



PROCEDURE MANUAL

Safety Program

Vehicle Accident Investigation

Original Date: Revised Date: 5/27/2009

Code: 2-8-7

7.01 PURPOSE

Establish guidelines for investigating accidents involving DES/County Fire personnel and/or equipment/apparatus/vehicles.

7.02 SCOPE

All DES and CSA 40 Staff

7.03 POLICY

The goal of the accident investigation process is to:

- a. Determine the facts surrounding the accident.
- b. Determine the principle cause(s) of the accident.
- c. Determine any mitigating factors which may have contributed to the accident.
- d. Report findings of the investigation. In the case of accidents involving Department vehicles or apparatus one of the following determinations will be made:
 - At-fault, with operator error/responsibility
 - Not at-fault, operator is not responsible
- e. Recommend changes to department policies, procedures, and/or equipment to prevent additional accidents of a similar nature.

7.04 PROCEDURES

1. ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE

The Accident Investigation Committee is formed for the purpose of reviewing and reporting factual evidence regarding vehicle accidents involving department apparatus, severe injuries to department personnel, equipment failures, or other incidents deemed appropriate by the Director / Fire Chief.

The Accident Investigation Committee shall consist of the Fire Division Assistant Chief responsible for the Health & Safety Committee, a Health and Safety Committee Member, the County Risk Manager representative (optional), a labor representative of the affected employee organization, (i.e. SEIU, SCLEA) and in the case of accidents involving department vehicles or apparatus, a vehicle accident investigator from the Sherriff's Department.

The Accident Investigation Committee will convene at the request of the Director / Fire Chief and shall submit their findings to him/her upon conclusion of the investigation.

2. ACCIDENT REPORTS

The initial stage in any accident investigation is completion of the appropriate accident investigation reports and notification of the appropriate personnel.

Department Policy 2-8-6 Vehicle Accident Reports, and/or 2-8-8 Accident/Injury Supervisor's Report will be followed regarding appropriate accident reports based on the nature and type of accident.

3. ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION REVIEW

The Accident Investigation Committee will convene at the request of the Director / Fire Chief as indicated in #1, above.

Upon review of the pertinent facts pertaining to the accident, the Assistant Chief responsible for the Health and Safety Committee shall report the findings of the Accident Investigation Committee in writing to the Director / Fire Chief. Each member shall review the content of the report for accuracy and communication of facts. This report shall place in writing the consensus of committee members' finding and contain each member's signature. Committee members shall not normally retain copies of this report. Dissemination of this report to other persons or agencies shall be determined by the Director / Fire Chief. This report shall not be made part of any involved employee's personnel file. Reports will be maintained in a secured file cabinet at DES Administrative Office for the duration of time required by law.

This report shall be used to document the accident, record finding of Fault/ No Fault, and guide accident prevention activities. Remedial training may be recommended for the employee(s) directly involved in the accident and others closely involved in the accident. In some instances, department-wide training and education may be deemed necessary as part of the accident prevention program. The Director / Fire Chief will direct the Training Officer to facilitate all necessary training, which may include outside course attendance.

The accident investigation process is not a disciplinary investigation. If the Director / Fire Chief determines disciplinary action is warranted, the disciplinary process will result in a separate review/investigation of the incident. Upon written request, the accident investigation report may be requested by the involved employee's(s') representative during the disciplinary investigation.

Personnel determined to be at fault in the accident shall have their Driver Safety Award eligibility starting date adjusted to the first day following the accident. *Example: The employee was promoted to Fire Engineer on August 1, 2001. He or she would be eligible for the five year drive safety award August 1, 2006. If the employee had an accident on July 30, 2006, the new eligible date would be adjusted to five years after July 31, 2006.*

7.05 REFERENCES

None