



FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE



STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES / STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES MANUAL

FIRE PREVENTION • FIRE INSPECTION • FIRE INVESTIGATION • CODE ENFORCEMENT • ADMINISTRATION

AGENCY:

City of Crockett Fire Marshal's Office

CITY:

Crockett, Texas

COUNTY:

Houston County

FIRE CHIEF/FIRE MARSHAL:

Jason Frizzell

EFFECTIVE DATE:

POLICY VERSION:

1.0

APPROVED BY:

RESOLUTION/ORDER#

PURPOSE

This Standard Operating Procedures/Guidelines Manual establishes the operational procedures for the City of Crockett Fire Marshal's Office.

These procedures are intended to provide personnel with consistent methods for performing inspections, investigations, enforcement activities, records management, evidence handling, permits, complaints, emergency responses, and administrative duties.

These procedures shall be used in conjunction with:

- City of Crockett ordinances;
- Adopted fire codes;
- Texas law;
- Texas Commission on Fire Protection requirements;
- Texas Commission on Law Enforcement requirements applicable to licensed personnel;
- City personnel policies;
- Fire Marshal's Office policies; and
- Applicable federal law.

When a conflict exists, controlling law, regulation, ordinance, or formally adopted policy shall prevail.

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GENERAL OPERATIONS

1.1

Personnel shall perform assigned duties in accordance with applicable law, department policy, and this SOP/SOG.

1.2

Personnel shall maintain professional conduct at all times.

1.3

Personnel shall carry required identification and equipment while performing official duties.

1.4

Personnel shall promptly report

- Injuries
- Lost equipment
- Damaged equipment
- Vehicle accidents
- Significant complaints
- Evidence discrepancies
- Safety hazards
- Significant investigative developments

CHAIN OF COMMAND

2.1

The normal chain of command shall be:

Fire Chief / Fire Marshal

↓

Assistant/Deputy Fire Marshal, if assigned

↓

Fire Inspector / Fire Investigator

↓

Part-Time/Support Personnel

2.2

Personnel should normally communicate through the chain of command.

2.3

Personnel may bypass the chain of command when:

- Immediate safety is involved
- A criminal allegation involves the supervisor
- A conflict of interest exists
- Immediate legal reporting is required
- The supervisor is unavailable

DAILY OPERATIONS

Personnel reporting for duty shall:

1. Check assigned vehicle
2. Check radio/communications equipment
3. Check required PPE
4. Check inspection equipment
5. Check investigative equipment
6. Review pending inspections
7. Review pending investigations
8. Review scheduled appointment
9. Review outstanding corrective actions
10. Check required permits or administrative matters

Deficiencies shall be reported to the supervisor.

FIRE INSPECTION PROCEDURE

4.1 PRE-INSPECTION

Before beginning an inspection, the inspector should review available:

- Previous inspection reports;
- Occupancy information;
- Building information;
- Permits;
- Fire protection systems;
- Previous violations;
- Complaints;
- Applicable code requirements.

4.2 ARRIVAL

The inspector shall:

1. Identify themselves.
2. Identify the purpose of the inspection.
3. Request the appropriate responsible person.
4. Explain the inspection process when appropriate.
5. Follow lawful entry procedures.

4.3 INSPECTION

The inspector shall evaluate applicable fire/life-safety conditions, which may include:

- Exits
- Exit access
- Emergency lighting
- Fire extinguishers
- Fire alarm systems
- Sprinkler systems
- Electrical hazards
- Storage
- Hazardous materials
- Cooking equipment;

- Open flames
- Fire lanes
- Addressing
- Occupancy conditions
- Required permits

4.4 DOCUMENTATION

The inspector shall document each violation sufficiently to allow the responsible party to understand

- What is wrong
- Where it is located
- What code/ordinance provision applies
- What corrective action is required
- When correction is required

4.5 PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs should be taken when useful to document significant violations.

REINSPECTION

5.1

A reinspection shall be scheduled when corrective action is required.

5.2

The inspector shall review the original inspection before returning.

5.3

The inspector shall document each previously identified violation as:

- Corrected
- Not corrected
- Partially corrected
- Not applicable
- Requires additional action

5.4

Repeated failure to correct violations shall be referred to the Fire Marshal for enforcement action.

