

299F.04 ORIGIN OF FIRE INVESTIGATED; COMPUTERIZED ARSON DATA.

Subdivision 1. **Duty.** The chief of the fire department of each city in which a fire department is established, and the mayor of each city in which no fire department exists, and the president of the statutory city board of each statutory city in which no fire department exists, and the town clerk of each town without the limits of any city or statutory city, shall investigate, or cause to be investigated, the cause, origin, and circumstances of each fire occurring in the city, statutory city or town by which property has been destroyed or damaged when the damage exceeds \$100, except that all fires of unknown origin shall be reported, and shall especially make investigation as to whether the fire was the result of carelessness, accident, or design.

Subd. 2. **Coordination by state fire marshal.** The investigation shall be begun within two days of the occurrence of the fire and the state fire marshal shall have the right to coordinate the investigation on deeming it necessary.

Subd. 3. **Reporting and records requirements.** The officer making investigation of fires occurring in cities, statutory cities and towns shall forthwith notify the state fire marshal and shall, within one week of the occurrence of the fire, furnish to the state fire marshal a written statement of all the facts relating to the cause and origin of the fire and such further information as may be called for by the blanks furnished by the state fire marshal. The state fire marshal shall keep a record of all fires occurring in the state, together with all facts, statistics, and circumstances, including the origin of the fires, which may be determined by the investigation provided by this chapter. These statistics shall be at all times open to public inspection.

Subd. 3a. **Arson investigative data system.** (a) As used in this section, "criminal justice agency" means state and local prosecution authorities, state and local law enforcement agencies, local fire departments, and the Office of State Fire Marshal.

(b) The state fire marshal shall administer and maintain a computerized arson investigative data system for the purpose of assisting criminal justice agencies in the investigation and prosecution of suspected arson violations. This data system is separate from the reporting system maintained by the Department of Public Safety under section 299F.05, subdivision 2. The system consists of data on individuals who are 14 years old or older who law enforcement agencies determine are or may be engaged in arson activity. Notwithstanding section 260B.171, subdivision 5, data in the system on adults and juveniles may be maintained together. Data in the system must be submitted and maintained as provided in this subdivision.

(c) Subject to the provisions of paragraph (d), a criminal justice agency may submit the following data on suspected arson violations to the arson investigative data system:

- (1) the suspect's name, known aliases, if any, and other identifying characteristics;
- (2) the modus operandi used to commit the violation, including means of ignition;
- (3) any known motive for the violation;
- (4) any other crimes committed as part of the same behavioral incident;
- (5) the address of the building, the building owner's identity, and the building occupant's identity; and
- (6) the name of the reporting agency and a contact person.

A criminal justice agency that reports data to the arson investigative data system shall maintain records documenting the data in its own records system for at least the time period specified in paragraph (e).

(d) The state fire marshal shall maintain in the arson investigative data system any of the data reported under paragraph (c) that the fire marshal believes will assist in the investigation and prosecution of arson cases. In lieu of or in connection with any of these data, the state fire marshal may include in the data system a reference to the criminal justice agency that originally reported the data, with a notation to system users that the agency is the repository of more detailed information on the particular suspected arson violation.

(e) Notwithstanding section 138.17, the state fire marshal shall destroy data on juveniles entered into the system when three years have elapsed since the data were entered into the system, except as otherwise provided in this paragraph. If the fire marshal has information that, since entry of data into the system, the juvenile has been convicted as an adult or has been adjudicated or has a stayed adjudication as a juvenile for an offense that would be a crime if committed by an adult, the data must be maintained until three years have elapsed since the last record of a conviction, adjudication, or stayed adjudication of the individual. Upon request of the criminal justice agency that submitted data to the system, the state fire marshal shall destroy the data regardless of whether three years have elapsed since the data were entered into the system.

(f) Data in the arson investigative data system are confidential data on individuals as defined in section 13.02, subdivision 3, but are accessible to criminal justice agencies.

Subd. 4. Investigation by state fire marshal. The state fire marshal may conduct further investigation necessary to establish reasonable grounds to believe that a violation of Minnesota Statutes 1976, sections 609.561 to 609.576, has occurred.

Subd. 5. Notification. (a) As used in this subdivision, "chief officer" means the city fire marshal or chief officer of a law enforcement agency's arson investigation unit in a city of the first class.

(b) The officer making investigation of a fire resulting in a human death shall immediately notify either the state fire marshal or a chief officer. The state fire marshal or chief officer may conduct an investigation to establish the origin and cause regarding the circumstance of the death. If the chief officer undertakes the investigation, the officer shall promptly notify the state fire marshal of the investigation and, after the investigation is completed, shall forward a copy of the investigative report to the state fire marshal. Unless the investigating officer does so, the state fire marshal or chief officer shall immediately notify the appropriate coroner or medical examiner of a human death occurring as a result of a fire. The coroner or medical examiner shall perform an autopsy in the case of a human death as provided in section 390.11, subdivision 2a, or 390.32, subdivision 2a, as appropriate.

History: (5955) 1913 c 564 s 6; 1967 c 543 s 1; 1973 c 123 art 5 s 7; 1978 c 777 s 2,3; 1986 c 444; 1993 c 326 art 5 s 1; 1998 c 367 art 11 s 9; 1999 c 139 art 4 s 2