

SERIOUS ACCIDENT AND NEAR-MISS REVIEW

1716

(No. 73 July 2009)

As a component of the departmental safety program, CAL FIRE conducts serious accident and near miss reviews.

In the event of a serious accident or near-miss incident, the Region Chief will notify and consult with the Director's Office for consideration of an accident review team. If the accident occurs within a Sacramento headquarters program, the Director's Office may appoint a Review Team

PURPOSE

1716.1

(No. 73 July 2009)

The primary purposes of reviewing serious accidents and near-miss incidents are to gather and distribute information which may be useful in preventing a similar occurrence, to detect design, procedural, training, and enforcement deficiencies; to detect and document departmental liabilities; and to comply with state and federal regulations.

DEFINITIONS

1716.1.2

(No. 73 July 2009)

SERIOUS ACCIDENT: A serious accident is one which results in serious injury (as described in [Section 1715](#)) or death involving any of the following:

- A CAL FIRE employee.
- A person working under the direction of a CAL FIRE employee.

NEAR-MISS INCIDENT: A near-miss incident is an event that occurs in the work environment and reasonably could have, but did not result in a serious accident due to good fortune and/or proper operation of safety devices or equipment. The Informational Summary Report (Green Sheet) is the most appropriate method of reporting Near-Miss and Non-Serious incidents. It should contain all necessary information including events or issues of interest and lessons learned aimed at preventing similar occurrences in the future. Examples of near-miss incidents include but are not limited to:

- Wildland fire entrapment
- Shelter deployment
- Vehicle incidents
- Building collapse
- Falling snag
- Gas explosion
- Aircraft incidents
- Equipment malfunctions or misuse

- Structural fire suppression activities
- Unusual rescue occurrences

WILDLAND FIRE ENTRAPMENT: A situation where personnel are unexpectedly caught in a fire behavior-related, life-threatening positions where planned escape routes and safety zones are absent, inadequate, or have been compromised. An entrapment may or may not include deployment of a fire shelter for its intended purpose.

ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES

1716.2

(No. 73 July 2009)

Upon determining the need for a Serious Accident Review Team deployment, a conference call will be organized and held between the applicable Region Chief (or his/her designee), the Deputy Director of Fire Protection (or his/her designee), the Assistant Deputy Director of Cooperative Fire, Training and Safety (or his/her designee) and any other identified individuals for the purposes of:

- Discussing the specifics warranting the Review
- Identifying the Agency Administrator
- Identifying the Team Leader
- Ordering the Serious Accident Review Team Members
- Addressing any immediate needs, concerns, or circumstances

A CAL FIRE Unit must be designated for fiscal responsibility and provision of logistic support of the team as necessary.

- Each accident review will be issued an incident number by the ECC at the level with responsibility for conducting and administering the review.
- Each team member will have a separate request number.
- The Team Leader will closely monitor expenses incurred as a result of the review.
- Fiscal responsibility for these expenditures will be as follows:
 - All costs relative to the review of an accident or incident that occurred as a result of an SRA fire are legitimate charges to the Emergency Fund (Cross-reference Handbook 3800 Emergency Fund Expenditures).
 - Expenditures for the review of an accident or incident that were not related to an SRA fire are the responsibility of the Unit or Program for which the involved resource was working.
 - Expenditures incurred by a Team Member who is assigned to a Review

Team for another agency are the responsibility of the supplying region or program unless these expenditures will be borne by the requesting agency.

- Expenditures for the review of a Serious Accident or Near-miss incident in a Schedule "A" contract are the responsibility of the contracting agency.
- Hours of work and overtime for Review Team members will conform to the rules of the applicable [MOU](#).