FIRE CODE VIOLATION PROCEDURE

6.1

When a violation is identified, the inspector shall:

1. Identify the violation
2. Identify the applicable code/ordinance
3. Explain the violation when appropriate
4. Establish a reasonable correction period when authorized
5. Document the violation
6. Schedule reinspection when required

6.2 IMMEDIATE HAZARDS

Conditions presenting an immediate threat to life or serious property loss shall be brought to the Fire Marshal's attention immediately.

The Fire Marshal may take enforcement action authorized by law and City ordinance.

FIRE PERMIT PROCEDURE

7.1 APPLICATION

Permit applications shall be submitted using the approved City/Fire Marshal's Office form.

7.2 REVIEW

The Fire Marshal or authorized personnel shall review:

- Applicant information
- Location
- Proposed activity
- Applicable code
- Required safety measures
- Required supporting documentation
- Applicable fees

7.3 APPROVAL

A permit shall be issued only after applicable requirements have been satisfied.

7.4 DENIAL

If a permit cannot be issued, the applicant should be informed of the reason and any available corrective action or appeal process.

7.5 RECORD

A copy of each permit shall be maintained in the appropriate permit file.

FIRE INVESTIGATION

8.1 INITIAL NOTIFICATION

When notified of a significant fire requiring investigation, the Fire Marshal or assigned investigator shall determine the appropriate response.

8.2 ARRIVAL

The investigator shall:

1. Identify the incident
2. Establish scene safety
3. Coordinate with the incident commander
4. Determine whether suppression operations are complete
5. Determine whether the scene remains hazardous
6. Establish scene-control procedures

8.3 SCENE PRESERVATION

The investigator shall make reasonable efforts to preserve potential evidence.

8.4 INVESTIGATION

The investigator shall conduct an examination appropriate to

circumstances. The investigation should consider:

- Fire patterns
- Fire damage
- Building Construction
- Fuel packages
- Electrical systems
- Heating equipment
- Appliances
- Cooking equipment
- Human activity
- Witness statements
- Firefighter observations
- Alarm/sprinkler operation
- Surveillance/video

- Other relevant evidence

8.5 REPORT

A written investigation report shall be completed.

FIRE SCENE SAFETY

Before entering a fire scene, investigators shall evaluate:

- Structural stability
- Electrical hazards
- Gas hazards
- Hazardous materials
- Atmospheric hazards
- Sharp objects
- Slip/trip hazards
- Biological hazards; Fire suppression hazards
- Weather conditions

Appropriate PPE shall be worn.

Personnel shall not enter an unsafe structure merely to complete an investigation.

ORIGIN AND CAUSE INVESTIGATION

10.1

Investigators shall conduct origin-and-cause examinations consistent with their training and recognized fire-investigation practices.

10.2

The investigation should include:

1. Scene documentation
2. Witness information
3. Fire department observations
4. Fire patterns
5. Building systems
6. Potential ignition sources
7. Fuel sources
8. Elimination of reasonable alternatives
9. Documentation of findings

10.3

Investigators shall avoid conclusions unsupported by evidence.

10.4

When the cause cannot reasonably be established, the investigator shall document the investigation and appropriate conclusion rather than speculate.

SUSPECTED ARSON

11.1

When evidence indicates a fire may have been intentionally set, the investigator shall immediately notify the Fire Marshal.

11.2

The Fire Marshal shall determine whether additional law-enforcement resources are required.

11.3

The investigator shall preserve relevant evidence.

11.4

Potential criminal evidence shall be handled according to applicable law and chain-of-custody procedures.

11.5

When the investigation requires authority beyond the Fire Marshal's Office, the appropriate law-enforcement agency shall be requested.

EVIDENCE COLLECTION AND CHAIN OF CUSTODY

12.1

Evidence shall be collected only by personnel trained and authorized to collect it.

12.2

Each item shall be assigned an identifying number or other approved identifier.

12.3

The evidence record shall include:

- Case number
- Item number
- Description
- Location found
- Date/time collected
- Person collecting
- Packaging
- Transfer history

12.4

Evidence shall be packaged appropriately for the type of evidence.

12.5

Evidence shall be secured immediately after collection.

12.6

Every transfer shall be documented.

PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION

Photographs should document:

1. Overall scene
2. Exterior
3. Interior
4. Fire damage
5. Fire patterns
6. Evidence
7. Relevant systems/equipment
8. Specific areas of origin
9. Conditions supporting investigative conclusions

Photographs shall be preserved with the case file.

WITNESS INTERVIEWS

14.1

Investigators shall identify potential witnesses.

14.2

Interviews should be conducted separately when practical.

