



GENERAL ORDER

Loudoun County Sheriff's Office

Chapter: Operations

Section: 406.20

Subject: Response to Selected Situations

Topic: Fire Related Offenses

Accreditation:

Revised:

Reaffirmed:

Enacted: 07/30/2015

Last Review: 07/24/2015

Review: 07/30/2016

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order shall be to establish guidelines when receiving a complaint of a fire related offense.

II. POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office to utilize uniform procedures when investigating fire-related offenses.

III. PROCEDURE

A. Investigations

1. Fire Marshal

- a. The Office of the Fire Marshal shall have the sole responsibility for the investigation of all fires, either accidental or arson-related, unless a criterion is met for the activation of the Fire and Explosive Investigative Task Force.
- b. Fire deaths require the activation of the task force.
- c. On the scene, the Fire Marshal may request assistance from the Sheriff's Office when processing the scene of an arson or suspected arson fire. This request should be made through the staff duty officer at the time the request is made.

2. Sheriff's Office

- a. An incident report will be required on the following fire related incidents:
 - i. Fire related deaths
 - ii. Fires involving other offenses
- b. A Criminal Investigation Division detective will be assigned to assist the Fire Marshal's Office with any fire-related case that is a result of arson or suspected arson.

- c. The Sheriff's Office Criminal Investigation Division shall, in conjunction with the Office of the Fire Marshal, investigate any fire deaths that result from arson, suspected arson, or any other offense.
 - d. When the examination of a fire scene indicates that another offense is apparently involved i.e. burglary, stolen property, auto larceny, etc., a deputy shall respond and complete an incident report. Deputies dispatched to scenes that they feel should come to the attention of the Fire Marshal shall use their judgment to call for a Fire Marshal or complete the incident report and mark a copy to the attention of the Fire Marshal's Office. The supervisor should make any request for the Fire Marshal to respond to the scene through the Emergency Communications Center.
 - e. At no time does the notification of the Fire Marshal alleviate the responsibility of the deputy at the scene from taking a report.
 - f. Deputies who observe the commission of arson or establish probable cause for an arson that requires immediate apprehension should effect an arrest. The arresting deputy shall contact the Office of the Fire Marshal and request assistance in processing evidence and gaining an expert opinion on matters that are unique to the investigation and prosecution of arson.
3. Media Relations
- a. Releasing information to the media will be up to the agency having primary responsibility for conducting the investigation.