Unit Objectives:

- Describe why accurate fire cause determination is important.
- Understand the basic responsibilities of a first responder.
- List the recommended equipment for a first responder.

Unit at a Glance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why do we investigate wildland fires?</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>5 Minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your role as a first responder to protect the scene.</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>5 Minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic responsibilities</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>5 Minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommended equipment to have available.</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>5 Minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Check/Review</td>
<td>Class discussion</td>
<td>5 Minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Unit Duration</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>25 Minutes</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Materials:

- Notebook for participants.
- Ability to display images and video on large screen.
- White board or easel access for group breakout.
Slide 1
Slide 2

### Objectives

1. Describe why accurate fire cause determination is important.
2. Understand the basic responsibilities of a first responder.
3. List the recommended equipment for a first responder.

- Review unit objectives.
- Ask students why they might think fire investigation is important based on this photograph.
- Provide background on this image as noted below.
  - Waldo Canyon fire 2012, Colorado Springs, Colorado, USA.
  - Resulted in insurance claims totaling more than U.S. $453.7 million.
  - Two fatalities.
  - 346 homes destroyed by the fire.

**Note to Instructor**
Your agency will have similar events to describe. Utilize this opportunity to discuss one.
Fire suppression agencies investigate wildland fires to determine the origin and cause:

- To gather information and validate statistical data to support fire prevention programs.
- For pursuit of criminal and/or civil prosecution.
- For state/federal/provincial penalties.

Why do we investigate wildland fires?

If we understand what starts fires, we can work towards preventing them, through engineering, education, and enforcement.

For civil: insurance and cost recovery.

For state/federal/provincial penalties: resulting in violation tickets, monetary fines, or court appearances.
Fire suppression agencies investigate wildland fires to determine the origin and cause:

- Accurate determination of origin and cause is very important.
- All staff have a direct and indirect responsibility to provide knowledge and share the data obtained that will support an investigation.

Discuss how photos, accurate timelines, and other observations support an investigation.

- All staff would include the initial attack crew leader, the Incident Commander (IC), the responding officer, etc.
Your role:

- To protect possible ignition sources and evidence from suppression activities once the site is safe, fire spread has been contained, and appropriate resources are available.
Your basic responsibilities are to:

- Record observations en route and upon your arrival at a fire scene.
- Photograph and document the fire scene.
- Identify and protect the general origin area.
- Identify and protect physical evidence.
- Document potential witness information.
- Take and document on-scene weather readings.

There are six basic responsibilities. Of these six, the last five will be discussed in detail in Unit 3: Arrival at the Fire Scene. Recognize the five tasks to be performed upon arrival to a wildland fire.
Recommended equipment for first responders:

- Note-taking materials
- Camera/smartphone
- Compass
- Belt weather kit or digital weather instrument
- Flagging
- GPS unit

Most of this equipment will already be in your vehicle or office. It’s recommended these items be put into an equipment or gear bag for easy access.

- **Note-taking materials:** Used for accurate sketches, reference points, witness names, documenting exact times of significant events, etc.
- **Digital Cameras:** Don’t delete any photos. Store on your agency’s digital network.
- **Compass:** Ensure declination is documented.
- **Belt weather kit:** A digital weather instrument will also be sufficient. Take a reading upon arrival. Record your observations.
- **Digital weather instrument:** Reference in your notes what was used to obtain your observations.
- **Flagging tape:** Recommend yellow ribbon/flagging where possible. Used to mark key locations of evidence and/or block off areas to restrict vehicle traffic or human activity.
- **GPS:** Ensure you take a GPS reading as a reference point near the general origin area to provide an accurate location for further follow-up. Ensure datum is documented.
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- Review unit objectives.