14.3

The investigator should document:

- Name
- Contact information
- Relationship to incident
- Location at time of incident
- Observations
- Statements
- Relevant knowledge

14.4

Investigators shall distinguish between direct observations and information received from others.

EYEWITNESS IDENTIFICATION

When eyewitness identification is required:

1. Coordinate with the appropriate law-enforcement agency when necessary
2. Use a legally appropriate identification procedure
3. Avoid suggestive statements
4. Document instructions given to the witness
5. Document the witness's response
6. Preserve the identification record.

JUVENILE/WITNESS CONSIDERATIONS

Personnel interviewing children or vulnerable witnesses shall use appropriate procedures and shall coordinate with the appropriate law-enforcement or child-protection agency when required.

Personnel shall avoid unnecessary repeated interviews that could compromise an investigation.

RECORDS AND CASE FILES

Each investigation shall have an organized case file containing applicable:

- Incident information
- Reports
- Photographs
- Statements
- Evidence records
- Diagrams
- Inspection records
- Correspondence
- Supplemental reports
- Disposition

Case files shall be maintained securely.

PUBLIC INFORMATION REQUESTS

18.1

Requests for public information shall be forwarded through the City's designated public-information process.

18.2

Employees shall not independently determine that records are confidential or public when a legal determination is required.

18.3

Records shall not be altered, destroyed, withheld, or released contrary to law.

AUTHORITY

Texas Government Code, Chapter 552.

CITIZEN COMPLAINTS

19.1

Complaints shall be accepted professionally.

19.2

The employee receiving the complaint shall document:

- Complainant
- Date
- Contact information
- Nature of complaint
- Employee involved
- Witnesses
- Available evidence

19.3

Complaints shall be forwarded to the Fire Marshal or appropriate City authority.

19.4

Complaints involving the Fire Marshal shall be referred according to City administrative procedures.

MISCONDUCT INVESTIGATIONS

20.1

The Fire Marshal or designated investigator shall determine whether an allegation requires investigation.

20.2

Investigators shall:

1. Define the allegation
2. Identify applicable policy
3. Collect evidence
4. Interview witnesses
5. Interview involved personnel as legally appropriate
6. Review documents
7. Prepare findings
8. Submit the investigation to the appropriate authority

20.3 CRIMINAL CONDUCT

Potential criminal conduct shall be referred to the appropriate law-enforcement agency when appropriate.

20.4

Administrative investigations shall be conducted separately when necessary to preserve the integrity of a criminal investigation.

TCOLE-LICENSED PERSONNEL

TCOLE-licensed personnel shall:

- Maintain an active license
- Complete required training
- Maintain required records
- Perform only authorized peace-officer duties
- Follow applicable TCOLE rules
- Report changes affecting licensing status

A TCOLE license shall not be interpreted as automatically authorizing every law-enforcement function.

TCFP-CERTIFIED PERSONNEL

TCFP-certified personnel shall:

- Maintain certification
- Complete required training
- Maintain required continuing education
- Perform only duties appropriate to certification and assignment
- Maintain required records
- Comply with TCFP rules

PART-TIME PERSONNEL

23.1

Before beginning duty, part-time personnel shall be verified for:

- License/certification
- Training
- Assignment
- Required background documentation
- Required City employment documentation

23.2

Part-time personnel shall receive appropriate orientation before performing assigned duties.

23.3

Supervisors shall monitor part-time personnel and review their work.

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

Employees requesting outside employment shall submit the required request to the appropriate City authority.

The request shall identify:

- Employer
- Type of work
- Location
- Schedule
- Duties
- Whether City equipment will be used
- Potential conflict of interest

Approval shall be obtained before beginning the outside employment when required.

MEDICAL / PSYCHOLOGICAL FITNESS CONCERNS

25.1

When a legitimate concern exists regarding an employee's ability to safely perform assigned duties, the supervisor shall notify the Fire Marshal.

25.2

The Fire Marshal shall coordinate with the City administration/HR department as appropriate.

25.3

Any fitness-for-duty evaluation shall comply with applicable law.

25.4

Medical information shall be maintained confidentially.

ACTIVE SHOOTER RESPONSE

Fire Marshal's Office personnel shall:

1. Immediately notify law enforcement
2. Provide location and known information
3. Assist with fire/EMS staging
4. Avoid entering areas where a deadly threat remains unless specifically trained, equipped, authorized, and required.
5. Assist with rescue when reasonably safe.
6. Coordinate with incident command.

