

Line-of-Duty Death and Serious Injury Investigations

326.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Best Practice

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for investigating a serious injury or line-of-duty death, documenting of the events leading to the injury or death and making recommendations directed toward preventing similar occurrences in the future.

326.2 POLICY

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It is the policy of the Lansing Fire Department to identify the causal factors pertaining to any event involving a serious injury or line-of-duty death, and to document and secure evidence which may be a factor in any regulatory actions or litigation resulting from the event. An investigation into the circumstances of the serious injury or line-of-duty death is separate and distinct from any investigation being conducted regarding the cause of a fire.

The Department may utilize external resources to assist or lead the investigation. These resources include:

- The Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA)
- The Michigan State Fire Marshal
- Local law enforcement
- Area fire department Fire Chiefs or Fire Marshals
- Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)

In the event an investigation utilizes multiple agencies, the Department will establish a Unified Incident Command program to facilitate the needs and activities of the investigation.

326.3 PROCEDURE

State

As soon as practicable after a serious injury or line-of-duty death has occurred, the Fire Chief or the authorized designee shall assign an investigation team to conduct an investigation into the circumstances of the event.

- (a) A Battalion Chief designated by the Fire Chief should function as the team leader and direct the investigation of the line-of-duty death or serious injury. The investigation team should report to the team leader, who is responsible for the management of the investigative process.
- (b) All members of the Lansing Fire Department shall give their full and complete cooperation to the investigation team.

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- (c) MIOSHA will conduct an investigation of incidents involving the death of an employee.
- (d) The Lansing Fire Department should cooperate with all other government agencies that have a legal cause to be involved in the investigation of a line-of-duty death or serious injury and should voluntarily share relevant information with other organizations working in areas of fire service occupational safety and health education and training. Participation by these agencies shall be at their own discretion, depending on the circumstances of the incident. These agencies may or may not produce their own reports of the incident with recommendations for corrective actions. These reports do not supersede the investigation team report.
- (e) The investigation team report and all related documentation shall be an internal Lansing Fire Department administrative report.
- (f) Any public release of the report requires the approval of the Fire Chief or the authorized designee. Such release will generally be processed in accordance with the provisions of the Michigan Freedom of Information Act (MCL 15.231 et seq.).

326.4 INVESTIGATION TEAM

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The investigation team shall consist, at a minimum, of the following team members:

- (a) Battalion Chief
- (b) Fire investigator
- (c) Risk manager
- (d) Employee labor representative

Additional personnel may be added as required by the specific circumstances of the incident, including an investigative representative from the appropriate law enforcement agency when there is reasonable cause to believe a crime may be connected with the investigation.

326.4.1 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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The duties of the investigation team include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a) Gather and analyze all physical evidence related to the incident.
- (b) Interview all witnesses with direct or indirect knowledge of the circumstances. When interviewing members of the Department, represented members shall have the right to have their labor representatives present pursuant to the applicable collective bargaining agreement.
- (c) Collect and preserve recordings and copies of radio traffic, telephone conversations, photographs, film, videotape, incident histories and other related information. The pertinent aspects of the radio and telephone recordings should be transcribed.

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- (d) Consult with persons having special knowledge of the factors involved in the incident, including private sector experts and consultants.
- (e) Connect with other agencies involved in the investigation of the incident.
- (f) Establish and maintain ongoing communication between the team leader and the legal counsel for the Department.
- (g) Develop a written report of the incident, including conclusions and recommendations.
- (h) Coordinate activities with Fire Prevention to avoid interference with any criminal investigation.
- (i) Ensure that a post-mortem examination is conducted on any member who dies as a result of the incident as well as on any other deceased person who may have been contributory to the event.
- (j) Activate the Department or regional Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) team for any members adversely affected by the incident.

