SOP 801

FIRE INCIDENT INVESTIGATION

PURPOSE OF THIS STANDARD

The purpose of this standard is to provide the requirements and guidelines to insure that each fire's cause and origin are determined. It shall be the policy of this department, as well as state law (Statute 23-9-30, 40), that each fire shall be investigated to determine cause and origin. In many cases this will be performed at the company level. Determination of the cause and origin of the fire is beneficial in many ways:

Section 1 - Objective

1. Complete and accurate records are formulated to provide vital statistics.

2. The statistics will assist in preventing fires in the future, either by public education programs, arrests for arsonists, or by corrective action in fire inspections.

3. By preventing fires in the future, losses due to fire are reduced, thus reducing Insurance Premiums and providing the community with the service they expect from the fire department.

4. Cause and determination can also provide invaluable information that can be linked directly to the firefighter:
   a. Why did the fire react a certain way when attacked by the firefighter?
   b. How did the fire spread?
c. To what hazards were firefighters exposed? (such as doors nailed or boarded closed, holes cut in the floors, etc.)

d. What tactics or training is required to combat this type of fire should it reoccur?

e. What corrective action can be performed to prevent this type of fire?

Section 2 - Definition

1. Definition: A fire investigation shall mean the determination of cause and origin. Again, in many cases this can be accomplished at the company level. But if it cannot, then the Battalion Chief/Duty Chief or on-call investigator shall be requested to respond to the scene. Calling for an investigation does not mean that a fire was intentionally set, only that the Incident Commander cannot determine the cause. The guidelines provided in this standard will provide the necessary assistance in making these important decisions.

Section 3 - Dispatch Procedures

1. Upon a request by Incident Commander at an incident within the normal coverage area of the Horry County Fire/Rescue Department, the Battalion Chief/Duty Chief on-call fire investigator and the Investigation Team shall be notified for investigations in accordance to the Horry County Fire/Rescue Department’s Communications Policy, Section 7-7.01.4.

2. Should dispatch personnel be advised of a fire in which no Fire/Rescue Department responded to, (ex. A fire took place overnight and was not reported to the Fire/Rescue Department) then they shall contact the Battalion Chief/Duty Chief for guidance.

Section 4 – Incident Commander’s Responsibilities

1. Incident Commander’s Responsibilities: It shall be the responsibility of the Incident Commander to ensure that proper cause and origin is performed. Every effort is to be made to determine this by the responding units, officers, or firefighters. If it cannot be determined then the Incident Commander shall request the on-call investigator.

Section 5 – Guidelines for Cause and Origin

1. Guidelines for Cause and Origin: A fire's cause and origin starts way before the fire is actually under control or extinguished. It can actually begin to take place at the onset of receiving the alarm in the dispatch center, continue through response and arrival to the scene, and is finally finished after the fire is extinguished.

   a. Dispatch Tips: When a call is received there can be hints or information that the fire is not an accident. This can come from facts such as verbal information as to who set the fire, or the dispatcher recognizing the voice as a frequent reporter of fires, or remembering other fires that took place either at the same location or in the same general location. It should be noted also that with the Enhanced 9-1-1 format a history of the last five calls for
emergency help can be shown on the address screen. This information must be passed along to the Incident Commander or the investigator to be of any value for a complete investigation.

b. **Response to the Scene:** When firefighters are responding to the scene, they also can remember prior incidents at the same location, and history of the owner(s). The firefighters may also encounter vehicles or persons that are commonly leaving the scene on numerous calls. The color of the smoke and flames (if present) and weather conditions as well as the time of day or night can add to the determination of cause and origin. Key points to look for in suspicious fires may be that the fire is inaccessible for firefighters and apparatus, trailers (flammable liquid trails) leaving the fire, or the actual containers used to start the fire.

c. **Attack/Extinguishment:** During the attack of the fire key points to remember may be:

1. Did you have to force entry in the building if it was unoccupied?
2. Was the fire difficult to extinguish when it should have been routine?
3. Were there any containers or incendiary devices found inside?
4. Did anything "out of the ordinary" catch your attention?
5. Were there any unusual odors present?
6. Were doors or windows "covered" to hide the fire?
7. Are the personal possessions in place (clothing, furniture, pictures, etc)?