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR

1716.2.1

(No. 73 July 2009)

The Region Chief (for regional reviews) or the Director's Office (for Headquarters reviews) shall appoint an Agency Administrator who is vested with the responsibility and authority to execute the Serious Accident and Near-Miss Review. The Administrator will normally be a Unit Chief or higher and shall not be assigned as a member of the Review Team. Duties of the Administrator include:

- Consult with the Director's Office or Region Chief to establish rules for the depth and scope of the review.
- Supervise the Team Leader.
- Act as a liaison and point-of-contact for departmental officials and those of other involved agencies. (OSHA, NIOSH, media).
- Receive, review and approve information for release to the Department, other agencies or the public as appropriate.
- Confirm appropriate notifications have been made (i.e. [NWCG Wildland Fire Fatality and Entrapment Report \[PMS 405-1\]](#), CalOSHA, family notifications, etc).
- The Agency Administrator, in consultation with the Region Chief or Director's Office, will have the authority to modify deadlines as deemed necessary.

ACCIDENT REVIEW TEAM COMPOSITION

1716.3

(No. 73 July 2009)

CAL FIRE will maintain a list of trained and qualified individuals for deployment as Serious Accident Review Team members. Each Review Team shall consist of at least the following:

- A Team Leader
- Lead Investigator (peace officer)
- Safety Program Representative
- Training Program Representative
- Documentation Specialist

Individuals should complete the CAL FIRE Accident Review Team Workshop prior to being assigned as a member of an accident review team.

In addition to those members, accident review teams will also include a representative of CDF Firefighters (CDEFF). The CDEFF representative participates as a member of the Review Team. Their function is not to represent individual members of the bargaining unit during the course of the review.

Other participants may include:

- A representative from the applicable CAL FIRE program area (Mobile Equipment, Aviation Management, Conservation Camps, etc.). These should be selected from a pool of individuals who have completed the CAL FIRE Accident Review Team Workshop.
- A representative from another involved agency.
- Any specialist from a discipline that may be of particular use to the review.

The Team Leader will excuse from participation, in all or part, from an accident review, any team member who has a conflict of interest specific to the incident being reviewed. For the purposes of this policy, a conflict is defined as any circumstance where the interests of the team member conflict, either directly or indirectly, with the interests of his/her duties and responsibilities as a team member. This would include, but may not be limited to, circumstances such as:

- A supervisor/subordinate relationship exists with a subject or major witness.
- The incident occurred within the home Unit or work location of the Team Member.
- The incident involved employees from the home Unit or work location of the Team Member or one in which the Team Member has worked in the last three years.
- A subject or a major witness is a relative of the Team Member.

The Team Leader is responsible for ensuring that, to the extent possible, the Team and its report will be viewed with credibility and as an unbiased report.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ACCIDENT REVIEW TEAM **1716.3.1** (No. 73 July 2009)

The Accident Review Team, under the direction of the Team Leader will:

- Identify the needs of the accident review based on the circumstances of the specific initial accident factors and assure that all notifications required by policy have been completed.
- Develop an investigation plan based on the initial accident factors and staff accordingly.
- Collect, document and organize documents, observations, expert opinions, data

and statements while establishing and maintaining an organized Chain of Custody.

- Conduct objective analysis and testing of evidence, documents, expert opinions, data and statements.
- Establish a sequence of events and findings based on the analysis of the factual evidence, documents, expert opinions, data and statements.
- Test the findings through the direct documentation and linking of specific supporting facts for each finding using the factual evidence, documents, expert opinions, data and statements of the review.
- Conduct further review and analysis where a factual basis for a finding can not be established.
- Document findings of the review, prepare summaries, reports and recommendations as required by department policy based on the analysis of the factual evidence, documents, expert opinions, data, statements and sequence of events.

