



Line-of-Duty Death or Serious Injury Investigation

In the event of a line-of-duty death or serious injury to one or your firefighter(s), EMS provider(s), dispatcher(s), or civilian employee(s), the department must take immediate steps to ensure that the incident is accurately documented and investigated. This action is conducted to protect the interests of the deceased or seriously injured, the surviving family (PSOB program), and your State Fire Marshal Office must be notified of the death(s) or serious injury(s).

As soon as possible after a line-of-duty death(s) or serious injury(s) occurred, the Fire Chief should assign an Investigation Team to conduct an investigation of circumstances of the event. The objective of this team shall be to thoroughly analyze and document the events leading to the death or serious injury.

A secondary objective shall be to obtain, document and secure evidence, which may be a necessary factor in any regulatory action or litigation resulting from incident.

An officer designated by the Fire Chief shall direct the investigation of incidents involving the death or serious injury to fire department members. The investigation team shall report through the designated team leader, who shall be responsible for the management of investigative process.

To accomplish this, there will be an Incident Investigation Team pre-designated for use in these types of emergencies. The team shall be made up of (but not limited to.)

- ✓ Assistant/Deputy Chief (appointed by the Chief),
- ✓ Officer-in-Charge of Fire Investigation
- ✓ Officer-in-Charge of Fire Training
- ✓ Officer-in-Charge of EMS Training
- ✓ Member from the Office of Chief Medical Examiner
- ✓ Fire Department Safety Officer
- ✓ Local / State Law Enforcement Agency
- ✓ Local / County EMA Director
- ✓ Local / County Fire Marshal

The Officer in charge should call the activation of the team. The team should then meet at the scene of the incident as soon as possible. The initial collection of facts, preservation of evidence, and the appropriate agency notifications shall be the responsibility of the Incident Commander until the time the team can take over.

The following is a list of items that should be addressed:

Immediate Action: (but not limited to)

SECURE THE SCENE. No unnecessary disturbing of the scene should take place.

- ✓ Remove all non-essential personnel.
- ✓ Designate one point of entrance and exiting
- ✓ Log all personnel entering and exiting the scene
- ✓ PD assigned to standby and secure the scene

IMPOUND ALL SAFETY EQUIPMENT that was used by your firefighter(s):

- ✓ SCBA
- ✓ Turnout Gear
- ✓ Helmet
- ✓ Gloves
- ✓ On/off duty clothing member was wearing
- ✓ Tools/Specialty equipment

These items may need to be sent for testing.

Have a video and still picture record made of the site.

Secondary Action (but not limited to.)

- ✓ Obtain audiotapes of the incident.
- ✓ Request written transcripts with times of radio transmissions.
- ✓ Impound all written forms used in the incident.
- ✓ Incident Work Sheets and Personnel Accountability

Other governmental agencies, which may be involved in investigation:

- ✓ National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
- ✓ Occupational Safety and Health Administration
- ✓ Law enforcement agencies
- ✓ International Association of Fire Chiefs
- ✓ International Association of Fire Fighters
- ✓ Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF)
- ✓ Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA)
- ✓ U.S. Fire Administration

Obtain written statements from all directly involved individuals. It is preferred that these statements be completed prior to the release of members at the end of fire or EMS incident. If this is impractical, the statements should be provided within twenty-four hours. These statements are confidential and are not

to be reviewed by any individual, including Supervisors. These documents are to be sealed and turned over to the Incident Investigation Team.

Setup interview teams for all companies on the scene.

- ✓ Interview all individuals on scene
- ✓ Reconstruct the scene from statements
- ✓ Have diagrams and designs of the fire scene for interviews
- ✓ Review the autopsy report in the event of death (one should be required)
- ✓ Write a final report

The participation of these agencies shall be at their own discretion, depending on the circumstances of the particular incident. These agencies may or may not produce their own reports of the incident with the recommendations for corrective actions. These reports do not supersede the Investigation Team report.

The investigation team shall utilize the resources of individuals and agencies outside the fire department to assist in investigation and/or provide technical consultation when necessary.

Injury/Death Investigation Checklist

Safety Equipment Impound Check Sheet (This is a pull out work copy, make copies as needed)

If a single or multiple, seriously injured or deceased firefighter(s) are transported to medical facilities for treatment, and you cannot secure the firefighter(s) personal protective equipment (PPE), you need to call the hospital, local fire department, or State Fire Marshal to assist with impounding and securing all PPE.

When impounding safety equipment, place equipment into CLEAR, heavy-duty plastic bag(s) and secure the plastic bag with an evidence tag from local Law Enforcement.

Impound ALL Safety Equipment that was used by your firefighter(s).

SCBA - to include Mask, Straps, Regulator, Harness, Bottle, and Pack.

Location Secured: _____

Timed Secured: _____

Date secured: _____

By Whom: _____

Turnout/Bunker Coat - to include liner(s) and tools attached

Location Secured: _____

Time Secured: _____

Date Secured: _____

By Whom: _____

Turnout/Bunker Pants – to include liner(s), boots leather/rubber, and suspenders.

Location Secured: _____

Time Secured: _____

Date Secured: _____

By Whom: _____

Helmet – to include liner(s), strap, and shield.

Location Secured: _____

Time Secured: _____

Date Secured: _____

By Whom: _____

Gloves – attempt to secure both gloves.

Location Secured: _____

Time Secured: _____

Date Secured: _____

By Whom: _____

Specialized Equipment – to include hand, electrical, and power tools

Location Secured: _____

Time Secured: _____

Date Secured: _____

By Whom: _____