

# Operating Guidelines

Section: Fire Investigation

Subject: Continuity of Evidence at a Fire Scene

Policy #: 401

Date Issued: March 12, 2016

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## Purpose

To establish a uniform and consistent method of securing a fire scene for Fire Cause and Determination purposes.

## Procedure

### 401.1

All Firefighters and Officers, while approaching the fire scene or while fighting the fire, shall immediately report any suspicious findings or activities of bystanders to the Incidental Commander.

### 401.2

When an arson investigation is a possibility, overhaul of the fire will be kept to the minimum amount possible, while protecting the fire scene and possible evidence.

### 401.3

A Fire Watch will be posted with a minimum of two (2) Firefighters left on scene to protect continuity of possible evidence, until such time as the O.P.P. or the Ontario Fire Marshal's investigator(s) take over responsibility for the fire scene.

### 401.4

Fire scene tape, OFM "Restrict Access" signs, boards or plywood or any combination thereof will be used to secure the fire scene until such time as security is deemed unnecessary by the Investigating Officers.

### 401.5

The following is a partial list of outside agencies to call for assistance:

- Ontario Coroner
- Ontario Provincial Police (OPP)

- Ontario Fire Marshal's Office (OFM)
- Lakeland Power
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR)

## **Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of the Incident Commander or the Cause and Determination Officer to make a determination of fire cause as soon as possible after the alarm, with the assistance of our trained investigators and other outside agencies, as deemed necessary.