



SHARED RESOURCE PROCEDURES

Procedure: Accident Investigation (SCFPD C-91)

Effective Date: January 4, 2018

Revision Date: NEW

Author: Alan Ernst, Operations Chief

Purpose: To establish general guidelines for investigating accidents, injuries, and equipment problems.

Because Firefighting is one of the most hazardous professions in our country, the agencies involved with resource sharing are committed to the prevention of accidents and injuries. As a result, it is important that we learn from those unfortunate events and look critically at how we might reduce the risk involved in our profession.

A) Accident Investigation

An Accident Investigation may be initiated by the Fire Chief or the Chief of Operations, at any time. Since time is of the essence, accidents involving injuries to fire personnel should begin as soon as possible. Any employee may submit a request for an Accident Investigation. Each request will be processed through the chain of command to the Fire Chief. Requests must be submitted in writing, including a description of the incident, along with the facts and circumstances relating to both the incident and reason for requesting the investigation.

1) Investigations shall be mandatory when a serious injury, arising out of an accident, occurs to fire personnel.

2) Accident investigations shall be divided into one of three categories based on the severity of the accident.

a) Level 1 investigations are close calls or accidents with minor or no injuries.

- Conducted by the Incident Commander or other Chief Officer.
- The Investigating Officer shall draft an Initial Report of findings as soon as possible after the incident.
- The draft document shall be reviewed for accuracy by the Fire Chief or Chief of Operations.
- The approved document shall then be published.
- The full Safety Committee will review and validate the Initial Report of Findings.

- The Safety Committee shall also publish recommendations focusing on measures to prevent a reoccurrence of the accident.
- No other action is necessary.

b) Level 2 investigations are incidents where the nature of the accident is serious enough to warrant a more in-depth investigation of the events surrounding the incident.

- Initial Report of Findings shall be prepared by the Incident Commander or other Chief Officer.
- Upon review by the Chief of Operations the determination is made that a more in-depth investigation is necessary.
- The reviewed Initial Report of findings is published.
- The internal Serious Accident Review Team (SART) acts as the investigation team.
- Upon completion of the investigation, the SART shall prepare a draft Final Report of Findings which includes whether or not the accident was preventable.
- The SART shall also publish recommendations focusing on measures to prevent a reoccurrence of the accident.
- The draft report shall be reviewed by the Chief Officers with final approval given by the Fire Chief prior to being published.
- The Safety Committee shall review and if warranted, publish recommendations focusing on measures to prevent a reoccurrence of the accident.

c) Level 3 investigations include accidents with significant injury or the death of personnel.

- Initial Report of Findings shall be prepared by the Incident Commander or other Officer.
- Upon review the Fire Chief determines that an independent investigation is warranted.
- The reviewed Initial Report of findings is published.
- The Fire Chief appoints a Case Manager from the membership of the SART.
- The Case Manager will work with Command Staff to request an Independent Accident Investigation Team from outside fire agencies.
- The Case Manager shall facilitate on behalf of the Independent Accident Investigation Team
- The SART and the Training Officer/Incident Safety Officer shall assist the Case manager and the Independent Accident Investigation Team, as needed.
- The Independent Accident Investigation Team shall prepare a Final Report of findings.

- The Independent Accident Investigation Team shall publish recommendations focusing on measures to prevent a reoccurrence of the accident.
- The Final Report shall be forwarded to the Fire Chief and then to all Chief Officers for review prior to final publishing.
- As a courtesy the employee association representative shall be forwarded a copy of the findings prior to publication.

An Investigation Tools check list is located at the end of this document and is identified as Appendix #1.

B) Initial Actions

When an accident occurs, whether there is an injury to an individual or a property, damage/vehicle accident, the Incident Commander must act quickly to attend to the injured employee and citizens. The care and medical treatment of our employees is paramount.

- 1) Secure the scene.
 - a) If necessary, secure and bag the injured fire fighter's PPE's and enter into evidence with the Fire Investigation Unit for safe keeping.
 - b) Flag off the perimeter of the scene to insure nothing is disturbed.
 - c) Photograph all aspects of the scene including the Incident Commander's command board and structure.
- 2) Begin the investigation process.
 - a) The Incident Commander or other Chief Officer to shall begin the preliminary investigation.
 - b) If necessary, the IC will call in an off duty Chief Officer to continue the process.
- 3) Notify your immediate supervisor.
- 4) Other notifications
 - a) Cal-OSHA – Made by the Fire Chief or the Division Chief of Operations
 - b) Law Enforcement – Made by the Incident Commander.
 - c) Politicians – Made by the Fire Chief
 - d) Risk Manager – Made by the Incident Commander or Fire Chief

5) Determine what level of investigation is required.

