



CITY OF MADISON POLICE DEPARTMENT
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE



Arson Investigations

Eff. Date 01/24/2022

PURPOSE

To provide investigative resources for arson related investigations. These resources will be available at a district's request for any fire/arson related investigations.

Establish standard operating procedure (SOP) for Madison Police Department (MPD) response for arson related incidents.

MISSION

Madison Police Department Arson Detectives and Investigators will work closely with Madison Fire Department's Fire Investigation Team (FIT) in the investigation of fire/arson related incidents. MPD and MFD personnel will work collaboratively to investigate the cause and origin of fires, to collect evidence and process scenes, to interview suspects and witnesses, and to prepare cases for prosecution.

PROCEDURE

Upon receiving any of the following calls for service, an officers and a supervisor will be dispatched to the scene and/or victim's location:

1. Structure fire
2. Vehicle fire
3. Tampering with fire safety equipment

The supervisor at the scene shall work with MFD command to determine if additional investigative resources are needed from either/both MFD and/or MPD.

If MFD advises they are dispatching an MFD Fire Investigator to the scene, the scene supervisor shall notify the MPD Officer in Charge (OIC) and advise of the circumstances surrounding the incident. Scene supervisors should also advise the OIC of any requests by MFD for additional MPD resources, beyond scene management/control.

Whenever a fire incident results in loss of life, significant injury, or property damage, or the cause of the fire appears intentional, the following notification is required:

- During normal working hours, contact the Burglary Property Crimes Detective Lieutenant-Detective Lieutenant or other command staff of the district where the incident occurred.
- If outside normal working hours, contact the on-call Detective Lieutenant.

Detective resources will be assigned per normal case assignment. The request for assistance from an arson detective may be based upon immediately known circumstances (such as loss of life or significant property damage) or may be made once the primary detective has determined the need and relayed that request through their district Detective Lieutenant or the on-call Detective Lieutenant. Any Arson Detective assigned a case outside of their district, or normal work assignment, should notify their direct supervisor as soon as practical. A current list of all Arson Detectives shall be maintained by the Arson Lieutenant and made available in the OIC's office.

PERSONNEL

The Arson Lieutenant shall maintain an active list of Arson Detectives. Detectives who have attended, or plan on attending the Wisconsin International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI) Basic Fire Investigation training, or substantially equivalent training, are eligible to be an 'active' Arson Detective.

All Investigators shall maintain a level of proficiency in their basic skills in order to adequately assist in the collection of evidence and processing of crime scenes. However, the Forensic Services Unit shall also maintain a minimum of two investigators with advanced training related to arson investigations. These investigators may be assigned to assist any designated Arson Investigation as the Lead Investigator or to serve in an advisory capacity.

The Arson Lieutenant will be a Lieutenant designated by the Captain of Investigative Services.

Original SOP: 05/09/2018
(Revised: 01/03/2020, 01/24/2022)
(Reviewed only: 02/05/2024)