

3001.01

Fire Investigation Call Out Standard Operating Procedure



This procedure is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. The procedure should not be construed as creating a higher duty of care, in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party civil claims against employees. A violation of this procedure, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department for non-judicial administrative action in accordance with the laws governing employee discipline.

Related Policies: SOP 6000.03

Applicable HI Statutes: HRS Chapter 132 §132-1, §132-3, §132-4, §132-4.5

I. PURPOSE

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is designed to guide Incident Commanders (IC) in the process of requesting a Fire Prevention Branch (FPB) response for specific categories of fire incidents (refer to the categories section below) that may require a fire investigation.

II. APPLICABILITY

These procedures shall apply to all uniformed personnel within the Hawai'i Fire Department.

III. CATEGORIES

A. **Commercial Building Fires:**

A fire at a commercial building refers to a fire that occurs within a structure primarily used for business or industrial purposes, such as offices, retail stores, factories, or warehouses.

B. **Incendiary (Suspected Arson):**

Arson is the deliberate and intentional act of setting fire to property, often for malicious or criminal purposes. It involves using incendiary devices or methods to start the fire with the intent of causing damage, destruction, or harm. Documentation of these fire scenes may be critical in the criminal investigation process.

C. **Fires with Injuries or Fatalities (Civilian or HFD):**

Any fire involving civilian or firefighter injuries or fatalities (suspected or confirmed) will be treated as a high-priority response. These incidents may lead to legal actions, and proper documentation is crucial to ensure coverage and accuracy during the investigation.

D. **Residential Fires (Permitted)**

Common residential structure fires in which the origin and cause are not determined by Operations personnel.

E. **Unpermitted/non-conforming construction**

The FPB will take information from the IC and evaluate the situation to determine an appropriate response for all unpermitted or non-conforming structure fires.

IV. PROCEDURES

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- A. Data Collection - Before initiating an FPB response, the following details shall be obtained by the Incident Commander (IC):
 - 1. Category of Fire and extent of the damage (structure standing or collapsed).
 - 2. HPD Officer's Name and Contact Number (if arson is suspected).
 - 3. Contact information for the owner of the property or tenant if access to the property is required after Operations personnel have cleared the scene.
- B. Initiation of Request
 - 1. The IC shall contact the Fire Prevention Battalion Chief (FPBC) or designee by cell phone to request a fire investigation response.
 - 2. At the time of the request, the IC shall provide a situation report, including photos or video if possible, to the FPBC to relay relevant information regarding the circumstances of the fire.
- C. Evaluation of Request
 - 1. The request received by Prevention shall be evaluated based on the following criteria:
 - a) Level of response required at the time of request
 - b) Availability of resources (personnel, equipment)
 - c) Alignment with the Fire Prevention Branch's guidelines per NPFA 921 for investigation response
 - 2. Upon receiving information from the on-scene IC, the FPBC will determine whether an immediate response is necessary. If the request does not require an immediate response, the fire investigation may be scheduled later with the property owner.
 - 3. The decision to approve or decline the request will be communicated with the IC (or their designee) within 30 minutes of the initial request.
- D. Planning and Coordination
 - 1. The FPBC (or their designee) shall notify the Lead Fire Investigator (LFI) responsible for the investigation response.
 - 2. The LFI will contact and communicate with the IC on scene to coordinate a response plan for the incident.
 - 3. The LFI shall ensure that all personnel involved are briefed on the nature of the request, expectations, and their specific roles
- E. Response time for the initial request
 - 1. Inspectors shall make every effort to respond as quickly as possible, though delays may occur due to personnel availability.
 - 2. After normal scheduled work hours, a timeframe of 15 minutes or more may be needed for FPB to respond to the request, as FPB personnel are off duty and not always available to respond immediately.
- F. Availability of Prevention Personnel
 - 1. FPB personnel assigned hours are Monday through Friday, 0745-1630 hours.

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2. Outside of scheduled working hours, response availability may vary due to staffing levels. FPB personnel will make every effort to respond to calls during evenings, weekends, and holidays, subject to availability.
3. The FPBC shall notify the FCCC, Operation BC staff, and AC2 in advance by email if the FPBC will be unavailable for after-hours callout coordination and provide an alternate contact for the duration of the FPBC's unavailability.
4. The FPBC shall notify the FCCC, Operation BC staff, and AC2 by email if there is no availability of Prevention personnel to respond to an after-hours incident.

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