

Operating Guideline # 823

Notification of Outside Agencies

December 10, 2019



PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Operating Guideline (OG) is to provide direction to staff on the post-fire notification of other individuals and agencies so that they may carry out their specific legislated responsibilities or to address customer service and public safety issues.

ISSUE/RATIONALE:

In some instances, the involvement of other persons and/or agencies is required following an incident to ensure that customer service or public safety issues are fully addressed. A malfunctioning furnace that is installed in a multi-unit dwelling for example, has the potential to affect a great number of people and correcting the deficiency may have broader implications for similar installations in other buildings.

Similarly, a fire damaged building may need extensive repairs and notifying the appropriate agencies will help ensure that any repairs are carried out lawfully and under the authority of required permits. Follow-up in the hours and days following the fire departments departure from the scene will yield safer outcomes for those directly involved or affected by the incident and the public alike.

GUIDELINE:

General

1. As emergency operations are being brought to a conclusion, the notification of other Agencies as outlined in this Standard Operating Guideline becomes important from a continuity of service perspective. Incident Commanders are ultimately responsible for the notifications contained in this guideline, and they shall document all such notifications made via the "Notes" section of the incident report before reporting off duty after the incident. With the exception of the circumstance outlined in sentence 2, 3 and 4, the actual notification of other agencies may be made by administrative staff.
2. The Incident commander shall ensure that the Fire Prevention Officer is made aware of any fire safety issues observed that may require follow-up from a fire code enforcement perspective. The incident commander should use their best judgment in terms of determining if this notification is made immediately, or can wait for further investigation on the next business day. In either case, the notification should be documented in an email to the Fire Prevention Officer and CC'd to the Deputy Fire Chief and Fire Chief.
3. Where a fire safety matter is viewed as an urgent matter, the Incident Commander should contact the Fire Prevention Officer immediately by telephone (preferably, prior to leaving the scene).
4. The notifications as outlined in sentences 5 – 12 should also be brought to the Fire Prevention Officers attention so that additional follow-up can be made if required.

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5. Where a significant fire occurs in any structure that would likely require the owner/occupant of the property to make repairs necessitating the issuance of a building permit (e.g. – a room and contents fire) *and the building is returned to the custody of the property owner/occupant* at the conclusion of the incident, the Incident Commander shall notify both the Building Department, Finance Department and Property Standards/By-Law Enforcement Division of the incident *via e-mail as soon as is practical*.

6. Where a serious fire occurs in an occupied or unoccupied building that leads to damage affecting the “structure” of a building, the Incident Commander shall notify both the Building Department and Property Standards/By-Law Enforcement Division of the incident *prior to leaving the scene when possible*.

NOTE: where Fire Prevention Division staff attends a fire scene for the purposes of conducting a post-fire investigation, the responsibility of notifying Building and Property Standard/By-Law enforcement staff shall be theirs.

7. Where fire department staff encounter a “child in need of protection” as defined by the Child and Family Services Act, the Incident Commander shall notify “Family, Youth and Child Services of Muskoka” 1-800-680-4426 and the OPP 1-888-310-1122.

8. Where a fire occurs in a commercial cooking establishment (e.g. - restaurant) or in any premises where food is prepared for public distribution, consumption, etc. the Incident Commander shall *advise* the owner/occupants that they are to cease the distribution of such food until such time as the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) authorizes. The Incident Commander shall cause the SMDHU to be notified of the incident immediately (preferably prior to leaving the scene) and shall supply such information as is necessary to assist public health officials. Call SMDHU at 1-888-225-7851 or daytime (705) 684-9090. *NOTE: It is not necessary to await the response of public health officials, however where this can be reasonably accomplished, the Incident Commander may wish to do so.*

9. Where it appears that a fire will displace the residents of a dwelling unit, the Incident Commander should make inquiries with the occupants respecting alternate living arrangements. In most cases, relatives will be available to assist with short term accommodations, however in the event that an occupant has no viable accommodation option, the Incident Commander shall contact the Red Cross (705) 721-3313 or the Muskoka Victim Services Unit to assist in this regard call 1-844-762-9945.

10. In any incident where utilities (e.g. – water, hydro, natural gas) are temporarily disconnected for the sake of efficient or safe operations, the Incident Commander shall ensure that the appropriate notifications are made to the service provider (via Communications) before leaving the scene.

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11. The Incident Commander shall ensure that the TSSA is notified (via Communications) in any instance where it appears that a device licensed under the provisions of their licensing authority (e.g. – boiler, HVAC unit, elevator, residential or commercial propane installation, fuel fired appliances other than a wood stove or pellet stove) failed to operate properly (i.e. – causes CO to build up in an enclosed space, causes or is suspected of causing a fire or pre-fire condition).

12. Where a fire is believed to have been caused by a faulty electrical service, the Incident Commander or person investigating the cause of the fire shall contact the ESA (via Communications) and advise them of the circumstances.

13. Where any domestic animal encountered in the course of a fire response appears to be in need of support either through abandonment or inattention by the owner the Incident Commander shall notify the Orillia office of the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (via Communications) and request their attendance at the scene.

14. Where a fire hydrant is utilized during any time of year that the threat of freezing water exists, the Incident Commander shall ensure that the District of Muskoka is contacted immediately and advised of the usage. During warmer months, The Incident Commander may contact the DofM via email to the Administrative Assistant who will in turn contact the DofM during normal office hours.

15. Where livestock or other farm animals are killed as a result of a barn fire etc., OMAFRA is to be notified through the Spills Action Centre (1-800-268-6060) so that they can assist agricultural operators with deadstock management regulations.

RESPONSIBILITY:

It is the responsibility of all Emergency Operations Division staff to comply with the provisions of this Operating Guideline.

DEFINITIONS:

“ESA” means the Electrical Safety Authority.

“TSSA” means the Technical Standards and Safety Authority.

REFERENCES:

- Child and Family Services Act, RSO