d. **Overhaul:** This is a particularly important aspect of determining a fire's cause and origin, if performed in an acceptable manner, then evidence can and will be protected. If careless and reckless overhaul is performed then determining cause and origin can be difficult if not impossible, due to all evidence being destroyed or hidden. Try not to move any debris that is not necessary.

e. **Determination:** After the fire is extinguished and the Incident Commander has gathered all the facts and information available to him/her as described above then a decision can be made as to:

1. Determination of the cause and origin.
2. Determination to request on-call investigator.

**SECTION 6 – PROCEDURES**
1. *Investigation Protocol*: The following guidelines shall be followed by all investigators on all scenes in which an investigation is being performed.

   a. All persons representing the Department in an official position shall dress appropriately and conduct themselves in a professional manner. They shall be well groomed and identifiable.

   b. Routine investigations require a non-emergency response, unless directed by the Incident Commander. This will require obeying all driving laws and signals.

   c. The investigator shall attempt to get information such as the incident number and related data via telephone prior to the response. If this is not possible then attempt to gather this by phone or 800 megahertz once on the scene. As a last resort this information can be requested by VHF radio from the investigator.

   d. Upon arrival meet with the Incident Commander to gather any information that has already been determined. Also determine why a request for an investigator was requested (suspicious, or unable to determine).

   e. Interview the first in firefighter(s) and company officer for information that was encountered upon arriving. This shall be a written statement. Ask questions:

      1. Where was original fire?
      2. What was color of smoke?
      3. What was the direction of smoke travel?
      4. Were the doors locked?
      5. Was electrical power in place?
      6. Did anyone leave the scene?

   f. Talk to the owner, tenant, driver, etc. to find out what they think happened. Gather the following paperwork in complete form:

      1. Consent to Search
      2. Voluntary Statements
      3. Investigation Report
      4. Individual’s Rights Form (if needed)

   g. Interview any witnesses and obtain written statements.

   h. Insure that all forms are complete, dated, signed, and witnessed.

   i. Begin the proper Fire Investigation Report Form and site investigation. The site investigation is to be completed as described in the rest of this section. Any Fire Investigation Report should be completed for all investigations that do not qualify as a structure or vehicle fire.
j. The Incident Commander shall call for the Horry County Police Department on all fire
investigations involving fatalities as described in Section 6, Paragraph 6.02b of this policy.

2. **Investigations of Structure Fires:** The following procedures along with those mention in
section 2.01 have been developed to serve as a guideline during the investigation of structure
fires by the fire investigator.


   b. Begin the Fire Investigation of the structure:

      1. Walk around the perimeter looking for any unusual circumstances such as burn
         patterns, containers etc. If possible look under the structure for unusual conditions
         such as piles of rags, paper, or wood.

      2. After a complete perimeter check begin inside the structure at the least burned area.
         While conducting the interior check look for missing personal items (pictures,
         clothes, appliances, personal hygiene items, food etc.)

      3. Inspect the electrical system. Does the breaker panel show signs of shorts? Are any
         wires shorted? Is there any solid beading on the ends? Are wires stretched to a fine
         point?

      4. Was there any extension cords in use? Were they acceptable?

      5. Are the burn patterns on the floors and walls normal?

      6. Is there more than one point of origin?

   c. As an investigator, you must first rule out all possible accidental causes before you can
      assume the fire was intentional.

   d. If you find that the fire was intentional, the investigator shall perform the following.

      1. Draw a field sketch of the building containing the following information.

         - Shape and dimensions of the structure.
         - Distance from structure to roadway.
         - Layout of the interior with doors/windows.
         - Annotate area(s) of origin.
         - Add standard notes on the sketch.

      2. Photograph the scene (See Section 5, Paragraph 5.03, of this policy)

      3. Collect Evidence (See Section 4, of this policy)
When the investigator has completed the scene fieldwork, an investigation file shall be started. This file will contain the following documentation.

