PREMISE: All firefighters have a right to work in the safest environment possible. However, accidents do and will occur. When accidents occur it is necessary to review the facts to determine if there are defects in the total system, if there may be multiple causes for the accident, and to identify the appropriate methods to improve the system.

A careful review of accidents and the resultant information, clearly presented, will provide a clear picture of the more common causes of injuries, as well as the measures necessary to prevent their recurrence.

PURPOSE: The primary purpose of an accident review is to gather information about and develop a solution to the problem so that it doesn't happen again. The emphasis of any accident review should be "fact finding, not fault finding".

The accident review should identify the "root cause" of the accident and make recommendations on how to improve the system not place blame on any individual(s) or agency (ies).

SCOPE: The Accident Review Policy will apply to all Pennington County fire departments that are covered by workman's compensation insurance provided for by the Pennington County Fire Service Board.

HISTORY: Original Issue: August 14, 1996
Revised: October 9, 2013

OPERATING PRACTICE:

1. Accident Review Committee:
   A. The Accident Review Committee (ARC) shall consist of the following members appointed by the Chairperson of the Fire Service Board.
      1. Three members from the Fire Service Board appointed in January of each year.
      2. Pennington County Fire Administrator, non-voting.
      3. If the ARC determines that the conditions of a specific incident which is under review warrant, they may select one member from outside the fire service who possesses "expert" knowledge which directly relates to the incident. This member shall be non-voting and his/her appointment will automatically expire upon completion of the incident review.
      4. If the incident under review involves an agency to which an ARC member is also a member, that ARC member shall be disqualified in participating in the review. In this case, the FSB Chairperson shall appoint an alternate
ARC member to participate in the review. This alternate member’s appointment shall automatically expire upon completion of the incident review.

2. Accident’s to be reviewed:
   A. All First Reports of Injuries will be forwarded to the ARC for their review using the following guidelines:
      1. Accidents that do not require medical attention, the ARC generally will not review nor make recommendations.
      2. Accidents that require on site medical attention, the ARC may review and may make recommendations.
      3. Accidents that require medical attention by a hospital emergency room, medical clinic, physician assistant or medical doctor, the ARC will review and make appropriate recommendation(s) and/or identify the appropriate method(s) to prevent recurrence.

3. Review Procedure:
   A. The ARC’s written review will not include names of the firefighter(s) or agency (ies) involved nor will it find blame for the accident.
   B. The ARC should include, but not limited to, the following items:
      1. Practices
         a. developed but not followed;
         b. developed but not trained on;
         c. developed but not understood;
         d. developed but not accurate;
         e. developed but unable to follow; or
         f. in place at all.
      2. Hazards
         a. created by man;
         b. created by external factors;
         c. documented but not repaired;
         d. unidentified;
         e. repaired but not correctly;
         f. conditions changed without proper communications; or
         g. lack of documentation.
3. Facilities/Equipment
   a. faulty equipment;
   b. poor design;
   c. corrosion/wear;
   d. ergonomic factors;
   e. improper use; or
   f. improper/nonexistent.

4. Communications
   a. insufficient planning;
   b. breakdown between firefighter's and/or officers;
   c. communications not understood or unclear;
   d. confusion after communications; or
   e. conflicting communications.

5. Training
   a. not addressed in training;
   b. developed but not followed;
   c. developed but not trained;
   d. developed but not understood;
   e. developed but not accurate; or
   f. developed but unable to follow.

6. Other factors
   a. weather/temperature;
   b. non-fire personnel; or
   c. terrain

4. Review Recommendations:
   A. All recommendations by the ARC shall be in writing.
   B. All recommendations shall first be presented to the Fire Service Board.
   C. Names and other personal information shall not be used in the written review.
   D. After the ARC’s recommendations/review has been accepted by the FSB, copies of their report shall be circulated to all departments/agencies that are subject to this SOP for the purpose of preventing reoccurrence.
   E. The purpose shall be three fold:
      1. inform departments of the potential need for additional safety training;
      2. inform departments of the potential need to make operational changes based on the facts involved in the incident; and
      3. inform firefighters about the action taken to protect their safety and health.