326.4.2 DOCUMENTATION

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The investigation team should ensure that the scene where the line-of-duty death or serious injury occurred is documented, including diagrams, photographs and observations. When feasible, all witness interviews should be recorded or transcribed. When recording or transcription is not feasible, the investigator's notes of the interview should be preserved. In addition, the investigation team should:

- (a) Obtain, examine and secure all personal protective equipment (PPE), breathing apparatus and equipment used by the seriously injured or deceased employee.
 - 1. A complete physical description of the PPE, breathing apparatus and equipment shall be included in the report of the incident.
 - 2. A performance evaluation report conducted by a qualified professional on all safety equipment should be included in the report of the incident.
 - 3. For specific guidance on PPE involved in the incident, refer to the special incident procedure in the Personal Protective Equipment Policy.
- (b) Review and comment on the application of policies and procedures to the incident, the observance of policies and procedures and their effect on the situation. Recommend changes, additions or deletions to such policies and procedures.
- (c) Attempt to obtain any photographs, videotape or other information relating to the incident from news media or other sources. Such evidence should be obtained with the agreement that it will only be used for investigative and educational purposes.

326.5 FINAL REPORT

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Lansing Fire Department

Policy Manual

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The investigation team should present the final report to the Fire Chief. The Fire Chief should determine the schedule and method of presentation of the final report.

See attachment: [Freedom of Information Act \(FOIA\) Policies and Procedures \(PDF\).pdf](#)

Attachments

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Policies and Procedures (PDF).pdf

CITY OF LANSING

Written Public Summary of FOIA Procedures and Guidelines

Consistent with the Michigan Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Public Act 442 of 1976, the following is the Written Public Summary of the City's FOIA Procedures and Guidelines relevant to the general public.

As used herein, "City" or "City of Lansing" includes all agencies, departments, and boards of the City.

This is only a summary of the City's FOIA Procedures and Guidelines. For more details and information, copies of the City's FOIA Procedures and Guidelines are available at no charge at the Office of the City Attorney, the Lansing Police Department Records Division, the Lansing Board of Water and Light, and the City's website at: www.lansingmi.gov.

1. How do I submit a FOIA request to the City?

- A request to inspect or obtain copies of public records prepared, owned, used, possessed, or retained by the City must be submitted in writing and may be delivered to the below addresses in person, by mail, or by email. Please include the term "FOIA" or "FOIA Request" on all communications to ensure a prompt response.

Requests for LPD incident, accident, and traffic crash reports should be directed to LPD at the below address. Reports for Lansing Board of Water and Light records should be directed to the BWL at the below address. All other requests should be directed to the office of the City Attorney.

For LPD report requests:
FOIA COORDINATOR
Records Division
120 W. Michigan Avenue, 1st Floor
Lansing, MI 48993
Email: LPD.FOIA@lansingmi.gov
Fax: 517/483-

For all other requests:
FOIA COORDINATOR
Office of the City Attorney
124 W. Michigan Avenue, 5th Floor
Lansing, MI 48893
Email: FOIA.Request@lansingmi.gov
Fax: 517/483-4018

For Board of Water & Light record requests:

FOIA COORDINATOR
Lansing Board of Water and Light
PO Box 13007
Lansing, MI 48901-3007
Email: FOIARequests@lbwl.com
Fax: 517-702-6743

- A request must sufficiently describe a public record so as to enable the City to find it.
- Please include the words "FOIA" or "FOIA Request" in the request to assist the City in providing a prompt response.

2. What kind of response can I expect to my request?

- Within 5 business days after receiving a FOIA request the City will issue a response. If a request is received by fax or email, the request is deemed to have been received on the following business day. The City will respond to your request in one of the following ways:
 - Grant the request,
 - Issue a written notice denying the request,
 - Grant the request in part and issue a written notice denying in part the request,
 - Issue a notice indicating that due to the nature of the request the City needs an additional 10 business days to respond, or
 - Issue a written notice indicating that the public record requested is available at no charge on the City's website.
- If the request is granted, or granted in part, the City will ask that payment be made for the allowable fees associated with responding to the request before the public record is made available.
- If the cost of processing the request is expected to exceed \$50, or if you have not paid for a previously granted request, the City will require a deposit before processing the request.

