



City Council Staff Report

Subject: Establishment of a Fire and Arson Investigation Unit

Date: February 24, 2026

Submitted By: Ryan Brayton, Deputy Fire Chief
Reginald Williams, Fire Chief

Department: Fire

Recommendation:

Introduce, Waive the Full Reading and Read By Title Only, an Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Rocklin Establishing a Fire and Arson Investigation Unit Within the Rocklin Fire Department and Authorizing Designated Personnel to Exercise Peace Officer Powers Pursuant to California Penal Code Section 830.37.

Background:

The City of Rocklin Fire Department conducts fire prevention, fire code enforcement, and fire and arson investigations within the city, including investigations of suspected arson and related criminal activity. These investigative functions have historically been performed in coordination with the Rocklin Police Department and in accordance with applicable state law.

California Penal Code Section 830.37 expressly recognizes members of an arson-investigating unit regularly employed by a City fire department as peace officers when their primary duty is the detection and apprehension of persons who have violated fire laws or committed insurance fraud. Under Penal Code Section 830.37, peace officer authority is limited to the performance of assigned duties, extends statewide for those purposes, and does not confer general law enforcement authority.

The Rocklin Fire Department took steps to professionalize and formalize its fire and arson investigation function by ensuring designated personnel complete Department of Justice background investigations and the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) prescribed training under Penal Code Section 832.

In January 2023, the City formally established a Fire and Arson Investigation Unit within the Rocklin Fire Department for administrative and operational purposes. Since that time, fire and arson investigations have continued to be conducted in coordination with the Rocklin Police Department and allied law enforcement partners, including information sharing and investigative support consistent with state and federal requirements.

While Penal Code section 830.37 provides limited peace officer authority, access to criminal justice information systems such as the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS) is governed by separate administrative requirements established by the California Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation Criminal Justice Information Services Division. In order for a fire department arson investigation unit to qualify for direct access to these systems, the unit must be formally established by City Council action and assigned an Originating Agency Identifier (ORI) through the Department of Justice.

The Rocklin Municipal Code does not currently contain express language establishing a Fire and Arson Investigation Unit or designating the unit as a criminal justice/law enforcement sub-unit for these administrative purposes. Adoption of the proposed ordinance is therefore recommended to provide the required formal authorization. The ordinance provides the documentation necessary to support issuance of an ORI by the Department of Justice and to enable compliant access to criminal justice information systems.

The ordinance does not expand the authority, duties, or operational scope of the Fire Department. Adoption of the ordinance provides the formal City Council authorization required to support the establishment of an ORI, a requirement to enable direct CLETS access in compliance with state and federal requirements and provides administrative clarity while continuing the Fire Department's fire and arson investigation mission.

Environmental Analysis:

The proposed ordinance is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060 and 15378 of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, providing that organizational or administrative activities of the City are not projects for purposes of CEQA as this organizational change will not result in a direct physical change nor cause an indirect physical change to the environment.

Fiscal Impact:

There is no fiscal impact to the General Fund from the staff recommendation.

ATTACHMENTS:

[1. Ordinance](#)