BARRICADED SUBJECTS

Personnel shall:

1. Notify law enforcement.
2. Establish a safe staging area.
3. Keep fire/EMS personnel out of the danger area.
4. Provide law enforcement with available information.
5. Coordinate entry when law enforcement determines conditions are reasonably safe.

MISSING PERSONS

When personnel receive a missing-person report:

1. Obtain available information.
2. Determine immediate danger.
3. Notify the appropriate law-enforcement agency.
4. Preserve relevant information.
5. Provide available Fire Marshal resources.
6. Document the assistance provided.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Fire Marshal's Office personnel who become aware of domestic violence shall:

1. Assess immediate danger.
2. Contact law enforcement when appropriate.
3. Provide emergency assistance within training.
4. Protect children and vulnerable persons when reasonably possible.
5. Document relevant observations.
6. Refer the matter to the appropriate law-enforcement agency.

Personnel shall not conduct a criminal investigation beyond their legal authority.

MUTUAL AID AND INTERAGENCY ASSISTANCE

30.1

Requests for assistance shall be coordinated through the Fire Marshal or designated supervisor when practical.

30.2

Personnel assisting another agency shall remain within their legal authority and training.

30.3

Evidence obtained during joint operations shall be transferred and documented according to the responsible agency's evidence procedures.

COURT / SUBPOENA PROCEDURES

31.1

Upon receiving a subpoena, summons, or court notice, personnel shall immediately notify the Fire Marshal.

31.2

Personnel shall not ignore a valid subpoena or court order.

31.3

Personnel shall preserve relevant records and evidence.

31.4

Personnel shall review reports before court testimony.

31.5

Personnel shall provide truthful testimony based on personal knowledge and official records.

SEARCH WARRANTS AND LEGAL PROCESS

32.1

Personnel shall not execute a search warrant unless legally authorized and properly assigned.

32.2

Searches shall be conducted within the scope of the warrant and applicable law.

32.3

Personnel shall preserve a copy of applicable legal process in the case file when appropriate.

32.4

Questions concerning legal authority shall be referred to the Fire Marshal and, when appropriate, the City Attorney or appropriate law-enforcement agency.

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

During emergencies, personnel shall operate under the Incident Command System when applicable. Personnel shall:

- Follow the incident command structure
- Maintain communications
- Use appropriate PPE
- Document significant actions
- Maintain accountability
- Request additional resources when needed

AFTER-HOURS RESPONSE

When responding after normal business hours, personnel shall:

1. Determine the nature of the call.
2. Determine whether immediate response is necessary.
3. Notify the Fire Marshal/supervisor when appropriate.
4. Use appropriate safety equipment.
5. Coordinate with fire, police, EMS, or other agencies.
6. Complete required documentation.

EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLE ACCOUNTABILITY

35.1

Personnel assigned a City vehicle shall inspect it at the beginning of the work period.

35.2

Personnel shall report:

- Damage
- Mechanical problems
- Missing equipment
- Fuel problems
- Safety concerns

35.3

Fire investigation equipment shall be maintained and inventoried.

35.4

Evidence-related equipment shall be maintained in a manner that protects evidence integrity.

REPORT WRITING

Reports shall be:

- Accurate
- Complete
- Objective
- Timely
- Professional
- Based on facts

Reports shall distinguish:

Personal observation from **information received from another person.**

Personnel shall not knowingly include false, misleading, or unsupported information.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Fire Marshal or designee shall periodically review:

- Inspection reports
- Fire investigation reports
- Evidence records
- Permits
- Enforcement actions
- Training records
- Complaints
- Case files

The purpose of quality assurance is to identify:

- Errors
- Training needs
- Documentation problems
- Policy issue
- Compliance concerns.

Quality assurance review shall not replace a formal misconduct investigation when one is required.

TRAINING RECORDS

38.1

The Fire Marshal's Office shall maintain appropriate records of:

- TCFP training;
- TCOLE training;
- Fire investigation training;
- Inspection training; Specialized certifications;
- In-house training;
- Required annual training.

38.2

Personnel shall promptly provide documentation of completed outside training.

38.3

Training records shall be entered into the appropriate City, TCFP, TCOLE, or other required system.

POLICY AND SOP REVIEW

This SOP/SOG manual shall be reviewed:

- At least annually
- When Texas law changes
- When TCFP rules change
- When TCOLE rules change
- When City ordinances change
- Following significant incidents
- When an operational deficiency is identified

The Fire Marshal shall document revisions.

