



SACRAMENTO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDERS



538.05 ARSON INVESTIGATIONS 07-17-2023

PURPOSE

The purpose of this order is to establish procedures for the coordination of the Sacramento Police Department (SPD) and the Sacramento Fire Department (SFD) during arson investigations.

POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Sacramento Police Department that arson investigations be coordinated with SFD.

PROCEDURE

A. GENERAL

1. Officers shall notify SFD of all fires.
2. Officers should assist authorized fire personnel with reasonable requests (e.g. transporting or booking prisoners, preserving the scene, taking witness statements).

B. INVESTIGATIVE RESPONSIBILITY

1. SFD arson investigators are sworn California peace officers (Penal Code § 830.37) and will assume the primary responsibility of all fire investigations, except those involving:
 - a. Homicides
 - b. Stolen vehicles
 - c. Destructive devices as defined in Penal Code § 16460
 - (1) The SPD Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Unit shall assume primary responsibility for the investigation of arsons involving destructive devices.
 - d. Other serious crimes as determined by the arson investigator
2. As primary investigators, SFD arson investigators will collect and book evidence and be responsible for any arrests or reports.
3. When SFD does not assume the primary responsibility for a fire, officers should request assistance with documenting fire damage.
4. If SPD arrests or detains a subject for arson, officers shall notify SFD and have them respond to assist with the investigation.

C. OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Officers shall contact their supervisor when:
 - a. Situations arise that are not covered by this order.
 - b. Seeking clarification of investigative responsibility of arson or fire calls.

D. SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

1. When situations or questions of jurisdiction or responsibility not covered by this order arise and cannot be resolved in the field, supervisors shall forward the information to the SPD lieutenant designated as the SFD liaison.
2. The SPD lieutenant designated as the SFD liaison shall work with SFD to mediate any concerns or questions that arise during the investigation of an arson and cannot be resolved in the field.