- a) Level 1 – Is dictated when there was no injury or the injury was minor.
 - A minor injury is defined as an injury where no work time was lost. The employee may seek treatment but was not relieved of duty due to the injury.

- b) Level 2 –Is determined to be when a moderate injury occurs and is more than a minor injury, but less than a significant one.
 - A moderate injury is defined as a lost work time injury. The injury resulted in medical treatment and the employee was not able to continue to work without restrictions.

- c) Level 3 – Is required when significant injury or the death of one of our personnel has occurred.
 - A significant injury is determined to be when hospitalization or surgery was required to treat the injury.

The amount of action required and the level of investigation will depend on the severity of the accident.

C) Conducting the Preliminary Investigation

1) Interview everyone who saw or was involved in the accident, including the victim (may have to be done at a later date). Use this procedure.

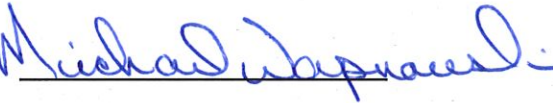
- a) Put them at ease - explain that you are finding facts -- not fault.
- b) Interview “on the spot”, if possible.
- c) Interview each person separately - group interviews create confusion.
- d) Record all interviews, if possible.
- e) Begin with the interviewee’s title and assignment.
- f) Encourage the person to tell “what they saw.”
- g) Ask open-ended questions: “What? When? Where? How? And Why?”
- h) Repeat the story back for confirmation.
- i) End on a positive note.
- j) Keep an avenue for future communication open. Some people will remember important facts at a later time.

2) Observe the accident scene - Look for obvious defects in equipment, tools, or

objects that could have caused the injury. Use photos or drawings as necessary.

- a) Secure any evidence, including PPE's for future evaluation.
- b) Record critical information promptly - don't delay. Use a prepared form to help remember key questions.
- c) Gather facts, not opinions. Use them to identify activities that contributed to the accident.
- d) Make conclusions based on facts and knowledge, not suppositions.
- e) Identify Safety recommendations for further review to correct physical hazards, revise job procedures, or to identify employee training needs.
- f) Complete a Green Sheet – Informational Summary Report of the event within 7 days of the occurrence.
 - Green Sheet format is included within this procedure as Appendix 2.
 - The agency with jurisdiction of the incident will be responsible for publishing the Green Sheet.

Approved by:



Date: January 4, 2018

Michael Wapnowski, Acting Chief

Appendix 1

INVESTIGATION TOOLS CHECKLIST

- _____ Bound notebook
- _____ Clipboard/pad, pens and pencils
- _____ Graph paper
- _____ Paint stick (yellow/black)
- _____ Chalk (yellow/white)
- _____ Camera, with film and flash
- _____ Video camera with tape
- _____ Audio recorder
- _____ Straight edge rule for scale reference in photos
- _____ Tape measure - preferably 100-ft.
- _____ Scotch, masking and duct tape
- _____ High visibility plastic tape to demarcate area
- _____ Identification tags
- _____ Flashlight
- _____ First-aid kit
- _____ Appropriate personal protective equipment
- _____ Sturdy gloves
- _____ Specimen containers
- _____ Hazard monitoring equipment
- _____ Accident investigator's checklist and report forms
- _____ Interview or statement forms

Appendix 2

GREEN SHEET

Modesto Fire Department (MFD)

Informational Summary Report of Serious MFD Injuries, Illness,
Accidents, and Near-Miss Incident



<Incident Type>

<Date>

Incident Number ##

<Submitted by>

A Board of Review has not approved the Summary Report. It is intended as a safety and training tool, an aid in preventing future occurrences, and to inform interested parties. As this is published on a short time frame, the

information contained herein is subject to revisions as further investigation is conducted and additional information is developed.

SUMMARY

<Enter Summary of Events>

CONDITIONS

Weather conditions observed at the scene <Date/Time>

Temperature:

Humidity:

Wind Speed:

Directions:

Visibility:

Structure:

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

<Enter Narrative>

Description	Photo

Description	Photo
Description	Photo
Description	Photo

INJURIES/DAMAGE

<Enter Injuries and/or damages>

SAFETY ISSUES FOR REVIEW

- <Enter Safety Issues for Review>
- <>
- <>