REPORT WRITING POLICY

Town of Menasha Fire Department Effective January 2010
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Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to provide the expectations of items that should appear in a well written fire incident or first responder EMS report.

Characteristics:

A. All Fire Department reports shall be entered into the Records Management System aka, FireHouse (RMS) by the Incident Commander for fire reports or first arriving first responder for EMS reports, so that they will always be typewritten. Fire investigation reports should be entered into the RMS by the Lead Fire Investigator or typed so that the data entry clerk may enter it into the system.

B. Department incident reports must be completed within five (5) days of the call. Failure to do so will result in progressive discipline.

C. All department reports shall be written in standard type style with initial caps when appropriate and lower case letters for other words.

D. The content of a well-written report is that it is factual, accurate, objective and complete.


F. The form of a well written report is: concise, clear, mechanically correct, written in standard English, and legible.

Narrative Structure:

A. The opening paragraph should set the stage. Give the date, time, how you became involved and the type of incident.

B. The next paragraph(s) contain what you were told by the victim(s) or witness(es). For each person talked to, use a separate paragraph.

C. Next, record your assessment of the incident which would include but not limited to: initial scene size-up, individual crew actions/assignments, assistance of mutual/automatic aid resources, any injuries to persons and/or property damage or loss, or any other information that would be pertinent to the incident.
D. The final paragraph states the disposition of the incident.

E. At the end of the report indicate your unit number, rank and last name.

F. Avoid using personnel identification numbers. Personnel names should be used in place of identification numbers.

**Using Names and Courtesy Titles:**

When using names and courtesy titles in a report, remember the following:

A. Use a person’s full name the first time; after that, use only the last name unless more than one person with the same last name is included in the report.

B. If two or more individuals having the same last name are included in the report, use their first initial and last name.

C. Do not keep repeating the person’s name, use pronouns.

D. Do not use courtesy titles unless there is a specific reason (i.e. Mr., Mrs. Ms., officer).

**Example of a Report Narrative:**

On 9/7/2009 at about 11:50 hours, Engine 41 was dispatched to a car fire at the intersection of Midway Road and Earl Street. Upon arrival at 11:56 hours, we were met by the car’s owner and driver, Norman Smith. The fire was extinguished at 12:10 hours.

Smith said he’s been experiencing some electrical problems with the vehicle, a 1992 Dodge Caravan. He had taken it to the dealership two days earlier for servicing and had picked it up that morning after the service department stated they had corrected the problem. He was on his way home when he noticed smoke coming from the dash. He pulled over, exited the vehicles and called 9-1-1 on his cell phone.

Smith was uninjured but visibly shaken. The vehicle, which was adequately insured, was a complete loss. Furthermore,
Smith, a salesman had just filled his van with sales samples which were also destroyed by the fire.

After investigating other possible sources of ignition, the fire was ruled to be caused by faulty wiring in the vehicles dashboard.