


PBP FORM 290  PITTSBURGH BUREAU OF POLICE <i>"...honor, integrity, courage, respect, and compassion."</i>		SUBJECT: "POLICE RESPONSE AT FIRE SCENES"	ORDER NUMBER: 42-03
		PLEAC STANDARD: NONE	PAGE 1 OF 4
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1.0 POLICY / PURPOSE

- 1.1 Pittsburgh Bureau of Police members are dispatched to the scene of a fire for the protection of life and property, to assist the Bureau of Fire, and to record the incident on a police report.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to provide the member of the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police with proper guidelines and procedures when responding a fire incident.

2.0 ACTIONS OF FIRST OFFICER ON SCENE

- 2.1 The first responding officer shall immediately notify the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) of the fire, the address of the fire, and the type of fire (e.g.: structure, brush, vehicle, dumpster, playground, etc.).
- 2.2 The first responding officer(s) will park their police vehicle in a position that will not interfere with the entrance of fire-fighting equipment to the scene or with the fire-fighting operations of the Bureau of Fire.
- 2.3 PBP vehicles shall not park in front of a structure or other burning object, as this may block access of fire-fighting equipment.
- 2.4 First responding officer(s) may also, if necessary, warn and assist occupants in evacuation of a building and take any other actions required by the situation.
 - 2.4.1 Officers shall consider all potential safety hazards before entering a structure affected by a fire.
- 2.5 The first responding officer(s) vehicle may be deemed the initial police command post for the incident.

3.0 ACTIONS AND DUTIES OF SUPERVISORY PERSONNEL

- 3.1 A zone shift supervisor will respond to the scene of all fire calls and assume command.
- 3.2 The responding supervisor will locate the "Incident Command Post" established by the Bureau of Fire and will establish a "unified" command post in conjunction with fire officials to ensure coordination of efforts and exchange of information.
 - 3.2.1 Fire Bureau "Incident Command Posts" can be roving or mobile in nature.
- 3.3 The supervisor will establish police lines beyond the fire apparatus and hydrants. The supervisor will ensure that police vehicles are kept at a safe distance and out of the affected area.
- 3.4 The supervisor will ensure that a record of the events of the fire, as they occur, is initiated at the beginning of the fire incident and is maintained until the fire is extinguished and the command post is secured.
- 3.5 When necessary, the supervisor will also ensure that a chain of custody record is fully and accurately maintained and reported, relating to the protection of fire scenes under investigation.

4.0 ACTIONS OF MEMBERS AT THE SCENE OF A FIRE

- 4.1 Police responsibilities at the scene of a fire include:

- 4.1.1 Containment of onlookers or sightseers behind established police lines.
- 4.1.2 Directing traffic away from the location of the fire and established access control points for emergency equipment.
 - 4.1.2.1 When a PBP vehicle is used to block off a street, an officer will stay with the vehicle to ensure that the PBP vehicle does not impede the free access to the fire location by other emergency vehicles.
- 4.1.3 Ensuring that no person hinders or obstructs a fire official in the performance of his or her duties.
- 4.1.4 Ensuring for the protection of water supply lines/hoses of the Bureau of Fire by preventing all vehicles from driving over the lines as prohibited by PA law. PBP vehicles shall not drive over a water supply line.
- 4.1.5 In some circumstances, assisting in the removal of injured civilians, fire, and/or police personnel from the scene of the fire.
- 4.1.6 Permitting authorized personnel only to enter police lines. Authorized personnel should be limited to on-duty fire-fighters, on-duty EMS personnel, and on-duty police or fire personnel actively investigating the fire.
- 4.1.7 Remaining alert for possible evidence or suspicious persons that may be in the vicinity of the fire scene.
- 4.1.8 Activating BWC and recording the fire scene events until the fire is under control.

5.0 RECORDING OF EVENTS/ REPORTS

- 5.1 Upon release from the fire scene, the designated report car shall initiate a police report describing the incident. In general, reporting officers shall not make any conclusions about the cause of the fire. All observations and evidence about the cause of the fire gathered by the officer at the scene will be included in the narrative section of the report. The following information shall be obtained and entered on every police report:
 - 5.1.1 The date and time of the fire. The time of the fire is the "created" time documented by the EOC on the CAD report.
 - 5.1.2 The full street address of the fire.
 - 5.1.3 All available information identifying the owner of any property damaged due to the fire.
 - 5.1.4 All available information identifying any person injured during the course of the fire incident. If the injured person is an emergency responder, their respective duty location and immediate supervisor's name will be provided in the report. If the injured person is transported to a medical center for treatment, the name of the medical center will be included in the report.
 - 5.1.5 All available information for any person identified as a witness to the fire incident.
 - 5.1.6 The observations of the first officer(s) on the scene – i.e. location, size, and color of flames or smoke.
 - 5.1.7 The extent of damage to property, as reported through the unified incident command.
 - 5.1.8 A list of any dangerous conditions resulting from the fire, as reported through the unified incident command.
 - 5.1.9 A complete listing of all Police, Fire, and EMS personnel and equipment on the scene.
 - 5.1.10 The name of any officer involved in the discovery and/or transport of evidence.
- 5.2 A police report for any structure fire will contain the above information and the following additional information:
 - 5.2.1 A description of the part of the structure where the fire occurred.
 - 5.2.2 A description of the type of structure and number of stories.
 - 5.2.3 All of the required information identifying the owner of the structure, to include any alternate address and telephone number.
 - 5.2.4 All of the required information identifying all occupants of the structure at the time of the incident.
- 5.3 Reporting Fires
 - 5.3.1 If the cause of any type fire is unknown, the report shall be titled, "IC 9123 – Miscellaneous Fire Other Investigation to Continue". Examples of different types of fires are structure, playground, trash, or brush fires.