3. What are the City's deposit requirements?

- If the City has made a good faith calculation that the total fee for processing the request will exceed \$50.00, the City will require that you provide a deposit in the amount of 50% of the total estimated fee. When the City requests the deposit, it will provide you a non-binding best efforts estimate of how long it will take to process the request after you have paid your deposit.
- If the City receives a request from a person who has not paid the City for copies of public records made in fulfillment of a previously granted written request, the City will require a deposit of 100% of the estimated processing fee before it begins to search for the public record for any subsequent written request when all of the following conditions exist:
 - The final fee for the prior written request is not more than 105% of the estimated fee;
 - The public records made available contained the information sought in the prior written request and remain in the City's possession;
 - The public records were made available to the individual, subject to payment, within the best effort time frame estimated by the City to provide the records;
 - Ninety (90) days have passed since the City notified the individual in writing that the public records were available for pickup or mailing;
 - The individual is unable to show proof of prior payment to the City; and
 - The City has calculated an estimated detailed itemization that is the basis for the current written request's increased fee deposit.
- The City will not require the 100% estimated fee deposit if any of the following apply:
 - The person making the request is able to show proof of prior payment in full to the City;
 - The City is subsequently paid in full for all applicable prior written requests; or

- Three hundred sixty five (365) days have passed since the person made the request for which full payment was not remitted to the City.

4. How does the City calculate FOIA processing fees?

The Michigan FOIA statute permits the City to charge for the following costs associated with processing a request:

- Labor costs associated with searching for, locating and examining a requested public record, when failure to charge a fee will result in unreasonably high costs to the City.
- Labor costs associated with a review of a record to separate and delete information exempt from disclosure, when failure to charge a fee will result in unreasonably high costs to the City.
- Labor costs associated with copying or duplication, which includes making paper copies, making digital copies, or transferring digital public records to non-paper physical media or through the Internet.
- The cost of copying or duplication, not including labor, of paper copies of public records.
- The cost of computer discs, computer tapes or other digital or similar media when the requestor asks for records in non-paper physical media. This may include the cost for copies of records already on the City's website if you ask for the City to make copies.
- The cost to mail or send a public record to a requestor.

Labor Costs

- All labor costs will be estimated and charged in 15-minute increments, with all partial time increments rounded down.
- Labor costs will be charged at the hourly wage of the lowest-paid City employee capable of doing the work in the specific fee category, regardless of who actually performs work.
- Labor costs will also include a charge to cover or partially cover the cost of fringe benefits

A labor cost will not be charged for the search, examination, review and the deletion and separation of exempt from nonexempt information unless failure to charge a fee would result in unreasonably high costs to the City. Costs are unreasonably high when they are excessive and beyond the normal or usual amount for those services compared to the City's usual FOIA requests, because of the nature of the request in the particular instance. The City must specifically identify the nature of the unreasonably high costs in writing.

Copying and Duplication

The City must use the most economical method for making copies of public records, including using double-sided printing, if cost-saving and available.

Non-paper Copies on Physical Media

- The cost for records provided on non-paper physical media, such as computer discs, computer tapes or other digital or similar media will be at the actual and most reasonably economical cost for the non-paper media.
- This cost will be charged only if the City has the technological capability necessary to provide the public record in the requested non-paper physical media format.

Paper Copies

- Paper copies of public records made on standard letter (8 ½ x 11) or legal (8 ½ x 14) sized paper will not exceed \$.10 per sheet of paper. Copies for non-standard sized sheets will reflect the actual cost of reproduction.

Mailing Costs

- The cost to mail public records will use a reasonably economical and justified means.
- The City may charge for the least expensive form of postal delivery confirmation.
- No extra cost will be charged for expedited shipping or insurance unless you request it.

5. How do I qualify for an indigence discount on the fee?

The City will discount the first \$20.00 of fees for a request if you submit an affidavit stating that you are:

- Indigent and receiving specific public assistance; or
- If not receiving public assistance, stating facts demonstrating an inability to pay because of indigence.

You are **not** eligible to receive the \$20.00 discount if you:

- Have previously received discounted copies of public records from the City twice during the calendar year; or
- Are requesting information on behalf of other persons who are offering or providing payment to you to make the request.

An affidavit is a sworn statement.