1. Copy of Incident Report
2. Structure Fire Investigation Report
3. Consent to Search
4. All Voluntary Written Statements
5. Individual’s Rights Form(s) (if needed)
6. Copy of Casualty Report (if needed)
7. Field Sketches
8. Photography Log Form(s) (if pictures taken)
9. Photo I.D. Form
10. Evidence Log/Chain of Custody Form(s)
11. Investigators Notes.
12. Photographs taken of scene (if developed)
13. Any additional information and forms required. (See Section 8, of this policy)

3. Vehicle Fire Investigations: The following procedures have been developed to serve as a guideline during the investigation of vehicle fires by the fire investigator.


b. Begin the Vehicle Investigation:

1. Walk around the vehicle for a complete overview.
2. Check area for containers that may have been used for flammable liquids.
3. Look for unusual burn patterns, and/or trailers from the scene.
4. Look under the vehicle: Is the transmission, Driveshaft and gas tank in place?
5. Check the interior of the vehicle to determine if any items are missing? (stereo, speakers, keys, seats)
6. Were the window’s up/down?
7. Is there any unusual odor? (gas, kerosene)
8. Is the Damage to the interior more severe than anywhere else?
9. Check the electrical system for signs of damage. (beading, splicing, signs of arcing)
10. Check the trunk area. (Is spare tire in place?, Are there any containers, or unusual items?)
11. Look in the Engine Compartment. (Is the Battery in place?, Carburetor {unless fuel injection}, Are fuel lines intact?)

12. Are all hoses and wiring intact or remnants?

13. Was the Gas cap in place?

14. Take necessary photographs (See Section 5, Paragraph 5.02, of this policy).

15. Take necessary samples.

16. Obtain business card from wrecker service that responds.

17. Begin follow-up procedure.

c. If it is necessary for the vehicle to be impounded, for reasons such as incomplete investigation, suspicion, or any other reason, the Incident Commander/investigator shall contact dispatch and advise them to contact the vendor under contract. Investigator shall also complete the Vehicle Impoundment Form as described in Section 8, of this policy.

d. The investigator shall remain on the scene until the wrecker service arrives, they shall inform the driver of the wrecker that the vehicle is to be impounded and only Fire/Rescue Department authorized personnel shall be allowed to examine the vehicle.

e. If the vehicle fire is determined to be accidental and is on a State or County maintained road, the dispatcher will be asked to have the next available wrecker service on the rotation list respond to tow the vehicle. If State or County police are on scene, it is preferred that they make the towing notification.

f. When the investigator has completed the scene fieldwork, an investigation file shall be started. This file will contain the following documentation.

1. Copy of Incident Report.
2. Vehicle Fire Investigation Report
3. Consent to Search
4. All Voluntary Written Statements
5. Individual’s Rights Form(s) (if needed)
6. Copy of Casualty Report (if needed)
7. Field Sketches
8. Photography Log Form(s) (if pictures taken)
9. Photo I.D. Form
10. Evidence Log/Chain of Custody Form(s) (if needed)
11. Investigators Notes.
12. Photographs taken of scene (if developed)
13. Vehicle Impoundment Form (if impounded).
14. Any additional information and forms required. (See Section 8, of this policy)

SECTION 7 – QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING

Fire Investigating is a very specialized effort to determine cause and origin, and prosecute arsonists if needed. Special training above the requirements of firefighter are essential to the operation and integrity of the Fire Investigation Division. To meet the standards of a Fire Investigator for this department the following criteria must be met and maintained.

a. **Career Investigator**: See job description attached to this policy as Appendix A.

b. **Volunteer Investigator**:

1. Must meet the requirements of this standard.

2. High School Education or completion of the GED.

3. Completion of the Department's Basic Firefighter Training course or equivalent.

4. Completion of the South Carolina Fire Academy’s "Fire Arson Detection for First Responders" course (16 Hrs) or equivalent.

5. Completion of the Horry County Fire Department's Investigation Team Orientation Program.

6. Completion of a six months probation of assisting in investigations.

7. Complete a minimum of 12 hours additional investigation training per year.

8. Assist with at least 6 investigations per year.

Experience and previous training will be considered for equivalency of any of the above requirements, by the department Division of Training and Life Safety.

SECTION 8 – EVIDENCE PRESERVATION AND CUSTODY

Evidence preservation and custody are very important aspects of a fire investigation. In order to adhere to the legal aspects of this the following guidelines are developed.

a. All samples shall be placed in a clean, unused container that can be securely closed and is suitable for the type of evidence.

b. Complete the evidence label and attach to the container, place the sample in the
container and seal with security tape.

c. Samples shall be gathered by the following methods:

1. Sample from the area of origin.

2. Sample from an unrelated area of the same type. This will be the control sample.

d. Ensure that the proper photographs are taken before moving the items.

e. Complete the Evidence Log/Chain of Custody form.

f. Secure the samples, Evidence Log, and Chain of Custody forms in an area that can be locked (trunk of investigator's car). Do not let the chain of custody be broken.

g. Deliver the evidence to the proper lab or another person and ensure that the Chain of Custody form is signed.

