandestine drug labs that have caused fires or explosions will be investigated by CIB Detectives for the appropriate criminal charge. The disposition of the report will be shared with the Fire Department Investigators as to the origin and cause of the fire or explosion.

C. Scene Security: When Fire Department Investigators have determined that a fire and or explosion requires a Police Department investigation per this policy, the following procedure shall be followed:

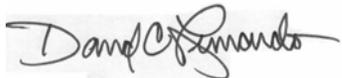
1. The Fire Department investigator will request a Patrol supervisor, through Communications, to meet them at the scene. The Patrol supervisor will then ensure that the scene is protected like any other crime scene.

2. The Patrol supervisor will notify the CIB Sergeant, who will determine if they will respond a qualified Arson Investigator(s) and all other necessary support units for the investigation.

3. Patrol officers will not enter the scene, unless exigent circumstances exists (i.e. destruction of evidence by individuals, an arrest is made, etc.)

4. The Fire Investigator will remain on scene until arrival of the assigned CIB personnel. The Fire Investigator will then brief the CIB investigators on the particulars of the incident. Once the briefing has occurred, like with most other criminal incidences, CIB will take the scene from the Fire Investigator and become the primary criminal investigative unit. CIB may request the assistance of the Fire Investigator and work the investigation jointly. Either way, the Fire Department is statutorily authorized to investigate the cause, origin and circumstances of each and every fire occurring within their jurisdiction. Therefore, if requested, the Fire Department Investigator shall have access to the scene and information discovered through the CIB investigation.

**Peoria Police Department
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