

PURPOSE

To outline the department's procedures and expectations for use of District vehicles. (Reference SOG 4-1-10 regarding Emergency Vehicle Response).

SCOPE

This policy applies to all District personnel.

RESPONSIBILITY

1. The Fire Chief shall assign District vehicles to individuals, stations, and/or specific functions in the best interest of the District.
2. Vehicle assignments may change at any time to accommodate District business needs.

POLICY

The use of vehicles creates special responsibilities for all employees or volunteers of the District. Vehicle operators have the responsibility to operate vehicles in a safe, lawful and skillful manner, and shall at all times give the highest priority to the safety and welfare of the general public. Operators shall obey all laws and District policies pertaining to operation of District vehicles.

Legal constraints for the operation of emergency vehicles are provided in the Oregon Revised Statutes. All volunteers and employees of the District will operate emergency vehicles in accordance with these statutes. Operators shall familiarize themselves with ORS 820.300 - 820.320, with particular attention to ORS 820.300 (2) (a) and (b).

QUALIFICATION AND LICENSURE

Operators shall not operate a District vehicle unless they are qualified and authorized to do so, and are in possession of a valid Oregon driver's license with the proper license classification.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees and volunteers assigned to operate District vehicles are responsible for the safe operation, care and condition of such motor equipment.

GENERAL

Drivers, under the supervision of their Shift Commander, shall be responsible for the condition and operation of their assigned apparatus, and they will be held accountable for its readiness and compliance to all procedures set forth for apparatus and equipment maintenance.

Each member of the District who drives vehicles must meet the following standards:

- a. Possess a valid Oregon driver's license and be insurable by the District.
- b. If corrective lenses are required by a Department of Motor Vehicles vision test, secure and maintain a pair of safety glasses prescribed to give normal vision in both eyes. If glasses are required, they will be worn at all times while driving District vehicles.
- c. Pass the certification examination required by the department for Drivers.
- d. Provide proof of current auto insurance.

Emergency Runs:

State law requires that any emergency apparatus have both siren sounding and emergency lights on when responding to an emergency code 3.

Apparatus headlights will be used in conjunction with the emergency lights.

Driving Apparatus and Ambulances on Streets:

Except when passing in response to an emergency, drive near oncoming, but not across the centerline, in order to give oncoming drivers an opportunity to see apparatus emergency warning lights.

Speed of Apparatus and Ambulances:

Caution shall be observed at all times. Use the basic rule; lights and sirens do not give you the right-of-way. Keep complete control of your apparatus at all times. Apparatus shall not exceed the posted speed limit unless it is reasonably believed that there is a life threatening medical emergency or hostile fire occurring. Second and third due units should respond code one

unless there is reasonable suspicion that a life threatening illness or injury or hostile fire is present. Water tenders should respond code one to all fires unless response is impeded by traffic traveling slower than the posted speed limit.

Crossing Controlled Intersections:

When responding to an emergency and a traffic control is against you (red), your vehicle shall be slowed and stopped if necessary until all traffic that is proceeding on a green light become aware that you are signaling them for the right-of-way and the traffic has stopped to let the District vehicle proceed through the intersection.

Upon Approaching a Stop Sign:

Department vehicles shall be slowed and shall not proceed until all other vehicles yield the right-of-way. If a siren and red light do not receive the right-of-way, you shall not take it arbitrarily - under any conditions.

Blind Corners and Dangerous Intersections:

Upon approaching an intersection, reduce speed and make sure that the vehicle can be stopped if necessary; then proceed with caution.

Apparatus Sirens:

Apparatus sirens shall be sounded when responding to emergencies code 3. The State law requires that sirens must be heard in order for an emergency driver to be protected by law. Air horns may be used in conjunction with sirens. An air horn however, is not a legal emergency warning device and should not be used to the exclusion of a siren.

Through Streets:

Apparatus responding to an emergency should use through streets as much as possible. This will increase response and reduce the chance of accidents.

Other Emergency Apparatus:

When approaching intersections, be alert for other emergency vehicles responding to the same alarm. REMEMBER, SAFETY FIRST ALWAYS.

Riding Apparatus:

No one except members of the Department, paid or volunteer, shall be permitted to ride any fire apparatus without permission of the Fire Chief, or in his absence, the Deputy Chief of Operations, or a Shift Commander. A liability release form must be completed prior to the ride.

SEAT BELTS

Seat belts shall be worn at all times a District vehicle is in motion. Exceptions exist for medical personnel treating a patient in the back of an ambulance.

IDENTIFICATION

All vehicles owned by the District shall bear external identification indicating that they are property of the District.

OPERATION BY CIVILIANS

Only District employees or volunteers shall be permitted to drive District-owned vehicles, except for purposes of mechanical maintenance or technical evaluation.

TRANSPORTATION OF CIVILIANS PROHIBITED; EXCEPTIONS

Operators of District vehicles shall not transport civilians or other unauthorized persons in or on Fire District vehicles except as authorized by a superior officer, in an official capacity, or as provided in this policy.

1. Emergency Vehicles. Only District employees or volunteers shall be allowed in or on the District's emergency vehicles. Civilians are not permitted to be in or on District emergency vehicles, except when such civilians are:
 - a. Directly involved with an alarm or emergency.
 - b. Participating in an authorized ride-along program with proper forms recorded.
 - c. Acting as mutual-aid personnel.