SECTION 9 – INVESTIGATION PHOTOGRAPHY

1. General Guidelines: In order that all Investigation photography be conducted in the same manner the following procedures shall be used anytime photographs are required of a fire scene.

1. Complete a Film Identification Form.
2. Complete a Photography Log Form.
3. Draw rough sketch of scene. (show approx. distance from the area/subject that is being photographed and direction you are facing. See Sample Sketch)
4. A Film ID Form and Photography Log Form is required for each film roll used on the scene.

2. Vehicle Fires

1. First frame shall be of the Film Identification Form.
2. Take a shot of all sides of vehicle.
3. Take a shot of the license tag if available.
4. Take at least two shots of the engine compartment.
5. Take a shot of the trunk and contents.
6. Take at least two shots of the interior of the vehicle, one from each side.
7. Photograph any special evidence, containers, etc.
8. If needed take a few shots of the by-standers.

3. Structure Fires

1. First frame shall be of the Film Identification Form.
2. Take at least one shot from a distance of the entire building.
3. Begin shots of all sides, these should overlap if it requires more than one shot per side. This will give reference for identification.
4. Begin shots from the least burned areas, and work to the most severe.
5. Upon reaching the area of origin, take several shots, from different angles.
6. Take shots of all evidence, and/or samples in their respective locations before and after removal.
7. Place the empty containers near the area where samples are to be taken. Place evidence in container and photograph. You must photograph the container next to the area in which the sample was taken.

SECTION 10 – OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE

1. Request:
   a. Upon arrival of the investigator and it is apparent that outside assistance will be required, then the incident commander/investigator is charged with requesting the proper agency needed.
   
   b. Should a request from an agency outside the normal coverage area of the Horry County Fire/Rescue Department be received, (i.e. City) notify the duty chief. The duty chief will then authorize the correct response if any.
   
   c. The following list of agencies are available to assist the Horry County Fire/Rescue Department with fire investigations and are used on many cases to determine cause and origin, track records of previous fires by occupants, and assist in prosecution of fire related crimes.
   
   d. It shall be noted that the only person who can request assistance from outside agencies shall be the duty chief.

2. Government Agencies

Horry County Police Department (HCPD): The HCPD can be utilized for crowd control, and access to the ownership of vehicles through the nationwide computers. The HCPD shall be notified for the following:

   a. If any other crime is suspected at this location, such as breaking and entering, narcotics, etc.
   
   b. All fire investigations involving fatalities. The Incident Commander shall call for the on-call detective and crime scene unit. The HCPD will be the leading investigation agency in all fire investigations involving fatalities and the Horry County Fire/Rescue Department shall assist in those areas requested. The Fire/Rescue Department’s investigator will compile a department file containing all appropriate documentation and forms as mentioned in this policy and provide the HCPD with copies.
c. In all fires investigations of a high profile nature or considerable dollar loss values.

**State Police**: Can also be used to access ownership of vehicles through nationwide computers, if incident took place on State highway.

**State Law Enforcement Division (SLED) Arson Control Team**: This group will assist in any structure fire investigation, which is suspected or known to have been intentionally set.

**S.L.E.D. Bomb Squad**: This group shall be called for all incidents that have had a bomb found or a bomb explosion. Note: This organization should not be called for bomb threats.

**S.L.E.D. State Laboratory**: Utilized to test samples taken at suspicious fires for determination of ignition factors.

**Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF)**: This group will also assist on bomb scenes in conjunction with SLED and any scene that involves Alcohol, Tobacco or Firearms.

**South Carolina Department of Natural Resource (DNR)**: This agency can be utilized to determine owners of boats and waterway equipment.

**United States Coast Guard**: This agency shall be notified of all boat fires on the intercoastal waterway or the ocean. They will also assist with the investigation and determine ownership.

**South Carolina Forestry Commission**: This agency shall be notified of all woods/brush fires. They will investigate and issue citations if outdoor burning laws were broken.

