

	<h1><b>COMMERCE FIRE DEPARTMENT</b></h1>
	<h2>Standard Operating Guidelines</h2>
	<b>Subject:</b> Fire Investigations
	<b>Reference Number:</b> 2.08
	<b>Effective Date:</b> 1/23/2014 <b>Last Date Revised:</b> 1/8/2015
<b>Approved By:</b> Chief Kevin Dean	

**Purpose:** The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that the points of origin and causes of all fires are identified to the extent possible so that accurate information can be maintained for budgeting, fire prevention and other uses, and to ensure that arson fires are identified and proper follow-up occurs.

**Scope:** All Suppression and Investigation Personnel

**Policy:** Guidelines shall be in accordance with *NFPA 1033 Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Inspector*.

**General:**

A. The incident commander is responsible for determining the point of origin and cause of a fire. Under certain circumstances the IC will need additional assistance. A Fire Investigator should be called to the following incidents:

1. Death or Serious Injury: A fire death or serious injury not related to a vehicle accident.
2. Major Fire: A fire that could exceed a \$100,000 loss even if the cause is known.
3. Arson: A fire that is determined to be incendiary. (See below for fires in abandoned houses, repeated minor incidents and vandalism.)
4. Cause Difficult to Determine: A fire where an accidental cause cannot be determined by fire suppression personnel.
5. Suspect Present or Known: An incendiary fire, regardless of size or type, with a suspect present or known.
6. False Alarm: A malicious false alarm with a suspect present or known. (Also notify the Police Department or Sheriff's Department.)

B. Resources do not permit the investigation of woods fires or car fires unless there is a serious injury or fatality not related to a vehicle accident.

C. In the case of repeated minor incidents (trash or brush fires that appear to be linked and minor vandalism fires) and fires in abandoned houses, notify the Police Department if in the City or the Sheriff's Department if outside the City. Then, notify the State Fire Marshal's Office during the next business day.

D. In cases where a serious code violation (locked exit, inoperable sprinkler system, etc.) is discovered, notify the respective Fire Investigator and/or State Fire Marshal's Office.

E. For situations not described above, call the Fire Chief, his/her designee, Commerce Police Department or Jackson County Sheriff's Department as the situation warrants.

G. When a fire investigator is called, the recording secretary should fill out the incident report in all areas except those relating to the cause of the fire, unless the investigator provides instructions on what to report. Where an investigation is continuing, enter "Under Investigation" in the proper area of report.