

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Arizona State Office**

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To:           Field Managers  
              Zone Fire Management Officers

From:        State Director

Subject:     Fire Trespass and Investigations

DD: None

Bureau policy requires any wildfire to be investigated to determine cause, origin, and responsibility. Accurate fire cause determination is a necessary first step in a successful fire investigation, and successful fire investigations are necessary in preventing unwanted wildfires. Proper investigative procedures, which in many cases occur concurrent with initial attack, can more accurately pinpoint fire causes and can preserve valuable evidence that would otherwise be destroyed by suppression activities.

Policy also dictates that the Bureau will pursue cost recovery, or document why cost recovery is not required, for all human-caused fires on public lands and/or other lands under protection agreement.

Normally, the initial attack Incident Commander (IC) is responsible for initiating fire cause determination. If probable cause indicates human involvement, the point of origin will be secured and an individual trained in Fire Cause Determination (Fire Investigator) will be dispatched to the fire.

All Incident Commanders will have basic training in wildland fire cause determination for First Responders course (P-130).

If the IC determines that a fire investigator is required, the Incident Commander will place the order through the local dispatch office. If the request cannot be filled within the local unit, the dispatch office will forward the resource order to the Phoenix Dispatch Center (PDC). PDC will contact the Law Enforcement Duty Officer (LEDO). It will be the responsibility of the LEDO to

find the closest available qualified fire investigator and fill the order through the PDC. If the LEDO is unable to fill the order in a timely manner (1 hour), the order will be placed back to PDC, and then to the requesting office, so that it may be filled through the standard fire dispatch channels. For orders after 11 P.M., call the LEDO pager (602) 417-9339.

Immediately upon arrival at the fire site, the fire investigator will personally contact the incident commander. Since the fire investigator is a technical specialist, and not an Incident Command System position, it is conceivable that the investigator may not have completed basic fire training nor have personal protective equipment. If that is the case, the IC will need to make arrangements to ensure that the investigator is escorted and/or if the scenario warrants, ensure that the investigator is issued personal protective equipment. In Arizona, the safety standards established by the National Standards for Fire Operations for managers visiting fires (Chapter 4, Safety) will also be the required standards for a fire investigator.

**SIGNED BY:**

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