

**PHOENIX REGIONAL  
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**

**OCCUPANT SERVICES SECTOR**

M.P. 202.12C

05/95-R

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The purpose of this procedure is to establish the role and responsibilities of the Occupant Services Sector.

The Occupant Services Sector shall be established by the Incident Commander at all working structure fires, and as early in the incident as is practical. The Occupant Services Sector should also be established at any incident where the need is identified; Fire, EMS, Special Operations, etc.

The Occupant Sector is a critical extension of our service delivery, and serves as the liaison between the Fire Department and those citizens (responsible parties) directly, or perhaps indirectly involved in or affected by the incident.

If necessary, Command will request additional resource in order to establish the Occupant Services Sector. An additional engine, ladder, or battalion chief is acceptable. If necessary, at prolonged incidents, in order to return fire companies and personnel to service, Command may assign staff personnel to this function. The Occupant Services Sector responsibilities may extend beyond the termination of the incident.

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The Occupant Services Sector should consider offering the following services to the occupant/responsible parties. It should be noted that other occupant service needs may be identified and should be addressed as part of the Department's customer service goals.

- Carry out responsibilities under supervision of loss control officer.
- Explain what happened, what we are doing and why, how long we expect to take until the incident is under control.
- Obtain from occupant/responsible party, any significant information regarding the structure and/or its contents that might assist Command tactically with the operation. Inform Command of this information.
- Provide cellular telephone access.
- Communicate the location to which evacuees have been sent. (Notify the Investigations Sector of this location also when passing on this information.)
- Identify any mental health needs of occupants/responsible party's, as well as any spectators or evacuees. (i.e., affects of shootings, mass casualty, highly visible critical rescue, etc).
- Notify Red Cross, Salvation Army, or other relief agencies.
- Notify other necessary agencies and/or individuals.
- Provide coordination of salvage efforts with the loss control officer.
- Where safe to do so, and after approval from Investigations Sector, coordinate a "Walk-through" of the structure with the responsible party.
- Determine the location of valuables in the structure and notify Command/Loss Control officer.
- Work with loss control and proper utility services to restore power, gas and water, as quickly as possible to reduce additional losses through a loss of business to affected occupants.

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Provide use of service vans as necessary.

- Coordinate site security.
  - Fire watch
  - Private security company
  - Necessary insurance services
  - Any services identified as necessary and possible
  
- Handout and explain the "After the Fire" brochure.
- Assist the occupant in notifying insurance agents, security services, restoration company, etc.
- Provide blankets, and a shelter, where practical to do so, (i.e. an apparatus cab, neighbor's house, etc.) To get occupants out of the weather and at a single location.
- Provide on-going service and support until the customer indicates our services are no longer needed.

The Occupant Services Sector shall report to Command unless a loss control Branch/Section is assigned, at which time he/she shall report to the loss control officer.

### **MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS**

Occasionally, the public is witness to a critical life threatening event that can have substantial psychological impacts on them. These persons may be survivors of a critical event or a witness to a mass casualty, or a parent of a severely injured child, or a witness to the death of a family member, etc.

Additionally, witnesses may have misunderstandings of fire department operations that cause a delay in removal of the patient (i.e. trench collapse, an electrocution rescue that is delayed due to energized contact, etc.). Addressing these issues early, on-site, or as soon as possible following the event, can minimize these misunderstandings, and reduce psychological effects, and produce improved relations with the public.

The Occupant Services Sector should consider additional help for these needs. Assistance and advice on availability of mental health services can be obtained through the department's Critical Incident Debriefing Team, the Employee Assistance Program Contractor, the American Red Cross, and in some cases, through the victim's personal medical insurance. Support from the Fire Department Chaplain or local clergy may also be available.

### **AMERICAN RED CROSS SERVICES**

For residential fires where the occupant has suffered a loss of living quarters and clothing, the American Red Cross may be used to provide support.

The American Red Cross can provide some clothing, food, toiletries, and arrange for temporary shelter/housing for the occupants. When contacting the Red Cross, provide the following information:

- Address of the incident.
- Address where victims can be contacted.
- Phone number of contact location.
- Number of displaced persons with information on age, sex, etc.
- Fire Department Incident No.