

PBP FORM 290  PITTSBURGH BUREAU OF POLICE <i>"...honor, integrity, courage, respect, and compassion."</i>		SUBJECT: "POLICE RESPONSE AT FIRE SCENES"	ORDER NUMBER: 42-3
		CALEA STANDARD: NONE	PAGE 1 OF 4
ISSUE DATE: 1/12/2018	EFFECTIVE DATE: 3/31/2008	ANNUAL REVIEW DATE: MARCH	RESCINDS: COP #96-402
		AMENDS: PREVIOUS	

1.0 POLICY OR 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, i. e. structure, brush, vehicle, dumpster, playground etc.
- 2.2 The first responding officer(s) will park the police vehicle in a manner 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 Additionally, NO PBP vehicle shall be parked 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 making a decision to enter a structure affected by a fire.
- 2.5 The first officer(s) vehicle may be deemed the initial police command post for the incident.

3.0 ACTIONS AND DUTIES OF SUPERVISORY PERSONNEL

- 3.1 The zone shift supervisor will respond to the scene of all fire calls and assume command.
- 3.2 The 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 Note: 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 and is maintained until the fire is out 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 the 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 Ensure that no person hinders or obstructs a fire official in the performance of his or her duties
- 4.1.4 Ensure 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. NO PBP vehicle will be driven over a water supply line.
- 4.1.5 In some circumstances, assist in removing injured fire, police, and civilian personnel from the scene of the fire
- 4.1.6 Permit only authorized personnel to enter police lines. Authorized personnel would be limited to on-duty fire-fighters, on-duty EMS personnel, and on-duty police personnel actively investigating the fire.
- 4.1.7 Remain alert for possible evidence or suspicious persons that may be in the area of the fire scene.

5.0 RECORDING OF EVENTS/ REPORTS

- 5.1 Upon release from the fire, the designated report car shall initiate a police report describing the incident. In general, reporting officers shall not make any conclusions about the cause. 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 time the Fire Bureau is dispatched by the EOC
 - 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 in 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 listed 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 damages 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 who is involved in the discovery and/or transport of evidence.
- 5.2 A police report for any structure fire will contain the above listed information and this 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 of the occupants of the structure at the time of the incident
- 5.3 Reporting Fires (*Rescinds COP #96-402, “Vehicle Fires”*)
 - 5.3.1 If the cause of any type fire is unknown, the report shall be titled, “Fire-[Type of] Fire”. Examples of different types of fires are structure, vehicle, playground, trash, or brush fires.
 - 5.3.2 If an on-view arrest is made for Arson, the report shall be titled “Arson”.
 - 5.3.2.1 If an on-view arrest is made, the reporting officer shall contact the Arson Unit and Major Crimes

Supervisor through the Investigations Desk, prior to transport to the Allegheny County Jail so the arrestee is available to be interviewed by the Arson Unit.

6.0 ACTIVATING THE ARSON UNIT

6.1 Activation of the Arson 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 either as a result of the fire or to conceal another crime.

6.2 If the fire has not reached 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 Arson Unit be activated by contacting the EOC or the Investigations Desk.

6.3 The Arson Unit investigates all structure fires and may, depending on the circumstances, investigate a vehicle fire, trash fire, brush fire, or playground fire.

- 6.3.1 Circumstances that may activate the Arson Unit to a vehicle fire, trash fire, brush fire, or playground fire include, but are not limited to the following:
 - 6.3.1.1 Whether a person sustained a life-threatening injury.
 - 6.3.1.2 If the fire spread to a structure.
 - 6.3.1.3 If the fire lead to other property damage.
 - 6.3.1.4 If evidence needs to be collected.
 - 6.3.1.5 If suspects were seen setting the fire by witnesses and/or victims.
 - 6.3.1.6 If suspects were seen leaving the scene of the fire by witnesses and/or victims.

7.0 RESPONSE TO HIGH RISE FIRE INCIDENTS

7.1 In the event of a fire in a building that is six or 75 feet stories, the Bureau of Fire will follow SOP 312.

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 Arson Unit member to determine if a uniform unit is requested to remain with the Arson 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/ RELIEFS

9.1 In the event that a fire continues on 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 Arson Unit has responded to a fire scene, the shift supervisor will ensure that a copy of the report is faxed to the Arson 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 Arson Unit Office.

Approved By:

SUBJECT:
POLICE RESPONSE AT FIRE SCENES

ORDER NUMBER:
42-3

PAGE 4 OF 4



Scott Schubert
Chief of Police