



Jackson Hole Fire/EMS Operations Manual

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PURPOSE

To ensure the investigation of all fires and explosions occurring within the Town of Jackson and Teton County which cause destruction or damage to property. This department shall follow the most recent edition of the National Fire Protection Association; 921: Guide for Fire and Explosion Investigations, 1033: Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Investigator, and 1321: Standard for Fire Investigation Units.

Wyoming Statute Section §35-9-109 (1977) directs the Fire Chief to investigate the origin and cause of every fire.

POLICY

1. It shall be the policy of this department to make every effort to determine the circumstances, origin, and cause of all fires within the jurisdiction.
2. It shall be the policy of this department to immediately notify the Fire Marshal when any of the following circumstances exist.
 - a. Arson, incendiary or suspicious fires.
 - b. Fires involving juveniles.
 - c. Evidence of suspicions of any crime having occurred in connection with the emergency.
 - d. Deaths or injuries from fires.
 - e. Explosions.
 - f. Fires which cause damage or loss.
 - g. Other related hazards and/or fires as determined by the on-scene incident commander.

SECTION I: RESPONSIBILITY

1. It is the responsibility of the Incident Commander to ensure that notification of the Fire Marshal is made.
2. It is the responsibility of all officers and members to be alert for any evidence of the cause of the fire and to preserve such evidence until the scene is properly transferred to the authority of the Fire Investigator.
3. It is the responsibility of the Incident Commander to conduct the investigation when a Fire Investigator is not available or contact a Wyoming State Fire Investigator as assigned by the Wyoming State Fire Marshal.
4. It is the responsibility of the Fire Investigator to conduct the investigation in accordance with the NFPA 921 Scientific Method using a systematic approach and as accepted by law.
5. It is the responsibility of the Fire Investigator to notify Law Enforcement whenever any evidence of a crime is discovered or detected.
6. In the event of a wildland fire, National Wildfire Coordinating Group NWCG Fire Investigator guidelines shall be followed. If available, requesting National Park Service or National Forest Service

certified wildland fire investigators to conduct and/or assist wildland fire origin and cause is recommended.

SECTION II: REPORTING ON SCENE

1. The Fire Investigator shall advise dispatch of his/her enroute, arrival and departure of the incident scene.
2. The arriving Fire Investigator shall report to the Incident Commander and obtain all pertinent information prior to commencing the scene examination.
3. Accountability shall be maintained by the Incident Commander for Fire Investigators working on scene.

SECTION III: SCENE SECURITY

1. Once a Fire Investigator arrives on scene, all entry must be authorized by the on-scene Fire Investigator. It is the responsibility of the Incident Commander to take the necessary precautions to prevent entry into the scene by unauthorized persons. Entry/overhaul of any structure/vehicle will be closely coordinated between the Incident Commander and the Fire Investigator. The following may be utilized to secure a scene:
 - a. Fire line or hazardous area tape.
 - b. Police Officers.
 - c. Fire/EMS personnel.
 - d. Other means as circumstances dictate.

SECTION IV: SAFETY EQUIPMENT

1. Prior to entering an emergency scene, the Fire Investigator shall don necessary safety equipment to protect health and provide safety, i.e., helmet, hard hat, boots, dust mask, turnout gear, protective clothing, SCBA, etc.
2. Additional safety equipment may be obtained from a company operating at the scene. Prior to removing equipment from fire apparatus, advise the appropriate Engineer or Company Officer of the equipment need.

SECTION V: EVIDENCE COLLECTION AND PRESERVATION

1. For all fires determined incendiary, all physical evidence observed at an incident scene shall be properly collected, itemized, analyzed, and stored for use in criminal/civil court. In cases determined not incendiary, all physical evidence shall be left on scene, unless removal for testing is necessary to determine the cause of the fire.
2. Proper chain of custody forms shall be provided for all evidence collected.
3. Evidence that has been analyzed and returned to the Fire Investigator should be transferred to the custody of the Jackson Police Department or Teton County Sheriff's Office for proper safeguarding until such time that the evidence is no longer useful.

SECTION VI: INVESTIGATION REPORT

A final investigation report shall be uploaded to Bomb Arson Tracking System (BATS), then saved as a hard copy and electronic versions to keep on file and to be provided upon request. A record of all requests made for copies of entire or parts of the investigation shall be retained in the investigation report file.

All contents of the investigation report may be reviewed by Teton County Legal Department before release.

Investigation Report shall include, at minimum:

1. Dispatch notes and times from incident including apparatus response
2. Investigation written report

3. Photographic documentation
4. Scene sheets/notes
5. Weather report
6. Written statements
7. Documentation of evidence removed from the scene
8. Scene sketch
9. Any other relevant documentation (optional)