

San Mateo County Fire Service POLICIES AND STANDARDS MANUAL

Fire Investigation Call Out Policy

Policy No. 2001-01

Adopted 01/07/02

Revised 07/30/08

- Title:** Call-Out for Supplemental San Mateo County Fire Investigators
- Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to adopt a standardized procedure for San Mateo County fire agencies to request additional fire investigation personnel.
- Policy:** It is the policy of the San Mateo County Fire Chiefs that the county fire agencies will use this call out procedure when requesting support from San Mateo County Fire Investigators for assistance with an origin and cause fire investigation. This policy is based on the premise that the originating agency "owns" the incident. It establishes the procedure for such a resource call-out and also reconfirms the requirement that the "owner" agency retains the ultimate authority, responsibility and accountability for the investigation. The agency's request for the County Fire Investigators' support is to provide supplemental Fire Investigation personnel and resources to assist the host agency. It is not the intent of this policy for the County Fire Investigators to take over or supplant the owning agency's responsibility for the investigation, but rather to provide necessary support services to assist the owning agency in the successful completion of a demanding investigation.
- In the event that the owner agency cannot provide investigative services, they will contract with a neighbor agency or with a private enterprise for such services. Such contract agency will then take the lead in the investigation and may use this callout policy as deemed necessary. This policy is not for the purpose of replacing investigation personnel for an agency that does not employ certified origin and cause fire investigators.
- Background:** There is a benefit in a complex or challenging investigation or one with a large fire loss or loss of life to enlist the support of supplemental fire investigation resources. These resources may include both experienced investigators and specialized equipment.

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Standard:

I. CALL OUT PROCEDURE:

- a. Upon request by an Incident Commander or Lead Investigator/Agency Representative for supplemental fire investigation resources beyond that which the local agency can provide, Public Safety Communications (PSC) shall send a countywide investigator group alpha page to all participating personnel with the requestor's contact information.
- b. The group alpha page will be repeated every ninety (90) seconds until the Lead Investigator/Agency Representative calls PSC to cancel the page.
- c. Responding Investigators will contact the Lead Investigator/Agency Representative to report they are responding and give their estimated time of arrival to the scene.
- d. The Lead Investigator/Agency Representative will notify PSC as to which investigators are responding (by unit number i.e., PR8A).
- e. When directed, PSC will then send out a group alpha cancellation page.
- f. Responding Investigators shall maintain their accurate status with PSC (i.e. responding, on scene, clear).

II. DUTIES OF INVESTIGATORS:

- a. **Incident Lead Investigator/Agency Representative:**
 1. Manage responding investigators to the scene.
 2. Organize and coordinate the fire investigation operations, maintain personnel safety and rehab all assigned personnel before releasing them from the incident.
 3. Be responsible for the entire origin and cause fire investigation report, liaison with law enforcement, and field all media contacts when necessary.
- b. **Fire Investigator:**
 1. Upon direction from the Lead Investigator/Agency Representative, respond to the incident with all department issued PPE.
 2. Report to the Command Post/Incident Commander and check in with a T-card. Then report to the Lead Investigator/Agency Representative and carry out duties as assigned
 3. Maintain accountability with Incident Commander.

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4. Submit a written summary of your investigation findings or provide verbal reports to the Lead Investigator/Agency Representative.

c. Fire Investigator - Trainee:

1. Complete tasks as assigned by supervising investigator(s).

d. Fire Investigation Personnel Information Database:

1. Maintain a current list of participating personnel with the necessary contact information.
2. The San Mateo County FPO Executive Board is responsible to assign a coordinator to oversee and maintain the database.