**Horry County Crime Stoppers**: This is a twenty-four (24) hour local telephone service run by the Horry County Police, in which persons may call to give information concerning any crime, including arson, without giving their name. Rewards are also offered for information leading to arrest and conviction of criminals. The number is 248-5000.

3. **Private Agencies and Contacts**

**Arson Hot Line**: A twenty-four (24) hour hot line service that can be used to tip off investigators for suspicious or arson related fires. This organization is sponsored by the S.C. Insurance Service. The number is 1-800-92ARSON. Rewards are also offered for information leading to arrest and conviction of arson related cases.

The Investigation Personnel can also contact the individual Insurance Companies for assistance in certain cases or for histories of insured personnel.

**SECTION 11 – INVESTIGATION FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES**

The follow-up of an investigation will begin after all fieldwork has been accumulated. Once all fieldwork has been completed, the investigator must determine if the fire was accidental or
intentional. Once that has been determined, the investigator must determine if the case is considered closed or opened. If it is determined to close the case, the case file must be reviewed by the Assistant Fire Chief and kept on file for 3 years (South Carolina Code of Laws, Title 23, Chapter 9, Section 23-9-110).

If the file needs to be kept open, the investigator shall confer with the Assistant Fire Chief and a determination will be made as to the type of follow-up necessary. This may include the following:

a. Contact with insurance companies and their Investigators.

b. Contact with the banks or finance companies that are involved with a mortgage or loan.

c. Research of office files on past fires.

d. Research of court records.

e. Research of individual background by the police or SLED.

f. Contacting the Federal Department of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, This agency will assist with background checks and prosecution.

g. Should any firefighter become aware of any additional information at a later date that may assist with the closing of the case, they shall pass this information on to the team leader.

h. The Fire Chief shall also be advised of cases under investigation and their status on a periodic basis.

Investigators will meet with the Assistant Fire Chief on a bi-weekly basis to review all open cases in order to track the status of the investigation over time.

SECTION 12 – FORMS UTILIZED

1. Application: The proper recording of information about an incident is one of the most effective tools available to a fire investigator. To assist in this endeavor, the Horry County Fire/Rescue Department has adopted NFPA 906, Fire Incident Field Notes, as a standard. The department has also developed other forms to assist with the investigation. Not all forms will be used at all incidents. However, several forms could be used on any specific fire, depending on the magnitude of the investigation or the type of incident. These forms will ensure that the fire investigator, whether it is the company officer or incident commander, has the proper tool for taking notes in an organized manner while collecting data about the incident. This section states the purpose has instruction on how to prepare forms not covered in NFPA 906. These forms are as follows:
2. Purpose/Instructions: The following is a detailed instruction on how to complete the following forms:

a. Consent to Search: The fire investigation does not need to be carried out immediately upon extinguishment of the fire if conditions such as darkness or fumes would not allow for a proper investigation. It may be carried out for a reasonable amount of time after the fire is extinguished as long as custody and security of the scene is maintained. A signed Consent to Search Form shall be obtained if the person legally responsible for the property can be located (See Figure 8-1 for an example). Permission must be given voluntarily; any coercion used may invalidate the search and its evidence. If the owner or responsible party refuses to sign then a Search Warrant must be obtained from the magistrate. This must be obtained and served by a Commissioned Police Officer. Keep in mind, custody and security of the scene must be maintained while the Search Warrant is being obtained and until it is properly served.

b. Individual’s Rights Form: This form should be read to and signed by all subjects who are thought to be suspects in a fire investigation before they are asked any questions by the investigator. The investigator is to read the subject his/her individual rights word for word on this form and make sure the subject understands his/her rights by signing (See Figure 8-2 for an example). The subject also has the right to refuse to give the investigator as statement.

c. Vehicle Impoundment Form: This form is to be completed prior to any vehicle being impounded by a tow truck vendor. Once completed, the tow truck vendor will be given a copy of the form prior to his departure from the scene (See Figure 8-3 for an example). The investigator will complete as much of the information on the form that is available to him/her.

d. Photo Identification Form: This form is to be completed by the investigator and
photographed as the first photo for each roll of film. See Figure 8-4 for an example.

e. **Evidence Identification Tags:** This form is to be completed and attached to all evidence containers used during the investigation. See Figure 8-5 for an example.

