

STOCKTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

GENERAL ORDER

ARSON
SUBJECT

DATE: March 1, 2005

NO: M-2

FROM: CHIEF ERIC JONES

TO: ALL PERSONNEL

INDEX: Arson Investigation
Arson

I. POLICY

- A. The Stockton Police Department, in conjunction with the Stockton Fire Department, will investigate all attempted or actual arson cases within the jurisdiction of the City of Stockton.

II. LAW

- A. Sworn personnel must become familiar with California Penal Code Section 451 (Willful and malicious setting a fire); Section 452 (Unlawfully causing a fire of inhabited structure or with injury), and Section 455 (Attempts).

III. PROCEDURE

- A. If it is determined an arson has occurred, a patrol sergeant will be notified by the officer at the scene under the following circumstances:
1. Deaths or serious injuries where the cause is unknown or under suspicious circumstances.
 2. Fires in commercial or residential structures where the apparent intent was to injure the occupants.
 3. Incidents where immediate response of an investigator to conduct a follow-up investigation is required.
 4. Incidents involving explosives, other than small quantities of fireworks.
- B. An arson investigator is to be called for the following types of fires:
1. Major or complicated incendiary fires
 2. Fires requiring numerous investigators to conduct a fire scene investigation due to the physical size or the number of witnesses
 3. Fires that involve one or more fatalities or injuries that may result in death(s).
 - a. Officer(s) at the scene will ensure the scene is protected against contamination.
- C. Auto fires and fires in abandoned buildings scheduled for demolition do not normally require an arson investigator.
- D. If the officer at the scene is to handle the investigation, the officer will:
1. Eliminate all accidental causes of fire.

- a. Generally a member of the Fire Department will state whether the fire was an arson.
 - b. Obtain a statement from the Fire Department explaining why the fire was arson.
2. Locate the cause and origin of the fire.
 - a. Seek, find, and preserve all items showing that arson was the cause of the fire (matches, flammable liquids, and residue).
3. Evidence Identification Technicians will photograph the entire scene including the point of origin.
 - a. The Evidence Identification Technician will collect all the evidence and diagram the crime scene as necessary.
4. Contact witnesses.
 - a. Interview the person who reported the fire.
 - b. Interview the first firefighter to arrive at the fire.
 - (1) Have the firefighter describe exactly what type of smoke was seen, shape and color, and what odor was present that may have aroused suspicions.
5. Complete the appropriate report listing all elements of the crime.