

Fire Investigation and Reporting

A. Fire Investigation Severity Levels:

(1) **Catastrophic Level.** A fire resulting in Smithsonian Management requesting a Board of Inquiry be formed to investigate the incident. The decision to form a Board of Inquiry will be based on whether or not the nature of the fire investigation extends beyond the capabilities or political interests of the Smithsonian Institution. OSHEM staff in conjunction with the Board shall investigate the fire and provide recommendations to best serve the Smithsonian Institution. Fire and explosion investigation guidelines and practices in NFPA 921 shall be followed. A Catastrophic level fire may involve one or more of the following:

- i. Loss of life.
- ii. Financial loss exceeding \$100,000.
- iii. Suspected arson.
- iv. Objects of cultural, artistic, or scientific value destroyed or damaged.
- v. Building or environmental damage that interferes with an office's mission.
- vi. Fire caused or made worse due to noncompliance with Smithsonian fire protection policies.
- vii. Requests for further investigation of a fire as a result of private, congressional, or public interest.
- viii. Technologically interesting (such as fire wall failure or failure of a sprinkler system to control a fire).
- ix. Widespread media attention.

(2) **Serious Level.** Fire investigations in the Washington, D.C. area will be conducted by OSHEM in coordination with OFMR, OPS, and any other Smithsonian office having an interest in the fire incident. Investigations outside of the Washington, D.C. area will be the responsibility of the facility director. These offices must assess their capabilities and resources and request additional resources if necessary. The investigation report shall be completed within 15 days after the fire. Fire and explosion investigation guidelines and practices in NFPA 921 shall be followed. A Serious Level fire may involve one or more of the following:

- i. Personal injury.
- ii. A fire resulting in major damage (greater than \$25,000) to property.
- iii. Interfering with the functions of an office for more than 24 hours.
- iv. Should the fire department respond to the incident, OSHEM is to be notified immediately.

- (3) **Recordable but not meeting the Serious or Catastrophic criteria.** Fires that result in minor personal injury (return to work within 2 days of the incident), and/or cause greater than \$1000 in property damage. OSHEM must be notified within 6 days of the incident, including a copy of SI Form 2120.
- (4) **Reportable but not Recordable Level.** Fires that cause minor property damage that amount to less than \$1000. A fire investigation report is unnecessary; however, OSHEM must be notified as soon as possible.

B Fire Investigation Report:

- (1) In the Washington, D.C. area OSHEM shall prepare a fire investigation report for Catastrophic and Serious Level fires within 15 days. See Preliminary Incident Report guidelines in [Chapter 7, "Injury/Incident Reporting and Investigation"](#), of this *Manual*, where final report requires more than 15 days to complete and publish.
- (2) Outside of the Washington D.C. area, the facility director is responsible for completing a fire investigation report within 15 days of a fire. See Preliminary Incident Report guidelines in [Chapter 7, "Injury/Incident Reporting and Investigation"](#), of this *Manual*, where final report requires more than 15 days to complete and publish.
- (3) Fire investigation reports shall contain the following information:
 - i. Date and time of fire.
 - ii. Fire location, origin, and cause.
 - iii. Injuries and other possible health effects.
 - iv. Fire department/staff and security personnel actions.
 - v. All pertinent details involved in the events leading up to the fire.
 - vi. Circumstances leading to injuries.
 - vii. Nature of destruction or damage to property (including cost estimates).
 - viii. Inventory or at least general description of any collections, records, or operating equipment that was lost or damaged.
 - ix. List of personnel at the scene of the fire.
 - x. Performance of the fire suppression and detection/alarm systems during the fire.
 - xi. Description of the efforts necessary for recovery operations, including: restoring operations to normal, salvaging damaged materials, obtaining replacement equipment, recovering lost information, etc.
 - xii. Recommendations to avoid a similar incident.