- 5.3.2 A vehicle fire where the cause is unknown shall be titled "IC 9122 -- Miscellaneous Fire Vehicle Investigation to Continue".
- 5.3.3 If an on-view arrest is made for Arson, the report shall be titled "Arson".
- 5.3.3.1 If an officer is going to make an on-view arrest for Arson, the Allegheny County District Attorney's Office requires that the Fire Investigation Unit must respond to the scene to conduct an origin and cause scene examination to rule that the cause of the fire is incendiary and to document the scene with digital photography.
- 5.3.3.2 The reporting officer shall contact the Fire Investigations Unit and Major Crimes Supervisor through the Detective Desk or the EOC prior to transport to the Allegheny County Jail so the arrestee is available to be interviewed by the Fire Investigation Unit.
- 5.3.4 When a fire is investigated by a certified fire investigator and the fire is classified as incendiary, juvenile arson offenders shall be referred to the UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital's Services Aimed at Fire Education and Treatment for Youth (SAFETY) Program.
- 5.3.4.1 In order for a juvenile to be eligible for the program, a juvenile allegation must be completed by the arresting officer.
- 5.3.4.2 Once the allegation is filed, the arresting officer shall contact Juvenile Probation Supervisor in charge of the SAFETY program to inform them of the arrest and any intention to request the SAFETY program.
- 5.3.4.3 If it is determined that charges should not be filed with juvenile probation (for instance, in a case where it is not appropriate or the child is under the age of 10), a referral may be made to the county's Office of Children Youth & Families (CYF) with a request that the child be ordered to the SAFETY program.

6.0 ACTIVATING THE FIRE INVESTIGATION UNIT

- 6.1 Activation of the Fire Investigations Unit is done automatically by the EOC when any one of the three conditions exist:
- 6.1.1 When a second alarm is requested by the Fire Incident Commander.
- 6.1.2 A life-threatening injury has occurred as a result of the fire.
- 6.1.3 A death has occurred as a result of the fire.
- 6.2 If the fire has not reached two (2) alarms and police officers on the scene have reason to believe that the fire has been deliberately ignited, any police or fire supervisor on the scene may request that the Fire Investigation Unit be activated by contacting the EOC or the Detective Desk.
- 6.3 The Fire Investigations Unit investigates all structure fires, and any fires involving any property that is owned by the City of Pittsburgh including vehicles, trash/dumpster bins, and playgrounds.
- 6.4 The Fire Investigation Unit (FIU) also investigates certain vehicle fires, trash fires, brush fires, and other types of fires.
- 6.4.1 Circumstances that may activate the Fire Investigations Unit to investigate a vehicle fire, trash fire, brush fire, or any other type of fire include, but are not limited to, the following:
- 6.4.1.1 If there is reason to believe that the fire was intentionally set.
- 6.4.1.2 Whether a person sustained a life-threatening injury.
- 6.4.1.3 If the fire spread to a structure.
- 6.4.1.4 If the fire lead to other property damage.
- 6.4.1.5 If evidence needs to be collected.
- 6.4.1.6 If suspects were seen setting the fire by witnesses and/or victims.
- 6.4.1.7 If suspects were seen leaving the scene of the fire by witnesses and/or victims.
- 6.4.2 If a vehicle fire occurs while the vehicle is in motion, FIU does not need to respond and a State Accident Report will need to be completed.

7.0 RESPONSE TO HIGH RISE FIRE INCIDENTS

- 7.1 In the event of a fire in a building that is six stories or greater, the Bureau of Fire will follow their standard operating procedures.
- 7.2 A supervisor will meet the Fire supervisor at the designated Command Post to coordinate evacuation of the structure as well as the surrounding area.
- 7.3 A supervisor will remain available to assist with the Fire Command until released or relieved by another supervisor.

8.0 ACTIONS OF SUPERVISORS AFTER FIRE IS EXTINGUISHED

- 8.1 After the fire is extinguished, the supervisor shall, if necessary, place uniformed patrols at the scene to prevent looting, protect fire scenes under investigation, and/or to safeguard the public.
- 8.2 The supervisor will contact an on-scene Fire Investigation Unit member to determine if a uniform unit is requested to remain with the Fire Investigation Unit as they investigate the fire scene.
- 8.3 If it is determined that there is no need to place uniformed patrols for the extinguished fire scene, the vehicles assigned to the fire will be released and report back in service to the EOC.
- 8.4 The supervisor shall ensure that all established posts are released and shall account for all personnel assigned to the fire.

9.0 CHANGES OF SHIFTS/ RELIEF

- 9.1 In the event that a fire continues through to another shift, the supervisor shall not leave the scene until properly relieved and not until all members under his or her command have been accounted for and have been provided with a relief.

10.0 DISTRIBUTION OF REPORTS

- 10.1 For those incidents when the Fire Investigation Unit has responded to a fire scene, a shift supervisor will ensure that a copy of the report is faxed to the Fire Investigation Unit office after he/she has approved the report.
- 10.2 The fire report will then be sent through the chain of command.
- 10.3 Copies of all fire reports, regardless of type of fire, will be sent to the Fire Investigation Unit Office.

Approved By:



Scott Schubert
Chief of Police