

A message from President Joel Gramling, Chester County Fire Police Association

I am sure you have seen the messages from chiefs and county officials during the past few days about the Arson epidemic. The things we are taught as fire police in classes and the fire marshals program at our county meeting last year are things we do all the time. Let's renew our dedication to what the Special Fire Police do best.

The Arson Task Force has asked us to reinforce the following:

1. Do not give interviews to anyone. **PERIOD.** Please keep the NEWS Media back and away from the scene and inform the IC (or Command Post) that they are on the scene. Someone in authority will give them permission to enter.

2. Be the eyes and ears as you do the perimeter security. If you take a picture(s) of the fire scene, turn the camera (be it a regular camera or a cell phone) around and take a picture of the crowd. The arsonist may be there.

3. Take down the license tags of vehicles leaving the scene. Suspicious activity may be the clue that breaks a case of arson.

4. Note people leaving the scene. It is not normal to leave as people are curious.

5. Operational Security: Please do not share what you see at a scene with family, friends or neighbors. Everyone wants to be someone in the "know". That tidbit in a casual conversation may give the arsonist(s) just the upper hand they need to avoid apprehension.

6. Make sure that you establish a sufficient perimeter as detailed by the Fire Chief, Incident Commander or the Fire Police Officer in charge. Make sure you report to that officer as you arrive for proper instructions. Make sure that a list of Special Fire Police on location is established. That officer should take down your name and company ID so you are not dragged into the investigation as a suspect.

7. If you take pictures, please let the Fire Police officer in charge know of the pictures so that he/she can let the Arson Task Force know of these pictures.

8. The last is the most difficult. In your perimeter security activity, make sure you ask for identification of those who wish to gain entry. A plain clothes or undercover officer may approach you. Ask for ID. Do not assume they are okay. We have had noisy firemen in civilian clothes from other companies not dispatched that wanted entry.

BE THE EYES AND EARS FOR ALL OF US.....YOU ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE TEAM TO HELP SOLVE THESE ARSONS!