

Subject:	ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION
Section:	PPG# 4200.4
Chapter:	Operations
Effective Date:	July 1, 1998

1.0 POLICY

- 1.1** It is the policy of McLane/ Black Lake Fire Department to provide and operate with the highest possible levels of safety and health for its members. Whenever accidents occur in the course of duties related to Department activities, said accidents will be investigated in the manner set forth below in order to reduce the likelihood of re-occurrence.

2.0 PROCEDURES

- 2.1** After the emergency actions following accidents that cause serious injuries that have immediate symptoms, a preliminary investigation of the cause of the accident shall be conducted. The investigation shall be conducted by a person designated by the Chief of the Department or the Department Safety Officer. The findings of the investigation shall be documented for reference at any time following formal investigations.
- 2.2** Within eight hours after a fatality or probable fatality of any member from a work-related incident or the inpatient hospitalization of two or more members as a result of a work-related incident, McLane/ Black Lake Fire Department shall orally report the fatality/multiple hospitalization by telephone or in person, to the Department of Labor and Industries. Call the Seattle office at (206) 281-5400.
- 2.3** Equipment involved in an accident resulting in an immediate or probable fatality, shall not be moved, until a representative of the consultation and compliance services division of the Department of Labor and Industries investigates the accident and releases such equipment, *except* where removal is essential to prevent further accident. When necessary to remove the victim, such equipment may be moved only to the extent of making possible such removal.
- 2.4** Upon arrival of the Department of Labor and Industry's investigator, The Safety Officer or designee shall assign as many personnel as are deemed necessary to assist the Department of Labor and Industries in conducting the investigation.
- 2.5** McLane/ Black Lake Fire Department shall preserve all records, photographic materials, audio, video, recordings, or other documentation concerning an accident for a period of seven years.
- 2.6** Accident information will be shared with personnel.

3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

3.1 Purpose of the Investigation

- 3.2** The purpose of an investigation is to find the cause of an accident and prevent further occurrences, not to fix blame. An unbiased approach is necessary to obtain objective findings.
- 3.3** Interview the injured party and available witnesses, as soon as possible, to determine the following:
- 3.3.1** Circumstances preceding and surrounding the incident. What were underlying and contributing causes, as well as immediate causes?
 - 3.3.2** What physical hazards existed at the time of the accident, such as unprotected openings, or housekeeping, slippery surfaces, protruding nails, etc.?
 - 3.3.3** Were defective tools, equipment or materials provided to workers -- or were they improperly used?
 - 3.3.4** Was personal protective equipment not provided, was PPE defective, not used, or used improperly?
 - 3.3.5** Did unsafe work practices contribute to the incident, including improper lifting or handling of materials?
 - 3.3.6** What safety rules or safety training might have prevented the accident?
 - 3.3.7** What unsafe conditions or unsafe actions were caused by a third party, i.e., another Department or a contractor?
 - 3.3.8** If possible, interview injured individuals at the scene of the accident and "walk through" a re-enactment. Be careful not to repeat the act that caused the injury.
 - 3.3.9** Privacy is important during interviews. Interview witnesses one at a time. Talk with anyone who has knowledge of the accident, even if they did not actually witness the mishap. Express sincere appreciation to anyone who helped with the investigation.
 - 3.3.10** Record names, addresses and statements of witnesses. Consider taking signed, dated statements if facts are unclear or an element of controversy exists.
 - 3.3.11** If a third party or defective product contributed to the accident, save any evidence. It could be critical to the recovery of claim costs.
 - 3.3.12** In major incidents, use sketches, diagrams and photos, to document details

graphically. Take measurements when appropriate.

3.3.13 Define corrective actions that should be taken to prevent re-occurrence.

3.4 An Accident review committee will be maintained by McLane/ Black Lake Fire Department for the purpose of reviewing all accidents, both personal injury and motor vehicle. This committee is an integral part of the accident prevention plan.

The accident review committee shall:

3.5

3.5.1 Meet as often necessary to timely review accidents.

3.5.2 Review each accident and make a determination as to whether the accident was preventable or non-preventable.

3.5.3 Make recommendations to help prevent future accidents of similar nature.

3.5.4 Publish the results of the accident reviews with recommendations on accident prevention.

4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 The Safety Officer shall:

4.1.1 Ensure that all reportable accidents are investigated as necessary per Department policy.

4.1.2 Be responsible to define corrective action. Timetables must be established as to when the corrective action must be completed. Every investigation should include an action plan.

4.2 The officer in charge shall ensure that accident reporting procedures are initiated in accordance with department policy.

5.0 REFERENCES

WAC 296-305-01503, WAC 296-24-020 (2), (3). [Statutory Authority: RCW 49.17.010, .050, .060. 96-11-067 (Order 94-27), §296-305-01503, filed 05/10/96, effective 01/01/97.]

6.0 APPENDIX

Appendix A: Accident Review Board Determination

MCLANE FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY ACCIDENT REVIEW BOARD DETERMINATION

Date of Review _____

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

1. ACCIDENT INFORMATION:

1. **Driver / Operator:** _____ **Rank:** _____
2. **Officer / Supervisor:** _____ **Rank:** _____
3. **Date of Accident:** _____ **Time:** _____
4. **Location of Accident:** _____
5. **Apparatus Involved:** _____

2. PERSONNEL INTERVIEWED:

3. CONTRIBUTING FACTORS:

1. **Human:** _____

2. **Mechanical:** _____

3 **Enviromental:** _____

4. DETERMINATION:

Nonpreventable _____ Preventable _____

Percentage of Fault:

Driver / Operator _____

Officer / Supervisor _____

Backup / Other _____

5. BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS:

 Chair

 Board Member

 Board Member

 Board Member