



January 2015 Newsletter

The Fire Scene and Freezing Temperatures

Anyone who has ever experienced investigating a fire scene in the winter can tell you that it presents different challenges and hazards than scenes processed in warmer months. Unfortunately, frozen fire scenes can result in delayed investigations and destruction of evidence if not properly handled.

The best solution is to process the scene as soon as possible. The earlier a scene examination can occur after suppression the better. As a wet scene sits, the waterlogged debris becomes gradually frozen. A two-day-old scene may only have an outer crust of frozen debris and is easily loosened up. A two-week-old scene will require thawing.

If a scene cannot be processed right away, measures can be taken to preserve it. Tarping of a structure or debris pile will keep snow from piling on and penetrating the debris. Tarping piles of debris are known to be preserved for over a week without freezing solid. The same thing goes for appliances and vehicles that may be involved in the loss. In some cases, debris that has been overhauled can be collected into bins for safekeeping and easier processing.

If a scene or vehicle is frozen, it will require thawing for proper inspection and processing. This may involve moving the item or vehicle into a warm environment. Structures may require that the heating system be put back into service, if available, or supplemental heating units brought in. If the area is small enough, a ground blanket may be used to thaw it.

As always, Herndon and Associates will provide the best and most cost effective investigation for your loss no matter the weather.

Congratulations to the New MAPC President!

The Michigan Arson Prevention Committee (MAPC) has nominated a new president! Congratulations Walter Herndon on your new role with MAPC! Herndon and Associates would like to thank Tom Riley, the past president, for all his hard work with the committee. We look forward to what the future has to hold. To learn more about MAPC, click [here](#).

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