

**SANTA CLARA COUNTY
LOCAL FIRE SERVICE AND RESCUE MUTUAL AID PLAN**

APPENDIX 7 - FIRE INVESTIGATION TASK FORCE

Revised Date: January 2016
Next Revision Date: January 2018

Introduction

The purpose of the Santa Clara County Fire Investigation Task Force is to supplement investigation resources for special limited duration operations. This plan is not intended to remove investigation responsibility from the agency having jurisdiction.

Information

1. A list will be maintained by Santa Clara County Communications for each calendar year identifying an "On-Call" Fire Investigation Task Force Coordinator and two alternates.
2. The Incident Commander (IC) or their designee, of the requesting agency, upon determining need, will request the Fire Investigation Task Force Coordinator through Santa Clara County Communications. The on-call Coordinator, or alternate, will contact the requesting IC or their designee either by telephone or by responding to the scene. The Coordinator and the requesting agencies designee will work together in a Unified Command and jointly determine the number of Task Force members and type of special equipment needed, to complete the investigation.
3. Once resource needs are determined the On-Call Coordinator will request a Red Net Broadcast through County Communications. The broadcast will provide response, incident location, type of situation, assembly location, and duration information for the investigators in the broadcast. This request will be for each agency to report their investigator's availability back to County Communications, who will in turn report each agencies' Investigator availability back to the Task Force On-Call Coordinator for deployment and needs assessments. The Coordinator will then provide resource availability to the requesting agency.
4. If requested Fire Department Agencies have Police Investigators that assist with fire investigations, it is the responsibility of that agency to contact their PD and make a request for a PD response. They will also report that person's response availability to County Communications.
5. The On-Call Coordinator will make calls to other agencies not available to receive Red Net broadcasts if their resources are needed. ATF, Santa Clara County Crime Lab, District Attorney's Office, Fish and Game etc.

6. It is the responsibility of the requesting agency to have a Lead Investigator present to secure the scene throughout the operations. The Lead Investigator is defined as someone who assumes command for the origin and cause investigation and provides all necessary support, follow-up, and report writing unless certain Task Force members are involved in functions that require documentation; such as photo documentation, K-9 reporting, diagrams, interviewing, etc.
7. It is the responsibility of the requesting agency to have the scene in a safe condition so that Task Force members will not be delayed in commencing operations.
8. The Coordinator will contact the necessary Task Force Agencies and request an investigator. Each agency will be notified of the incident location, type of situation, assembly location and time duration of investigator need.
9. At the assembly point, Task Force members will be briefed on the situation and the Task Force Coordinator will assign specific jobs for the operation.
10. After the initial briefing and job assignments, the team will report to the fire scene to commence the investigation. The On-Call Coordinator and the requesting agencies Lead Investigator will work together (Unified Command) to make sure all safety issues are continually addressed throughout the investigation process and appropriate equipment needs are provided. If the investigation process will be extended through a long period of time, food, water, and appropriate toilet facilities and washing stations should be provided.
11. Care must be given to assure either consent or a search warrant has been obtained prior to the initiation of the scene search.
12. At the conclusion of the scene investigation, a final briefing will be held in which all aspects of the investigation will be discussed and agreed to before the Fire Investigation Task Force investigation is concluded.
13. Task Force members involved in functions requiring written reports will complete them as soon as possible and forward them to the appropriate agency designee. All evidence gathered at the scene and transportation of evidence to the laboratory for analysis will be the responsibility of the requesting agency, unless other arrangements are made by the requesting agencies. Examples: Appropriate Police Agency, County Crime Lab, ATF, other Federal Agency, or D.A.'s Office.

14. Investigator commitments on an "If available" status:

CAL FIRE	-	CDF	1
COUNTY	-	CNT	1
GILROY	-	GIL	1
MILPITAS	-	MLP	1
MOUNTAIN VIEW	-	MTV	1
PALO ALTO	-	PAF	1
SAN JOSE	-	SJS	1
SANTA CLARA	-	SNC	1
SOUTH SANTA CLARA CO	-	SCC	1
SUNNYVALE	-	SNY	1