



Northeast Fire Department Standard Operating Procedures

Driving department owned vehicles

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Purpose

The Northeast Volunteer Fire Department is dedicated to saving life and property. It is imperative that we do not endanger the lives of our firefighters and the public by unsafe driving of fire equipment. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that each member knows the safe operation of all emergency equipment during emergency and non-emergency operations.

General Driving

- A. All traffic laws and rules shall be adhered to while driving under normal conditions.
- B. Seat belts will be worn at all times without exception.
- C. Defensive driving principles should be adhered to at all times.
- D. Extreme care should be shown when backing a vehicle. If possible, avoid backing a vehicle even if it requires circling a block. A back-up guide must be used at all times when backing a vehicle.
- E. It shall be the responsibility of the driver to operate the vehicle in such a manner as to arrive at the destination safely and without incident. Those who disregard safe driving practices shall be subject to disciplinary procedures.

Zero Tolerance

Under no circumstances shall a member of this department respond to the station or any emergency call under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If a member is suspected of being under the influence disciplinary actions will be followed.

Emergency Driving

- A. When responding to emergencies, drivers will drive the vehicle to the scene of the emergency safely and sanely. It is the duty of the driver to arrive safely at destination. The driver shall be in control of the vehicle at all times.

- B. Seat belts shall be worn when the Fire Department apparatus is in motion. Officers and Drivers are responsible for the safety of all riders. However, it is also the individual firefighter or riders responsibility to wear seat belts at all times. It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that all passengers are buckled prior to putting the apparatus in motion.
- C. Special caution is required when approaching intersections or when proceeding into any right-of-way situation. In these situations, the vehicle shall be driven at such a speed that will allow the driver to bring the vehicle to a complete stop before entering the intersection or right-of-way area.
- D. When passing schools, hospitals, through crowded streets or congested traffic, the driver shall cause the Fire Department vehicle to be slowed to a speed consistent with safety. Driving that endangers life or property is strictly forbidden.

Emergency Warning Lights

- A. Emergency warning lights will be used on all emergency runs with active fire or rescue. Except members who cannot drive code 3. These calls will include:
 - Structure fires
 - Shed fire
 - Vehicle fires
 - Grass/Brush fires
 - Accident with injury (if requested by the city)
 - High water rescue
 - Tank battery fire
 - Shuttling water if the need is urgent

Non-Emergency

- A. Emergency warning lights will not be used for:
 - Public service fire with no active fire
 - Down powerlines if there is no active arching or fire
 - Fire alarm's
 - Spills
 - Gas Leaks
 - Control burns

Racing

Racing department vehicles is strictly prohibited.

Excessive Speed

It shall be the officer's responsibility to prevent excessive speed or unsafe driving practices. Officers who permit drivers to disregard safe driving practices will be subject to disciplinary action. Excessive speed is defined as any speed above safe driving practices. In no case will speed exceed 10 miles per hour above posted speed limits with weather conditions considered.

Apparatus in reverse

A. Officer's/Passengers Responsibility

It is the officer's/passenger's responsibility to post a ground guide to assist the driver in backing.

B. Driver's Responsibility

It is the driver's responsibility to always keep ground guide in view and to follow guide's directions.

Operation on scenes

While on the fire ground, apparatus will be operated in accordance with Department SOG and manufacturer's recommendations in regard to spotting, positioning, checking wheels, etc.

Non-Emergency Driving

Drivers of Department vehicles shall obey all traffic laws when on non-emergency calls or returning to the station. All Fire Department vehicles, except when making an emergency run, shall leave and return to stations following the line of traffic.

Drivers Eligibility

Drivers of any Department vehicle must have a valid Texas Driver's License on his/her person at all times and readily display such license when called upon to do so by any Peace Officer. In order to operate Department equipment personnel must secure exempt status Class-B and must be 21 years of age with completed courses.

Courtesy

Drivers of Fire Department vehicles shall observe and practice all the rules of courteous driving.

Vehicle Accident Policy

A vehicle accident shall be defined as any and all occurrences in which damage is done to public and/or private property or persons and involving Fire Department vehicular equipment. If the vehicle accident results in bodily injury or \$500.00 or more in property damage (as determined by the police or Fire Officer who investigates the accident), in addition to filing Fire Department injury report all applicable sections of Department "Drug and/or Alcohol Testing of Applicants and Members" shall be observed.

Accident Review Board

An accident review will be conducted for all events that cause injury; near miss accidents that could have caused significant damage; and/or any accident causes significant equipment damage, (\$500.00 or more). Generally, accident reviews are conducted internally and do not involve outside agencies or personnel from other agencies. An Accident Review Board will consist of the following personnel. Fire Chief, Assistant Chief and 2 Captains.

- The process for review of an accident begins immediately after the accident occurrence. The immediate supervisor for the individual involved is responsible for beginning the review process.

An Accident Review will be initiated for any of the following types of incidents.

- A. Any motor vehicle accident involving a department-owned/operated vehicle.
- B. An accident resulting in injury or death to any party.
- C. An accident causing damage to equipment or vehicles in the amount of \$500.00 or more.
- D. A “near-miss” accident that could have caused injury or substantial damage

All Department Personnel shall immediately report the occurrence of any of the above situations to his/her immediate supervisor. If the immediate supervisor is involved, the report goes to the next higher supervisor in the chain of command.

An accident review is begun by the Accident Review Board for any accident that is of the type described above. An Accident Review Form is initiated upon receipt of report of an accident. This form will be used throughout the review process and may be completed by several different persons.

In the event more than one person is injured in an accident, a separate form is completed for each person. This allows for detailed examination of contributing factors associated with individual injuries.

The main priority at any accident is the care for any injured people.

Reporting procedures for an injury on department time must be followed. These are addressed in a separate policy.

An Officer must be notified in the event of any accident resulting in injury to any person.

The Officer will also be notified if any of the above type accidents occur.

The Officer will notify the Chief Officer in the event of a serious injury, particularly one that requires emergency attention at a hospital.