REVIEW TEAM SUMMARIES, REPORTS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1716.4

(No. 73 July 2009)

Documents prepared by the Team will normally include the following:

- Preliminary Summary Report ("Blue Sheet")
- Informational Summary Report ("Green Sheet")
- Accident Review Report
- Confidential Working Recommendations

PRELIMINARY SUMMARY REPORT ("Blue Sheet")

1716.4.1

(No. 73 July 2009)

The Preliminary Summary Report will be prepared for distribution within 48 hours and posted within 72 hours after the Review Team's arrival at the accident scene or staging area. This announcement will provide preliminary information to other Units conducting similar operations. It assists management in dispelling rumors based on misinformation about the accident or near-miss situation. When warranted, it provides preventative warning or alert information relative to unsafe situations or conditions to the field as soon as possible. A notice of the incomplete nature of the Review must accompany the Summary.

The Preliminary Summary Report will consist of a short factual synopsis of the accident and may be initially developed by the requesting Unit or Program. However, the final Preliminary Summary Report will be completed and submitted to the Agency Administrator by the responding SART. Include recommendations for immediate corrective action when necessary. **It should not contain unsubstantiated information and will not contain confidential information or names.** Since it is only preliminary

information, it does not become part of the final report. A Preliminary Summary Report may be reissued at any time during the review if important accident prevention information is developed. Also consider issuing a Safety Alert or Safety Advisory.

The Agency Administrator is responsible for review and consultation with the appropriate Region and/or Sacramento Program staff and forwarding to the appropriate Region Chief or Deputy Director for approval and distribution of the document. The Agency Administrator will forward the approved Blue Sheet to the Department Safety Officer, or designee, to be sent to all employees via the CAL FIRE Postmaster. Units/Programs will distribute a hard copy to all facilities for posting. Once the Report is distributed, it is considered a "public document" and may be shared with external sources. ([See approved Preliminary Summary Report \(Blue Sheet\) Template.](#))

INFORMATIONAL SUMMARY REPORT ("GREEN SHEET")

1716.4.2

(No. 73 July 2009)

The Informational Summary Report shall be prepared and distributed within 7 calendar days of the Review Team's arrival unless otherwise directed by the Agency Administrator. In the event of a Near-Miss or Non-Serious incident of significance and a Review Team is not assigned, an Agency Administrator will be indentified to work with the Unit, Region and/or Program in developing an Informational Summary Report containing all necessary information, facts and lessons learned from the incident.

The purpose of the Green Sheet is to aid in accident prevention by letting interested parties know "what happened" and for use as a safety training tool. Since this report is an accident prevention tool, it should not be used to place personal blame. Therefore, names of individuals shall not be used. The report should include a cover page identifying the report and containing a disclaimer that information contained in the report is subject to revision as additional information is obtained and that it has not been approved by an Executive Board of Review. The Green Sheet will also contain a brief factual narrative of what happened, conditions at the accident scene, a sequence of events leading up to the accident and a map or diagram of the scene. The report will be completed by the Review Team when sufficient facts are known to provide a clear picture of what happened. It will be completed and forwarded to the Agency Administrator in hard copy and in Word processed form via disk or Email (including scanned diagrams and maps, if possible).

The Agency Administrator is responsible for review and consultation with the appropriate Region and/or Sacramento Program staff and forwarding to the appropriate Region Chief or Deputy Director for approval and distribution of the document. The Agency Administrator will forward the approved Green Sheet to the Department Safety Officer or designee to be sent to all employees via the CAL FIRE Postmaster. Units/Programs will distribute a hard copy to all facilities for posting. Once the Report is

distributed, it is considered a “public document” and may be shared with external sources. (See [approved Informational Summary Report \(Green Sheet\) Template.](#))

A revised Green Sheet may be issued following the distribution process outlined above, if:

- Additional pertinent information is developed
- The initial Green Sheet needs updating or clarification

ACCIDENT REVIEW REPORT

1716.4.3

(No. 73 July 2009)

The Review Team must complete the Accident Review Report as directed by the Agency Administrator. The purpose of this report is to present the facts and a picture of what happened **and why**. Witness statements, photographs and all other pertinent information will be included in the report. The Serious Accident Review Report format must be followed. The completed report will be sent through the Agency Administrator to the appropriate Region Chief or Deputy Director, and then to the Departmental Safety Officer. (See [approved Accident Review Report Template](#))

