

## Why Cooperating in Fire Safety Investigations is Important

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**N**eedless to say this a busy season for the fire service and your union is determined that you have resources, tools, and training to do your job effectively even in the most adverse conditions. There are times when we need to assess how we can have responded differently on a job, and how the department can help us to help you.

That is why your cooperation in all fire investigations is so important. The information that you can provide has practical and technical importance. We all have the tendency to be suspicious when the department begins a probe, but Safety Chiefs are on an important fact-finding mission. They are our partners in the field, not adversaries.

The information they are seeking can lead to a changes in tactics and policies that will be employed on the job in other situations. They can help

Firefighter's observations and perceptions of events fit into a large jig-saw puzzle. The significance of the information provided may not be readily apparent.

Often times, as an investigation proceeds, further clarification is necessary. It may be because another member or witness has had a different interpretation or because a seemingly unimportant piece of information suddenly takes on greater significance.

In such situations, a member may be re-interviewed to corroborate information or to expand on a previous

response. Once again this is not a situation that should cause apprehension on the member's part.

Lastly, it is important that you know that Safety Chiefs try to work independently. They are free from the political pressure that can distort their findings, even if their outcome or recommendations are detrimental to the city in a civil lawsuit. It's the union's job to ensure that their independence is not tampered with. That is why it is vitally important that someone from the union be there during an interview to protect the member's rights.