6. May a nonprofit organization receive a discount on the fee?

A nonprofit organization advocating for developmentally disabled or mentally ill individuals that is formally designated by the state to carry out activities under subtitle C of the federal developmental disabilities assistance and bill of rights act of 2000, Public Law 106-402, and the protection and advocacy

for individuals with mental illness act, Public Law 99-319, may receive a \$20.00 discount if the request meets all of the following requirements in the Act:

- Is made directly on behalf of the organization or its clients.
- Is made for a reason wholly consistent with the mission and provisions of those laws under section 931 of the mental health code, 1974 PA 258, MCL 330.1931.
- Is accompanied by documentation of its designation by the state, if requested by the public body.

6. How may I challenge the denial of a public record or an excessive fee?

Appeal of a Denial of a Public Record

If you believe that all or a portion of a public record has not been disclosed or has been improperly exempted from disclosure, you may appeal to the President of City Council by filing a written appeal of the denial with the office of the FOIA Coordinator.

The appeal must be in writing, specifically state the word “appeal,” and identify the reason or reasons you are seeking a reversal of the denial.

Within 10 business days of receiving the appeal the President of City Council will respond in writing by:

- Reversing the disclosure denial;
- Upholding the disclosure denial; or
- Reverse the disclosure denial in part and uphold the disclosure denial in part.

Whether or not you submitted an appeal of a denial to the President of City Council, you may file a civil action in Ingham County Circuit Court within 180 days after the City's final determination to deny your request. If you prevail in the civil action the court will award you reasonable attorneys' fees, costs and disbursements. If the court determines that the City acted arbitrarily and capriciously in refusing to disclose or provide a public record, the court shall award you damages in the amount of \$1,000.

Appeal of an Excessive FOIA Processing Fee

If you believe that the fee charged by the City to process your FOIA request exceeds the amount permitted by state law, you must first appeal to the President of City Council by filing a written appeal for a fee reduction to the FOIA Coordinator.

The appeal must specifically state the word “appeal” and identify how the required fee exceeds the amount permitted.

Within 10 business days after receiving the appeal, the President of City Council will respond in writing by:

- Waiving the fee;
- Reducing the fee and issue a written determination indicating the specific basis that supports the remaining fee;
- Upholding the fee and issue a written determination indicating the specific basis that supports the required fee; or

- Issuing a notice detailing the reason or reasons for extending for not more than 10 business days the period during which the President of City Council will respond to the written appeal.

Within 45 days after receiving notice of the President of City Council's determination of the processing fee appeal, you may commence a civil action in Ingham County Circuit Court for a fee reduction. If you prevail in the civil action by receiving a reduction of 50% or more of the total fee, the court may award all or appropriate amount of reasonable attorneys' fees, costs and disbursements. If the court determines that the City acted arbitrarily and capriciously by charging an excessive fee, court may also award you punitive damages in the amount of \$500.

National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS)

327.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

State

The Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 authorizes the National Fire Data Center in the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) to gather and analyze information on the magnitude of the nation's fire problem, as well as its detailed characteristics and trends. To do so, the National Fire Data Center has established the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS). The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance regarding NFIRS reporting to ensure Department response information is properly reported to NFIRS.

327.2 POLICY

State

The Lansing Fire Department is committed to improving fire reporting and analysis capability at the local, state, and national levels. Therefore, it is the policy of the Lansing Fire Department to participate in NFIRS.

327.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

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The Fire Chief should designate an NFIRS coordinator, who should develop and maintain familiarity with NFIRS resources and reporting requirements and ensure Department information is compliant with the NFIRS reporting format and that the information is forwarded to Michigan Bureau of Fire Services (BFS). The BFS serves as the State Program Manager of the NFIRS program for USFA. Michigan law requires that reports of fires be made to BFS in a timely manner and as prescribed by BFS (MCL 29.1c; MCL 29.4).

The USFA has developed a standard NFIRS package that includes incident and casualty forms, a coding structure for data processing, manuals, computer software and procedures, documentation, and a National Fire Academy training course for utilizing the system. Additional resources are available on the BFS National Fire Incident Reporting website.