WORKING RECOMMENDATIONS

1716.4.4

(No. 73 July 2009)

A **confidential** document entitled “*Working Recommendations*” will be prepared by the Accident Review Team Leader. These recommendations are not to be included in the Serious Accident Review Report. They will be transmitted to the Agency Administrator under separate and confidential cover. As a **confidential** working document, it may contain a description of the most probable cause and causal factors, contributory factors, opinions and possible management concerns, as well as recommendations. Commendations should be considered for employees whose exemplary actions in the incident or rescue operations reduced losses.

UNIT RESPONSIBILITIES

1716.5

(No. 73 July 2009)

A Unit designee (normally the Duty Chief or ECC Duty Officer) will ensure CalOSHA notification is made on incidents meeting the definition of a serious accident, illness, injury or fatality. (See section 1715)

The Unit Chief, Incident Commander or designee will be responsible for accident scene security and gathering the names and contact information of witnesses until the Review team arrives. Unit personnel, incident personnel or the security detail will not begin the Review, collect evidence or interview witnesses unless there is a danger that the information or evidence will be lost.

All observations and information will be relinquished to the Review Team Leader on his or her arrival. The Unit Chief, Incident Commander, or designee will be responsible for assembling key personnel for the initial Team briefing at the designated time and place.

No Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) shall take place until a consultation has occurred between the Lead Investigator and the CISM Team Leader. The CISM Team Leader shall identify areas of critical need and discuss with the Lead Investigator as expeditiously as possible.

A Unit point-of-contact or Liaison must be designated and made available to assist the Team with logistics, procurement, communications and provision of personnel for interview as requested by the Team Leader. This individual will not be a member of the Team and will not have access to Team meetings or information generated or gathered by the Team.

All wildland fire entrapment incidents will necessitate the completion and submission of a National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) form entitled "Wildland Fire Entrapment/Fatality Initial Report." The report is [PMS 405-1](http://www.nwcg.gov/pms/forms_otr/pms405-1.pdf) (http://www.nwcg.gov/pms/forms_otr/pms405-1.pdf). It is to be completed and forwarded as indicated on the form within 24 hours of the accident even if some of the information is incomplete.

DEPARTMENT SAFETY OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES **1716.6** (No. 73 July 2009)

The Departmental Safety Officer will monitor ongoing Serious Accident Reviews and have the following responsibilities:

- Receive and secure Serious Accident Review documentation and evidence as required by departmental administration.
- Notify the Director's Office that the Serious Accident Review Report has been received.
- Receive the Executive Board of Review Action Plans. Develop a tickler file for each of the action items and track the status of each item. Report status of action items to the appropriate level of administration.
- Develop and maintain a database containing all crucial elements of each accident including identification of the accident, date, type, results, causal factors, contributory factors, and any other necessary information.
- At the completion of the Executive Board of Review and at the direction of the Director, transfer the Serious Accident Review Report, documentation and evidence to the Academy Administrator.

ACADEMY ADMINISTRATOR RESPONSIBILITIES **1716.7** (No. 73 July 2009)

Receive and secure Serious Accident Review documentation and evidence from the Departmental Safety Officer.

The Academy Administrator is responsible for filing and retaining all published Accident Reports, Green Sheets, and Preliminary Summaries, as well as all collateral information and evidence generated by the teams and considered necessary for retention but not included in the Review Report.

Evidence will be retained for a period of five (5) years unless a longer period is needed due to litigation. Documentation, with the exception of Working Recommendation documents, will be retained in a library at the Academy, where the documents may be utilized for research.

Notify the Department Safety Officer of conditions or circumstances that warrant a Safety Alert, Safety Advisory or Safety Communication.

[Next Section](#)

[Handbook Table of Contents](#)

[Forms or Forms Samples](#)