



GENERAL ORDER

GENERAL ORDER 620.01

Juvenile Fire Setter Program

OFFICE OF THE FIRE MARSHAL

Issue Date: February 01, 1995

Revision Date: June 13, 2019

1 APPLICABILITY

2 All personnel.

3 POLICY

4 Juveniles are responsible for a significant proportion of both accidental and intentional fires
5 that occur each year in the United States. The Juvenile Fire Setter (JFS) Program, which is
6 coordinated by the Office of the Fire Marshal, is a program focusing on intervention and
7 education designed to prevent and control Juvenile fire-setting behavior.

8 DEFINITIONS

9 ➤ **Juvenile** – a person under the age of 18 years old.

10 PROCEDURES

11 GENERAL:

- 12 • The JFS Program is a two-part program involving intervention and education for Juvenile
13 fire setters and their families, and may also be used for Juveniles responsible for false
14 alarms, improvised explosive devices, and the use of fireworks.
- 15 • The program will assist the Howard County Public Schools, the Howard County Police
16 Department's Youth Division, and the State of Maryland Department of Juvenile Justice
17 with court-appointed cases.
- 18 • The JFS Program works in conjunction with a network referral agencies, including, but
19 not limited to: the Howard County Police Department, the State of Maryland
20 Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Social Services for Howard County,
21 the Howard County State's Attorney Office, and the Howard County Health Department.
- 22 • The intervention portion of the program consists of identification of Juveniles for
23 participation in the program in multiple ways, including direct investigation by the
24 Department of Fire and Rescue Services (Department) and referrals from various
25 agencies, including the Howard County Police Department, the Maryland Department of
26 Juvenile Services, the Howard County Public School System and the courts.
- 27 • The education portion of the program consists of educating the family on basic fire
28 behavior, home fire safety, smoke alarm awareness, escape planning in the event of a
29 fire, as well as specific information call takers at the Public Safety Answering Point will



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- 30 be looking for (nature of emergency, location of the emergency, etc.) when calling 911.
- 31 • Department personnel responsible for the JFS program may also recommend referral to
- 32 or intervention by other agencies that may be of benefit to the child and/or the child's
- 33 family.
- 34 • Records relating to Juveniles are confidential by law and may not be disclosed without a
- 35 court order or as permitted by law. Records shall be kept as confidential and stored in a
- 36 secure location. The JFS program may report back to the referring agency as to the
- 37 Juvenile's successful completion of the program if permitted by court order or
- 38 applicable law.

40 NOTIFICATION:

- 41 • When Department personnel respond to an incident scene and determine that a
- 42 Juvenile may be involved in starting a fire, setting off an alarm (maliciously), or involved
- 43 in the use of improvised explosive devices and/or fireworks, the Incident Commander
- 44 shall stay on the scene and gather as much information as possible, such as contact
- 45 information of suspects, including Juveniles and any witnesses, and shall request police
- 46 to respond to the scene and notify the On-Call Fire Marshal.
- 47 ○ Information collected and passed on to responding police and the On-Call Fire
- 48 Marshal includes, but is not limited to:
 - 49 ▪ A description of the incident
 - 50 ▪ Age of the Juvenile or Juveniles involved
 - 51 ▪ If the juvenile's family has been contacted
- 52
- 53 • **Field-level intervention is prohibited.**
- 54 ○ Behavior that could be misconstrued as interrogating a Juvenile shall be avoided.
- 55
- 56 • Phone calls or inquiries concerning Juveniles playing with fire or staging false alarms
- 57 shall be directed to the Office of the Fire Marshal.
- 58 ○ Citizens may contact the JFS Hotline at 410-313-OJFS (0537).

59 REFERENCES

- 60 • None

61 SUMMARY OF DOCUMENT CHANGES

- 62 Convert to new G.O. template
- 63 General revisions, format changes, etc.
- 64 Added reference to JFS Hotline

65 FORMS/ATTACHMENTS

- 66 • None
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APPROVED

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Author:

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Uhlhorn", written over a horizontal line.

Christine M. Uhlhorn, Fire Chief
Office of the Fire Chief

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Wallace", written over a horizontal line.

Gordon Wallace, Assistant Chief
Office of the Fire Marshal