-
- d. Participating in a scheduled and approved public relations program.
2. Staff Vehicles. Civilians are not permitted to travel in District staff vehicles, except when such civilians are:
 - a. Accompanying a District employee to an official District function located outside District's boundaries.
 - b. Directly involved in the transaction of District business.
 - c. Transported in the course of District business.
 - d. In response to a public assistance call.
 - e. Accompanying a District employee who is driving to work and/or driving home from work.
 - f. Participating in a ride-along program.
 - g. Authorized to ride by the Fire Chief or Deputy Chief of Operations.

PERSONAL USE PROHIBITED

District vehicles shall be used only in the course of official District business, and not for personal business or private gain.

USE OF STAFF VEHICLES

Staff vehicles are to be used only for the following purposes:

1. Transportation to and from emergency scenes.
2. Transportation to and from approved schools, seminars and meetings.
3. Other District business as approved by the Duty Officer or Fire Chief.
4. Use as allowed by employment contract.

VEHICLE USE OUTSIDE DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

District-owned vehicles are not to leave the District other than on official District business, for maintenance purposes or mutual-aid response, unless prior authorization is received from the Fire Chief.

ASSIGNMENT

The Fire Chief shall provide for the assignment of vehicles. Employees must be cognizant of their high visibility and the potential damage to the public trust

if misuse occurs. Violation of this policy or any misuse of District vehicles shall result in disciplinary action.

RADIO USE

Unless authorized by a supervisor, operators assigned to a District vehicle equipped with a radio shall maintain the radio on the appropriate frequency, and shall not turn the radio off while operating the vehicle except when responding to situations involving explosive devices believed to be electrically or electronically activated.

SIGNS AND DECALS

Employees are prohibited from applying or placing any signs, decals, posters, insignia, bumper stickers, window stickers or any other items on District vehicles, unless authorized by the Fire Chief.

APPROPRIATE VEHICULAR SPEED

When practical, all travel in District vehicles shall be at the designated road speed or less. When traffic conditions make such speeds impractical, the vehicle shall be operated in accordance with the general flow of traffic.

VEHICLE OPERATION CODES

District vehicles shall be operated in strict conformance with all the provisions as set forth below: (Code 1)

1. Non-Emergency. Assignments which are not urgent. Units on such calls shall comply with all traffic laws.
2. Emergency. Emergency assignments where there is a danger or threat of danger to life or property. These calls require all practical haste. Response to these calls shall be made with the emergency lights and siren in operation at all times. The lights and siren must be employed when the operator chooses to take advantage of the exemptions granted to an emergency vehicle, such as proceeding past a red signal or exceeding the speed limit. The vehicle shall not be operated in excess of the safe speed for the conditions present and shall not endanger persons or property. Operators must remember that the use of emergency equipment does not relieve them of the responsibility for the consequences of such operation. (Code 3)
1. Exemptions. Exemption from certain provisions of the Traffic Code

does not relieve the operator of an emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due care for the safety of all persons using the roads, nor do the exemptions protect them from the consequences of exercising such privileges. See ORS 820.300(2)(a-b).

REPORTING AND INVESTIGATING ACCIDENTS

When any District vehicle is involved in an accident resulting in property damage or injury to any person, the following procedures shall be observed:

1. The operator shall immediately report such fact to the Dispatcher and to the operator's supervisor; remain at the scene until a police report is made in the case of a fatality, injury, extensive damage, or damage that renders a vehicle inoperative; and not move any vehicle until authorized by a supervisor unless non-removal creates an undue hazard. In those cases where the vehicle(s) suffer only minor damage, citizens should not be delayed any longer than is necessary to exchange the required information. The operator shall promptly complete the individual accident report, and file any other reports as requested by the supervisor.
2. The supervisor shall respond to the scene, and ensure that a police investigation is conducted; submit independent reports and complete all forms as appropriate; and report all findings and conclusions to the Fire Chief.

MAINTENANCE OF VEHICLES

Operators shall be responsible for the proper maintenance of any vehicle assigned to them. This service shall include fuel, oil, water, tire check, wash windshield, and clean the interior of the vehicle of debris and clutter. All vehicles shall have routine maintenance as required, including lubrication, oil and filter changes, tire changes, and other preventative maintenance measures. The operator shall complete the necessary forms and documents in a timely manner.

REPAIR OF VEHICLES

When a vehicle is found to be inoperative or unsafe to use due to damage, mechanical failure, or normal wear, the operator to which the vehicle is assigned shall submit (on the proper District forms) a report on the condition of the vehicle to the operator's supervisor as soon as time permits. No employee or volunteer shall attempt to repair any District vehicle unless authorized by a supervisor.

USE OF PERSONAL VEHICLES

All employees must have the specific approval of the Fire Chief before using their own or other privately owned vehicle for District business. The District provides liability insurance for employees for the acts in which they become involved. However, employees and volunteers must be advised that they must provide coverage for privately owned vehicles. Employees who use their personal vehicles for District business shall provide a vehicle which is in good repair. Campers and motorcycles shall not be used when conducting investigations or representing the District. When responding to a fire in a private vehicle, all traffic laws shall be complied with. See SOP 2-6-2.

CHAINS AND STUDED TIRES

As the weather may dictate, or November 1st through April 25th of each year, studs will be required on all district vehicles except fire apparatus.

When in the opinion of an officer or firefighter, chains are needed on vehicles, they shall be installed.