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PETER J. OSTROSKY  
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Heads of Fire Departments

**FROM:** Peter J. Ostroskey  
State Fire Marshal

**DATE:** March 1, 2016

**RE:** **Fire & Explosion Investigation Unit Response Protocol**

I would like to provide you with the following information on the Response Protocol for the Fire & Explosion Investigation Unit assigned to my Office. The current response protocol has been in effect since 2003 but I am reissuing it now, as there have been many personnel changes in recent years.

Pursuant to Massachusetts law, the local Fire chief is legally responsible for conducting an examination to determine the origin and cause of each fire or explosion in his/her community. (M. G. L. Chapter 148, section 2). The State Fire Marshal is mandated to investigate fires and explosions where local fire authorities are unable to determine the cause, where a violation of law exists, or when the fire or explosion is or may be incendiary nature (M.G.L. c. 148, section 3).

By statute, the State Fire Marshal also investigates cases including but not limited to explosive devices, blast explosions, houses of worship, fires causing fatal or serious injuries or which damage state property or any public records.

**State Police fire investigators and bomb technicians are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.** Please notify the Fire & Explosion Investigation Unit immediately of:

- Fatal fires or explosions;
- Fires resulting in personal injury;
- Fires resulting in firefighter injuries;
- Large commercial loss fires;

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- Arson fires that damage occupied buildings or any residential property;
- Fires involving properties owned by the Commonwealth or municipalities;
- Fires that involve the destruction of public records;
- Fires or explosions involving facts which indicate that such fire or explosion is the result of a “hate crime” or crime based on the race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation of the victim;
- Fires or explosions involving churches or houses of worship; and
- Any other fire or explosion situation where the fire department would like assistance or consultation.

## **Requesting Services**

### ***Normal Business Hours***

Requests for response during business hours should be directed to the Fire & Explosion Investigation Section Desk Officer at (978) 567-3310.

### ***After Hours***

After hour requests should be directed to the State Police Troop Headquarters in your jurisdiction. Go to <http://www.mass.gov/eopss/law-enforce-and-cj/law-enforce/msp-troops/> for details.

### ***Special Circumstances***

If a Fire chief or incident commander has a special set of circumstances that might influence a response, consider providing a cell phone number for a call back-point of contact so that the investigator can speak with you directly.

## **Response Protocol**

Please do not hesitate to call and request a response at the time of any incident. If the on call investigator cannot justify an immediate response, arrangements will be made for the response during the next business hours.

If you have any questions regarding this response protocol, please feel free to contact Detective Lieutenant, Paul Zipper, Commanding Officer, Massachusetts State Police, Fire & Explosion Investigation Section directly at (978) 567-3312.