

# Fire Marshal's Directive 2023-001

[Français](#)

## TOPIC: NOTIFICATION OF FIRES AND EXPLOSIONS

This directive is issued under clause 9.(1)(b) of the [Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997](#) (FPPA), and supersedes Fire Marshal directive 2019-002 issued July 10, 2019.

### Background

It is the responsibility of every assistant to the Fire Marshal to follow the Fire Marshal's directives as set out in subsection 11.(1) of the FPPA.

Under clause 9.(2)(a) of the FPPA, it is a duty of the Fire Marshal to investigate the cause, origin, and circumstances of any fire or of any explosion or condition that in the opinion of the Fire Marshal might have caused a fire, explosion, loss of life, or damage to property. In order to carry out this duty, the Fire Marshal must be notified of those specified incidents. This directive establishes the reporting duties for assistants to the Fire Marshal.

### Directive to Notify

All assistants to the Fire Marshal shall notify forthwith the Provincial Emergency Operations Centre (PEOC) Duty Officer, Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) at 1-800-461-2281 (toll free) of all incidents that meet or that appear to meet one or more of the following criteria **[1]**:

- Fires or explosions resulting in a fatality.
- Fires or explosions requiring person(s) to be admitted with **life threatening injury** as in-patient(s) to a hospital (it is the responsibility of the fire department to make every reasonable effort to confirm the status of injured persons transported to hospital prior to the release of the fire scene). The local fire department shall record the efforts taken to obtain information

regarding the status of a patient admitted to the hospital which may include inquiries to local hospital, paramedic services, and/or police agency.

- An assistant to the Fire Marshal must report a fire incident as soon as they become aware of the incident if it involves a person who was taken to the hospital due to an exposure and/or injury sustained as a result of the fire.
- Explosions (where the explosion is suspected or known to be the primary event).
- Fires or explosions suspected of being incendiary (criminal). Discretion to notify the Office of the Fire Marshal may be used: when the cause, origin, and circumstances has been determined; when there is no impact to a building(s); or, in circumstances where there is no clear threat to life. These types of fires include dumpster fires, car fires [2], and wildland fires. All incendiary fires and explosions must be reported to the police authority having jurisdiction.
- Fires or explosions where the loss is significant to the community [3].
- Fires or explosions involving circumstances that may result in widespread public concern (for example, environmental hazard).
- Fires or explosions in multi-unit residential occupancies where the fire spread or the explosion impacted multiple units or where suspected Fire Code violations have directly impacted the circumstances of the event.
- Fires or explosions involving clandestine and illegal drug operations, cannabis/marijuana grow operations.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

1. Fire departments should call once all suppression activities are at the stage that someone is available on-scene to provide detailed information/date.
2. Fire departments shall advise the PEOC if they are requiring OFM assistance or if the information is being provided for notification only because it meets the aforementioned criteria.
3. Fire and explosion investigation protocols require that the security of the scene be maintained prior to the arrival of an OFM or police investigator. When a fire investigation is assigned to an investigator, it is the responsibility of the fire department to provide all necessary documents, including but not limited to, firefighter statements, dispatch chronology, incident commander report detailing suppression and overhaul activities, and fire prevention files as required by the investigator.
4. Fire departments may hire a third party licenced security company to secure the scene when the fire is believed "non-suspicious" or "non-criminal".

5. In order to ensure investigative integrity for various investigative agencies that may be involved, assistants to the Fire Marshal are advised that media requests should be coordinated by all respective responsible agencies. Matters that are beyond the authority of the responding fire department should be deferred to the lead investigating agency.

*Note: There is no requirement for a local fire service to report a fire incident that they were not dispatched to.*

### **Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) Fire Investigation Services Response**

1. All notifications involving a fatality, life threatening injury, or explosion will be **evaluated 24/7** for determination of OFM investigation requirements, and deployment of OFM fire investigation staff.
2. All other incidents will be evaluated from **7:30 am – 9:00 pm** for a determination of investigation requirements. Calls received between 9:00 pm and 7:30 am (which do not meet the immediate notification criteria) shall be deferred by PEOC until after 7:30 am the next morning.

When an OFM response is deferred to the next day, the PEOC Duty Officer will inform the caller that:

- The OFM will be notified at 0730 hrs
- The OFM Duty Manager or Duty Supervisor will determine investigation requirements and
- All steps shall be taken by the fire service/police to secure the scene if the fire department or police are requesting the assistance of a fire investigator.

An OFM manager is available after regular business hours to deal with circumstances that call for direct consultation with the OFM.

### **Special Consideration – Fires of a Potential Criminal Nature**

Findings of an OFM investigation such as cause, origin, and circumstance may assist the local police in determining whether a fire is criminal in nature. In the event that a scene is potentially criminal in nature, the police are the lead agency, and they may liaise directly with the OFM. The OFM will make reasonable effort to advise the local fire department when this occurs.

## **OFM, Notification by Police Agencies and/or Indigenous Communities**

Police agencies and or Indigenous Communities may directly notify the OFM of incidents through the PEOC as well as the local fire department if not involved in the incident.

When the local fire department is on scene, the police should be communicating with them to determine whether a call has already been made to the PEOC.

### **Rationale**

This directive provides direction to assistants to the Fire Marshal on the reporting of fire incidents in support of the prescribed responsibilities, powers, and duties of the Fire Marshal under the FPPA.

Jon Pegg  
Fire Marshal and Chief, Emergency Management  
February 17, 2023

#### **[1]**

This directive does not restrict the ability of assistants to the Fire Marshal to contact the PEOC for any fire or explosion for which they desire consultation. Further, they may contact the PEOC for fires or explosions of unusual cause, origin, or circumstances which may be of interest to the OFM

#### **[2]**

Car fires are only investigated if suspected of being involved in a serious incident (homicide, robbery, etc.), fatal, or life-threatening injury. The OFM does not investigate if the fire is the result of a motor vehicle collision that does not include any of the other above criteria.

#### **[3]**

Significant loss is classified as being at least either \$1,000,000 or twice the residential average sale price for that community. The local authority having jurisdiction has the discretion of which method they choose to classify a significant loss.

Examples of: "significant to the community" may include, but are not limited to, fires at religious institutions or fires that appear to have been intentionally set and targeted towards a certain type of establishment.