

# ACCIDENT & INJURY INVESTIGATION

## A. Purpose:

The purpose of this guideline is to provide a process for investigating accidents / incidents.

## B. Guideline:

It is the guideline of the PFD to investigate accidents / incidents of the following nature:

1. Most apparatus and POV accidents (POV's while on PFD business). The Senior Officer available will determine the necessity of a full or condensed incident investigation. This decision is somewhat subjective but must error toward the conservative of a full investigation process. A condensed investigation is considered an exception to the rule.
2. All accident documentation must be clearly marked with the following phrase "**in anticipation of litigation**". Any pictures of the accident must be provided to the fire chief and NOT retained by the individual and will be stored by the fire chief.
  - All documentation including pictures will be provided to the PVFA attorney after being marked "in anticipation of litigation".

## C. Guidelines that will be considered in the decision process requiring a full investigation are:

1. Estimated damage greater than \$750. (Insurance deductible is \$1,000)
2. A damaged vehicle that cannot be transported under its own power
3. The member-driver receives a traffic citation
4. Other extenuating circumstances
5. Injuries that require medical treatment
6. Incidents that result in significant property damage
7. Any other accident at the discretion of the senior officer present

An investigation will begin within 48 hours of the incident and will be concluded within seven days of the incident. The investigation report will detail the root causes of the accident, a corrective action plan that will help prevent similar occurrences in the future, and recommendations for disciplinary action if necessary.

#### D. Procedures:

##### Vehicular Accidents:

1. The driver of the vehicle must provide a verbal report to the senior officer available as soon as feasible. Failure to notify will result in an immediate 30-day suspension from the department.
2. If the incident occurs during a response, consideration must be given to completing the response, but it is not a requirement. Normal information exchange must occur between PFD personnel and the affected public.
3. Immediately after the incident (as soon as feasible), the driver of the PFD vehicle will be suspended from driving PFD apparatus and the use of POV emergency equipment until such time as the accident receives a preliminary investigation and a decision is made to allow or disallow driving. The senior officer available usually performs this as long as he/she is not directly involved in the incident.
4. The driver of the vehicle involved in the incident must complete a written report within six hours of the incident and submit to the senior officer available.

##### Injury Incidents:

1. The immediate priority after an injury incident will be the appropriate treatment of the injured person(s).
2. All fire ground injuries must be reported the Incident Commander and/or Senior PFD Officer present as soon as possible. Other injuries while on PFD business or on PFD premises are to be reported to the Senior Officer available.

##### Investigation:

1. The Senior Officer available will appoint an ad hoc investigative committee within two days of the incident. The committee will consist of a Command Staff member (unless that officer was involved or is a direct witness), the departmental Safety Officer if available, and a representative group of three additional personnel (one from each station). If the Senior Officer available was involved, then the next most senior officer available will assume responsibility for the investigation.
2. The investigation committee will gather any and all information necessary to determine the cause(s) of the incident and to determine what measures are necessary to prevent similar occurrences in the future. If the incident is deemed preventable, the committee will also determine appropriate suspension,

termination, and/or training attendance that may be necessary for those involved.

3. A preliminary report of the investigation findings will be prepared. The report will include a description of the incident, the immediate and root cause(s), and the corrective actions determined appropriate. A diagram of the incident should be included if it would add clarity to the investigation. The Command Staff will assign primary ownership for completion of the corrective actions. Closure of the corrective actions and supporting documentation (if any) will be included in the final report. Final accident reports will be maintained in an accident file and if appropriate, in the individual personnel files of those involved.

# ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION FLOW MODEL

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