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SUBJECT: FIRE AND FIRE ALARM RESPONSE PROCEDURES

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IACLEA STANDARD: 9.1.6, 17.1.2

CSU POLICE DEPARTMENTS SYSTEMWIDE OPERATIONAL GUIDELINE – No

APPROVED: Anne P. Glavin, Chief of Police

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set forth the primary responsibilities of, and to define the role of, the California State University, Northridge Department of Police Services officers in actual fire and fire alarm emergency response incidents. Additionally, this policy sets forth the procedures for outside agency notifications, incident command procedures and building evacuation procedures.

II. ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY POLICE AT FIRE SCENES

The primary responsibilities of the Department of Police Services at a fire scene are to open all fire lanes and direct responding Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) apparatus; to provide initial evacuation notifications; to assist in the preservation of life; the protection of property; the prevention of crime; the control of crowds and the direction of vehicular traffic (including removal of vehicles which interfere with firefighting efforts).

Although the LAFD is the public agency in charge of and directly responsible for the handling of fires, the Department of Police Services also has an important role to play. Due to the patrol function, University police officers are often the first to discover a fire, the first on the scene and the first to alert and assist the occupants of a burning building or residence hall. Police officers may be assisted in fire scene response by parking enforcement officers who are authorized to lead fire engine companies to CSUN buildings and assist in the direction of traffic around a fire scene.

Police officers must also be aware of the possibility of arson and be observant for any person acting suspiciously at a fire scene. It should be noted, however, that the basic responsibility for the investigation of fires of incendiary or suspicious origin is with LAFD officials.

III. DISPATCHER RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon receiving from any source an alarm of fire, alert of a fire, report of a smell of smoke or any other type of call for service in which the possibility exists of a potential fire situation the dispatcher shall immediately notify:

1. The appropriate University police patrol units to respond to the scene (including the shift supervisor).
2. Los Angeles City Fire Department
3. California State University, Northridge PPM
4. Housing Office (if a residence hall is involved)
5. Environmental Health and Safety
6. Patrol Operations Commander (or designee if not available)
7. Chief of Police (working fires only)

NOTE: The California Health and Safety Code, section 13107 requires that all fires or explosions in state owned and state occupied facilities must be investigated by the State Fire Marshal. The notification task is the responsibility of the shift supervisor. In the event the shift supervisor is occupied, the dispatcher will be directed to be responsible for this task.

If the alarm of fire is received directly from PPM, the police dispatcher should determine if PPM has notified LAFD. The police dispatcher should verify with the LAFD that there is an alarm call and that they are enroute (or if PPM has not made any notification, LAFD is alerted immediately by police dispatch). CSUN units are to be advised of the LAFD notification when it is accomplished, as well as any other emergency responders en route to the scene.

It should be noted that no matter how vague a report involving the potential for a fire (i.e. smell of smoke, fire alarm of unknown origin, etc.), dispatchers shall err on the side of life safety and immediately notify the LAFD. In the event that University Police officers are the first to arrive on a scene and determine there is no fire or the call involves burned food on a stove or some other minor situation, the dispatcher shall transmit this information directly to the LAFD. The LAFD shall determine whether or not they will continue to respond to campus. Should the LAFD continue to respond, the shift supervisor shall be responsible for maintaining the police command post until the LAFD responds to campus and then clears the scene.

In advising CSUN Police units to respond to the scene, the dispatcher (and patrol supervisor) should ensure that units are coordinated so as to allow all fire lanes in the affected area to be open.

IV. FIRE INCIDENT RESPONSE PROCEDURES

When an officer on patrol learns of the existence of a fire of such character as to require the services of the fire department and/or other additional resource/assistance need, that

officer shall immediately notify police dispatch via the radio of their request for additional resources (regardless of whether or not any other citizen has given an alarm).

Upon arrival at a fire scene, officers assigned to patrol vehicles shall position the vehicle outside the fire lanes in such a manner that they do not obstruct the passage of fire or other emergency vehicles. Every precaution should be taken to avoid police vehicles being blocked so that they are unable to further respond. The shift supervisor should ensure that initial responders do not block roadways.

Incident Command Post

The first responding officer to a fire scene or alarm of fire shall immediately establish the Incident Command post and act as Incident Commander (I/C), reviewing the ICS 9 Critical Tasks list. The I/C shall immediately notify CSUN dispatch of the exact location of the Incident Command Post and the name of the Incident Commander. Transfer of command of the I/C may occur when a more qualified person (e.g. shift supervisor) assumes command, a jurisdictional or agency change in command is required (e.g. fire department arrives on the scene) or a regular shift change occurs on an ongoing incident.

The I/C is responsible for managing the emergency response by setting objectives, the strategy, and directing the tactical response. Essentially the I/C is responsible for implementing ICS protocol (NIMS/SEMS) for fire response situations. Refer to policy # 08-S.O.-019 Unusual Occurrence –All Hazard plan for details involving the command, operations, planning, logistics, and finance/administrative ICS functions.

Unified Command

When LAFD responds to CSUN and University Police have already established a Command Post, the CSUN command post shall be moved to the site of the LAFD command post and merged for unified command. The shift supervisor will respond to the incident command post as soon as possible after being notified of the incident by police dispatch. He /she will assume the role of incident commander unless the scene is already operating under unified command. The shift supervisor will coordinate with internal CSUN emergency responders. In the event of an actual fire or other real emergency, the Patrol Operations Commander shall, if at all possible, respond to the Command Post and assume Incident Commander responsibility.

Evacuation of Buildings

Officers responding to fire scenes should ascertain alarm location(s) from the building annunciator panel. Simultaneously, building evacuation (with special attention given to persons with disabilities) and preventing any person who has exited a fire involved building from reentering the building should be priority tasks. Officers will interface with floor and building marshals and enlist their assistance in manning exits.

Officers shall utilize bullhorns (on a floor by floor basis) as the primary means to direct building occupants to evacuate a building. In inclement weather, evacuees will be directed to the nearest building or residence for shelter. In situations which involve a lengthy period of time for people to be out of a building or residence, community members are to be kept informed (via bullhorns) as to the situation at hand.

After officers have done as much as is reasonably possible to preserve life and to secure the scene for the firefighters, the officer's attention should be directed toward the detection of any suspicious persons or circumstances which might suggest that the fire is the result of a criminal act. Officers should identify and interview anyone who arrived at the scene prior to the first police and fire units or anyone who makes mention of having observed any suspicious people in the vicinity.

V. EMERGENCY PERIOD COMMUNICATIONS

Reports of fire constitute a form of emergency. During emergency periods all routine communications will cease at the instruction of the dispatcher or patrol supervisor. Personnel at the emergency scene will limit themselves to important communications which affect the emergency. All other personnel will maintain radio and telephone silence during this period (except in the event of another emergency situation) until such time as the dispatcher gives instructions to resume routine communications.

VI. INCIDENT DOCUMENTATION

RIMS police reports shall be submitted for all fire and fire alarm calls except false alarms or false reports of water flows (in these instances radio log entries will be sufficient documentation). Fire reports shall be submitted at the end of the watch and shall include the time of the alarm, portion of the structure involved (first, second, etc. floor or entire structure, etc.), any injuries involved and medical care provided; the type of structure involved (academic building, administration building, dormitory, etc.); cause of the fire if known and estimated damage (if known); and the name of the LAFD officer in charge of the scene. An Incident Command post report shall also be submitted before the end of watch by the Incident Commander when the Incident Command Post is established.