



MABAS DIVISION 19

SOG #: 19-205	Effective Date: 10/01/19
Section: Operations	
Subject: Fire Investigation	

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all fires and explosions responded to by MABAS 19 Fire Investigators are investigated and properly documented in accordance with state and federal laws as well as national standards.

SCOPE:

This guideline applies to all members of MABAS Division 19 when assigned or responding as a MABAS 19 Fire Investigator.

DEFINITIONS:

None

GUIDELINE:

The Fire Chief has overall responsibility for fire investigations. The Fire Marshal is responsible for management of the fire investigations program. The Incident Commander (IC) of each incident is responsible for ensuring that each fire is investigated for origin and cause. MABAS 19 Fire Investigation Team is a resource to assist in the investigation process.

The first-in Lieutenant/Company Officer should conduct a preliminary investigation of each fire or explosion to identify the origin, cause, and circumstances. The Officer will notify the IC of the results of the preliminary investigation. The first-in Company Officer and Chief Officer shall complete a first arriving narrative in NFIRS. If the origin of a fire or explosion appears to be suspicious, the IC should take immediate charge of all physical evidence relating to the fire or explosion, coordinate with investigators, and contact local law enforcement. The IC is responsible for determining when fire investigators, fire investigators with arrest authority, or sworn law enforcement investigators, from this or another agency, are appropriate to investigate an incident. The immediate response of an appropriate investigator should be requested when any of the following circumstances exist:

- (a) Major or unusual fires that exceed the investigative abilities of a Company Officer
- (b) Any fire resulting in a major injury or death
- (c) Incidents involving special circumstances, such as an especially high dollar loss, extensive damage, political sensitivity, or any other circumstance deemed appropriate by the Chief Officer / IC
- (d) Arson and/or incendiary devices are involved, or the origin of the fire is otherwise suspicious
- (e) There has been an explosion
- (f) There is evidence or suspicion that a crime has occurred in connection with a fire or explosion
- (g) A fire has been started by a juvenile
- (h) Any illegal activity that potentially could cause a fire and/or explosion has occurred



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EQUIPMENT

The fire investigator's unit should be stocked with the following equipment to help investigate fire cause, origin, and circumstance:

- Personal Protective Equipment
- Decon supplies
- Digital camera
- Spare batteries
- Voice recording device and spare media
- Fire investigator toolbox
- Shovels, rake, broom, and sifter
- Disposable latex evidence collection gloves
- Evidence collection markers and labels for canisters

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS:

USE OF PROTECTIVE GEAR

Fire investigators are responsible for using personal protective equipment (PPE) and respiratory protection appropriate for the conditions present at an investigation scene. When entering any fire scene during the fire, before or during overhaul, or when there is a chance of re-ignition, fire investigators shall wear full structural PPE and self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA).

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

FIRE INVESTIGATOR QUALIFICATIONS

Fire investigators should:

- (a) Meet the job performance requirements of the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) standards for fire investigators.
- (b) Complete the certification requirements of the Division of Personnel Standards and Education.
- (c) Comply with all federal and state statutory and constitutional investigatory requirements, including limitations on searches and seizures.

LOGBOOK

Each investigator should maintain a logbook of field training, continued professional training hours, and investigative experience. The purpose of this log is to assist in establishing the member as an expert witness in court appearances.

Revised 10/1/2019

Approved: 10/1/2019

Adam Riegel

**Adam Riegel
President**