f. **Evidence Log/Chain of Custody Forms:** The documentation to whereabouts of any item of physical evidence is as important as the evidence itself. This documentation is established by completing an Evidence Log/Chain of Custody Form (See Figure 8-6 for an example). The Evidence Log/Chain of Custody Form provides a record of every person who has had custody of the evidence. If the investigator has never let the evidence out of his/her personal control, the matter is simple. The investigator can testify “That is the very same item that I recovered, I placed it in this container, sealed it, and it is in the same condition as when I first collected it.” If the evidence is turned over to other individuals or agencies for storage, photography, or laboratory examination, an Evidence Log/Chain of Custody Form shall be completed and a signed copy placed in the investigation file.

g. **Investigator’s Notes:** Notes must be taken to record observations and activities for use in preparing the formal Investigators Written Report. Notes should focus on just the facts and include all information the investigator feels pertinent to the investigation. The notes can be handwritten on plain paper, legal pads, etc. Notes should not include groundless accusations, personal opinions, extraneous information, or anything the investigator would not like to discuss on the witness stand in court.

h. **Investigator’s Written Report:** The Investigator’s Written Report shall record the facts of the incident and give you an organized, concise record from which to testify. The written report shall be typed/computer generated and should include everything from the Investigator’s Notes. Reports should not include:

1. Anything that shouldn’t have been included in the notes
2. The investigator’s qualifications
3. The investigator’s actions before going to the scene
4. Fire slang terminology
5. Legal buzz words such as search, seized, evidence, interrogated

The report should include but not be limited to:

1. Copies of all forms required by this policy
2. Criminal histories
3. Police reports (if separate)
4. Lab reports
5. Applicable charts and maps

3. **Forms Required by NFPA 906:** The fire investigator must refer to Appendix A of this policy to find instruction on how to complete forms required by NFPA 906.
SECTION 13 – JUVENILE FIRESETTERS

1. JUVENILE FIRESETTERS INTERVENTION PROGRAM PROTOCOL: The Horry County Fire/Rescue Department (HCFRD) has instituted a Juvenile Firesetters Intervention Program. For this program to be successful specific guidelines MUST be followed. It is imperative that the person(s) who begin the process with the child(ren) continue until the intervention measures with the child(ren) are completed.

2. PERSONNEL ABLE TO INTERVENE: Only personnel specially trained to intervene in the Juvenile Firesetters Program are able to discuss the fire event, fire safety, etc., with the child(ren) and parent(s) involved in the incident.

3. PERSONNEL CONTACT:

   a. As soon as the fire scene personnel know that a child(ren) has/have been involved in the fire incident the appropriate Battalion Chief/Duty Chief must be contacted. The Battalion Chief/Duty Chief will contact the proper intervention personnel if needed. Fire personnel are to remain on location until either the Battalion Chief/Duty Chief and/or proper intervention personnel arrive on scene. The intervention process will begin only when the properly trained personnel arrive.

   b. The following two scenarios are examples (there could be others) of the process on-scene department personnel are to follow.

      1. Parent and child, or parent comes to/calls your station because a child has been playing with matches or lighters (nothing burned/ignited, just precautionary – fire department was not called to extinguish a fire).

      2. Child-set fire {bedding, carpet, house, grass, pine straw, etc.} anything the fire department is called to extinguish (upon arrive dept. personnel could have found it already extinguished by neighbor/occupant, etc.)

      3. Procedure for both incidences would be to contact the Battalion Chief/Duty Chief immediately. Under no circumstances is any fire department personnel to interview the child(ren). Properly trained personnel will contact you immediately to provide you with further instructions.

   c. Under no circumstances is any fire department personnel to interview/question/talk with the child(ren) and the parents. Your response to the parent(s) would be that the appropriate personnel have been contacted and are responding. If more than one child is involved, it is best to keep them separated from each other. It is imperative that the child(ren) and parent(s) remain on the scene until the intervention personnel arrive. If there is a problem with this, contact intervention personnel responding for assistance.
d. When the appropriate intervention personnel arrive on the scene, they will meet with the Incident Commander to determine the facts regarding the fire.

