



<b>Policy Name:</b>	<b>ARSON</b>		
<b>Policy #:</b>	OP 4.34.2	<b>Last Updated:</b>	2022-04-07
<b>Issued By:</b>	COMMUNITY POLICING BUREAU	<b>Approved By:</b>	SURREY POLICE BOARD
		<b>Review Frequency:</b>	AS REQUIRED

**RELATED POLICIES**

*OP 4.23 Fire Calls*

*OP 4.13 Crime Scene Management*

*OP 4.34 Major Crime Investigations*

**1. PURPOSE**

1.1. To ensure Surrey Police Service (SPS) Members follow procedures in cases of suspected and confirmed arson incidents.

**2. SCOPE**

2.1. This policy applies to all Members.

**3. POLICY**

3.1. Arson incidents are dangerous and have the potential to be life threatening. If the incident is believed to be or is confirmed to be arson, the following procedure is best practice for ensuring officer safety, working in collaboration with the Surrey Fire Service (SFS), and maintaining evidence continuity.

3.2. Deliberately set fires involving minor damage (e.g., dumpsters, garage doors, abandoned buildings, cars, etc.) will be generally considered as mischief fires with conduct of the investigation maintained by Frontline Members or the Frontline Investigative Support Team (FLIST).

3.3. The Serious Crimes Unit (SCU) will be notified where:

- i. the fire is deemed an arson or is suspicious in nature and,
- ii. there are serious injuries and/or death; or
- iii. the damage caused by the fire is of significant value, or there are circumstances that justify notifying the SCU Supervisor (e.g., firebombing, serial fires believed to have been set by the same suspect, etc.).

#### 4. PROCEDURE

4.1. When Members are notified by SFS or through another method that a fire is believed to be or confirmed to be an arson incident, responding Members will:

- i. exercise caution to maintain officer safety (refer to *OP 4.23 Fire Calls*);
- ii. provide assistance to SFS personnel as needed (refer to *OP 4.23 Fire Calls*);
- iii. treat the premises, structure, or vehicle as a major crime scene (refer to *OP 4.13 Crime Scene Management* and *OP 4.34 Major Crime Investigations*);
- iv. ensure any human remains are undisturbed;
- v. record any evidence at scene (e.g., fire patterns, multiple fire locations, discarded accelerants, ignition devices, signs of forced entry, etc.);
- vi. locate and interview any witnesses;
- vii. request Lower Mainland Division Integrated Forensic Identification Services (LMD IFIS) where appropriate or at the request of the SFS Investigator;
- viii. identify and obtain details of the scene from the SFS Investigator;
- ix. take control of the scene once SFS completes their investigation;
- x. if exhibits are seized, place the exhibit into a nylon bag or a metal can to preserve the presence of accelerants; and
- xi. write a detailed General Occurrence report to be forwarded to SCU, along with Members' notes.

4.2. A Supervisor responding to a fire incident believed to be or confirmed to be arson will:

- i. determine the need for additional units to assist in the investigation or traffic control;
- ii. notify the Duty Officer of the incident; and
- iii. contact the on-duty or on-call SCU Supervisor for a SCU Investigator(s) to be called out and take control of the investigation if the criteria in s. 3.3 above are present.

## **APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS**

“FLIST” means Frontline Investigative Support Team.

“LMD IFIS” means Lower Mainland Integrated Forensic Identification Service.

“Member” means a sworn Police Officer appointed by the Surrey Police Board.

“SCU” means SPS Serious Crime Unit.

“SFS” means the Surrey Fire Service.

“SPS” means Surrey Police Service.

“Supervisor” means a Sergeant, Staff Sergeant, Inspector, Superintendent, Deputy Chief Constable, Chief Constable, and any other person acting in a Supervisory capacity who is accountable for a particular area or shift on behalf of SPS.

## APPENDIX B: REFERENCES