REQUIRED FORMS AND CHECKLISTS

The Fire Marshal's Office should maintain standardized forms for the following:

FIRE PREVENTION

- Fire Inspection Report
- Reinspection Report
- Violation Notice
- Corrective Action Notice
- Fire Permit Application
- Fire Permit
- Certificate/Approval Documentation
- Inspection Checklist

FIRE INVESTIGATION

- Fire Investigation Report
- Fire Scene Checklist
- Evidence Collection Form
- Chain-of-Custody Form
- Evidence Transfer Form
- Witness Statement Form
- Investigator's Activity Log
- Photograph Log
- Scene Diagram
- Supplemental Investigation Report

ADMINISTRATION

- Citizen Complaint Form
- Personnel Complaint Form
- Outside Employment Request
- Training Record
- Equipment Inspection Form
- Vehicle Inspection Form
- Policy Acknowledgment
- Confidentiality Acknowledgment

FIRE SCENE INVESTIGATION CHECKLIST

INITIAL RESPONSE

- ☐ Incident location confirmed
- ☐ Scene safety evaluated
- ☐ Incident commander contacted
- ☐ Utilities/hazards identified
- ☐ Structural concerns evaluated
- ☐ Scene access controlled
- ☐ Required PPE obtained

DOCUMENTATION

- ☐ Exterior photographs
- ☐ Interior photographs
- ☐ Damage photographs
- ☐ Fire patterns documented
- ☐ Utilities documented
- ☐ Appliances/equipment documented
- ☐ Witnesses identified
- ☐ Firefighter observations obtained

EVIDENCE

- ☐ Evidence identified
- ☐ Evidence photographed
- ☐ Evidence collected lawfully
- ☐ Evidence packaged
- ☐ Evidence labeled
- ☐ Chain of custody completed
- ☐ Evidence secured

REPORT

- ☐ Origin documented
- ☐ Cause documented
- ☐ Witness information documented
- ☐ Evidence documented
- ☐ Photographs attached
- ☐ Supplemental information included
- ☐ Report reviewed

FIRE INSPECTION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Business/occupancy information verified
- ☐ Address verified
- ☐ Exits inspected
- ☐ Exit access inspected
- ☐ Emergency lighting inspected
- ☐ Fire extinguishers inspected
- ☐ Fire alarm inspected
- ☐ Sprinkler system inspected
- ☐ Fire lanes inspected
- ☐ Electrical hazards reviewed
- ☐ Storage reviewed
- ☐ Cooking equipment reviewed
- ☐ Open-flame hazards reviewed
- ☐ Hazardous materials reviewed
- ☐ Required permits verified
- ☐ Violations documented
- ☐ Photographs taken when appropriate
- ☐ Reinspection date established
- ☐ Report completed

EVIDENCE CHAIN-OF-CUSTODY FORM

Case Number: _____

Item Number: _____

Description: _____

Location Found: _____

Date/Time Collected: _____

Collected By: _____

Packaging: _____

TRANSFER

Date/Time	Released By	Received By	Purpose

CITIZEN COMPLAINT FORM

Date:

Complaint:

Contact:

Employee/Division:

Nature of Complaint

Witnesses:

**Supporting
Documentation**

Received By:

Date:

Forwarded To:

Disposition:

EMPLOYEE SOP ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the City of Crockett Fire Marshal's Office Standard Operating Procedures/Guidelines Manual.

I understand that these procedures are intended to guide the performance of my duties and that I am responsible for complying with applicable federal law, Texas law, TCFP requirements, TCOLE requirements applicable to my license, City ordinances, adopted fire codes, department policy, and this SOP/SOG manual.

Employee Name: _____

Position: _____

Signature _____

Date: _____

FIRE MARSHAL APPROVAL

I have reviewed this Standard Operating Procedures/Guidelines Manual and approve it for implementation subject to applicable City approval requirements.

Jason Frizzell

Fire Chief / Fire Marshal

Signature:

Date:

CITY APPROVAL

Approved by the City of Crockett:

Authorized Official:

Title:

Signature:

Date:

Resolution/Order No:

REVISION HISTORY

Version	Date	Description	Approved By
1		Initial Adoption	

ANNUAL REVIEW

Review Year:

Reviewed By:

Legal Review:

TCFP Review:

TCOLE Review

Changes Required:

YES/NO

**Effective Revision
Date:**

**Fire Marshal
Signature:**
