FELTON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

ARTICLE: III

SOP: 3100

SECTION 3100

FIRE PREVENTION & INVESTIGATION

SUBJECT:

FIRE INVESTIGATIONS

PURPOSE:

To establish guidelines which provide for fire scene security and the prompt investigation of fire occurring within the jurisdictional boundaries

of the Felton Fire Protection District.

SCOPE:

All personnel responding to or on scene of a working fire.

PROCEDURE:

- 1. The "First-In" Engine Company Officer shall assume primary investigative responsibility. In the event that a fire investigator arrives on scene at a later time, responsibility for investigation may be passed on. The incident Commander should be consulted and advised should this take place. Facts and findings relative to each investigation will be included in the incident report form.
- Fire scene security shall be established, supervised and maintained by the Incident Commander.
- 3. Felton Fire personnel shall make every effort to determine the cause and origin of every fire(structure, car, brush). In the event that cause and origin cannot be determined by the personnel on scene, an investigator may be requested by the Incident Commander from CDF/Felton Emergency Communications Center. If available, an investigator from their team will respond and assist Felton Fire personnel in determination of cause and origin.

NOTE** Felton Fire Protection District is considered State Responsibility Area(SRA). In the event of a brush fire, CDF will serve as the lead investigator. Cause, origin, and reporting shall be done by CDF personnel. Felton Fire personnel should offer their assistance to CDF to help in anyway possible.

- 4. The following are examples of when a fire investigator should be called to the scene to assist with cause and origin:
 - a) Incendiary or suspicious fire in structures.
 - b) Incendiary or suspicious vehicle fire involving a series of fires within a given area where victims or witnesses are present.
 - c) A series of intentional grass and or rubbish fires where there is a known suspect.
 - d) Fires or explosions involving fatalities, serious burns or injuries.
 - e) Any confirmed bomb related incident, other than a bomb threat only.

- f) When an arrest has been made by the sheriff's department and a suspect is in custody.
- g) Any condition or situation in which the incident Commander deems it necessary.
- 5. When the cause and origin of a fire is determined to be criminal in nature, or a fatality is involved, law enforcement shall be request by the incident Commander. If needed the incident Commander or fire investigator may assist law enforcement personnel in notifying or requesting assistance from the Crime Scene investigation team, Arson Task Force Team, District Attorney's office.

When the fire cause and origin is determined to be criminal in nature, and law enforcement has arrived on the scene, the incident Commander and/or the fire investigator shall brief the law enforcement investigator. Once this briefing has taken place, law enforcement shall become the lead investigator and Felton Fire personnel may assist as needed. Contact should be maintained with law enforcement in order to complete the fire scene investigation.

6. When the Arson Task Team is requested an investigator from Felton Fire shall serve as the "lead" investigator. The Arson Task Team will be used to help or assist the Felton Fire investigator with technical expertise relating to arson fires.

As of this writing, 5/2395, the lead person for this Arson Task Team is Tom Wiley from Watsonville Fire Department. The dispatch procedure is a follows:

- Contact County Communications and request this team to respond to the incident.
- 2. County Communications will notify Tom Wiley.
- 3. Tom Wiley will contact the Incident Commander (radio or phone), to determine what the situation involves and how the task team can be of assistance. Based on this conversation, action will begin to take place.

Note*** This task force may take some time to assemble and respond. The Incident Commander should expect a minimum one hour response time.

- 7. The fire investigator shall make available a preliminary report within 72 hours of the incident. After the case is closed, a final report shall be filed with the Fire Chief.
- 8. The Fire Chief shall notify the State Fire Marshall, as soon as practical, of any significant fire in a Title 19 occupancy(schools, churches, State occupied buildings).