



INFORMATION BULLETIN

Office of the
Fire Commissioner

Issue Date: January 14, 2003

No. IN 007R

Updated: March 29, 2006

REQUESTS FOR OFC FIRE INVESTIGATION OR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) provides support for fire investigations or technical assistance under certain conditions or in extreme emergencies as described below. After-hours calls to the OFC will continue to be handled by the Provincial Emergency Program (PEP).

To access the services of the Office of the Fire Commissioner, please call 1-888-988-9488.

The OFC will contact the Regional Fire Service Advisor for your area.

Assistance at Investigations

Local Assistants to the Fire Commissioner (LAFC) are requested to report fires to the OFC according to the following criteria:

- All fatal fires or critical injury incidents (**immediate**)
- Explosions (**immediate**)
- Suspected incendiary fires where a suspect has been identified (**immediate**)
- Suspected incendiary fires where no suspect has been identified (**Monday through Friday during normal working hours, 08:30 hrs - 16:30 hrs**)
- Fires of unusual origin or circumstance - unusual fire/smoke spread, or involves circumstances that may result in widespread public concern, e.g., environmental hazard (**Monday through Friday during normal working hours, 08:30 hrs - 16:30 hrs**)

Requests for assistance at fire investigations will be dealt with in the above order of priority and subject to the availability of resources. Once reported, an evaluation will be made to determine the urgency of response and level of assistance requested from the OFC. Part of the evaluation will include considering the potential benefits for improved fire safety resulting from an investigation.

Depending on the circumstances of the occurrence and the time the notification is received, the Deputy Fire Commissioner may assign an investigator to attend immediately.

The calls for assistance that do not meet the established criteria for an OFC investigation may be deferred to the LAFC and/or police services to handle directly.

Technical Assistance

The OFC provides technical advice and assistance to the fire service on routine matters upon request. The OFC also provides more immediate technical advice and assistance to the fire service in cases of high-risk situations. These requests are usually made to the regional office during normal office hours.

The OFC will make every effort to provide technical advice and assistance to the fire service based on priority and availability of staff resources.

To obtain technical assistance to address high-risk situations after normal office hours, the local authority may use the OFC after-hours assistance line.

The following list identifies under what circumstances the fire service may wish to obtain immediate advice and assistance on a 24-hour basis:

- all orders to close;
- situations that are considered an immediate threat to life under Section 25 of the *Fire Services Act* and

imminent threat of a major emergency, where once started, has the potential to result in a serious threat to public safety or environmental emergency in a community.

The contents of this Information Bulletin are not intended to be provided as legal advice and should not be relied upon as legal advice.

Information Bulletins are distributed to British Columbia Fire Departments, Local Assistants to the Fire Commissioner and where applicable, other related agencies and authorities, in order to provide general information on fire-related issues.

For further information contact: Office of the Fire Commissioner, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General,
Mailing Address: PO Box 9491, Stn. Prov. Govt., Victoria BC V8W 9N7 / Location: 1st Floor, 800 Johnson Street
Telephone 1-888-988-9488, Facsimile (250) 356-9019, E-mail: ofc@gov.bc.ca, Internet: <http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/firecom/index.htm>