4. Intervention Process:

a. The intervention personnel will meet with the child(ren) with the parent(s). An interview will take place and determination of program placement will then be made. The child(ren) could be referred to HCFRD’s Intervention program or to Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). If the child(ren) is/are referred to HCFRD’s Intervention program, it begins immediately. In any case SC requires law enforcement officer to refer to any program.

b. If the child(ren) is/are referred to HCFRD’s Intervention program, the same personnel that responded to the incident work with the child(ren) and parent(s) until the process is completed.

c. If the child(ren) is/are referred to DJJ, Horry County Police Department (HCPD) will handle the transfer to that program.

d. In any case, HCPD or law enforcement officer is required to complete the referral paperwork for DJJ. That referral would indicate either intervention into HCFRD’s Intervention program or entrance into the DJJ system.

5. Confidentiality: Confidentiality is a major concern where children under the age of 16 are concerned. No one who has not had the proper training in this type intervention is allowed to discuss the cause, origin, or any particulars concerning a fire incident if a child is suspected of being involved.

SECTION 14 – EQUIPMENT INVENTORY

This section lists and explains the various equipment that is assigned to and/or utilized by the Investigation Division to conduct detailed investigations. This list is subject to change as procedures and regulations warrant.

1. Generator, portable lights, and drop cords: To be used to light scenes at night. Ensures that adequate lighting and assists with photography.

2. Glass Mason Jars: For collection of evidence such as liquids, ashes, and other small items.

3. Metal Containers: New and unused paint cans, various sizes.


6. Set of Felt Tip Pens: Suitable for marking any surface.

7. Evidence Tags (Preprinted): For marking evidence.


9. Scene Security Tape: For sealing off area until investigation is completed.

10. 100' Measuring Tape: For location of evidence, by measurements to fixed items, to complete a drawing.

11. Rubber Gloves: Used for collecting evidence, to keep investigators fingerprints off the items.

12. 6" or 12" Ruler: Used during photography to show true scale.

13. Flat and Round Shovel: Used to dig in fire debris during a scene investigation.

14. Camera w/Flash: Used to take photographs of fire scenes and locations of evidence as found.

15. Locks, Hasps, and Screws: Used to seal a fire scene, as in cases that will require further investigation at a later date.

16. Small Hand Tools: To be used as needed on the fire scene. (screwdrivers, cable cutters, pliers, pipe wrench, crow bar, etc)

17. Turnout Gear: Used anytime as required by Standard Fire Department Policy regarding Fire Scenes.

18. Hard Hat, Coveralls: Worn in instances during investigations where full turnout gear is not required.

19. Required forms, pens: Needed for documentation and file requirements.
Appendix A

Instructions for Completion of Investigation Forms as Required by NFPA 906
HORRY COUNTY
FIRE/RESCUE DEPARTMENT
Proud*Prepared*Professional

FIRE INVESTIGATION DIVISION’S
CONSENT TO SEARCH FORM

I, ______________________________________________, Name of Person Giving Consent
Of ________________________________________________________________, Address

Give the consent to the Horry County Fire/Rescue Department to enter the entire premises/property
described
as ____________________________________________________________________________
Description of Premise(s)/Property(s) to Be Entered

Without a search warrant and to determine the origin and cause of the fire/explosion which occurred
on or about (date/time) _______________________; to enter all areas of the premises and or
property, even those where the fire/explosion did not cause damage, and to search and seize
evidence which may be relevant to the investigation.

I agree to allow officers of the above Department (and others assisting the above department) to take
photographs and videos of the premises and or property, to remove debris, materials, documents or
other property, knowing that they may be submitted for examination, analysis and testing.

I understand that this examination of the premises and or property may take more than one day and
agree to allow the entering and remaining in or on the entire premises or property for as long as
necessary.

I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time prior to the conclusion of the fire/explosion
examination. I understand that if I do not give consent, no one may enter the premises and or
property without a search warrant. I give my consent voluntarily, without threats or promises of any
kind.

PERSON GIVING CONSENT SIGNATURE: ______________________________________
DATE: _____________ TIME: ____________ HOURS.

WITNESS SIGNATURE: _____________________________________
PRINT NAME: _________________________________

WITNESS SIGNATURE: _____________________________________
PRINT NAME: _________________________________

Fire Incident Investigations
Revised August 15, 2001   SOP 801-19
PHOTO IDENTIFICATION FORM

INCIDENT NUMBER: ________________________________

DATE: __________________________________________

LOCATION: _______________________________________

OWNER NAME: _____________________________________

ADDRESS: _________________________________________

TYPE FIRE: ________________________________________

TAKEN BY: _________________________________________