



## MASON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT #4

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TITLE: VEHICLE SAFETY STANDARDS

CHAPTER: 4000 NUMBER: 4100 DATE: 10-07-2008

APPROVED: Signature on file Bob Burbridge, Chief

1. **PURPOSE:** To ensure drivers of Mason County Fire District #4 vehicles are well-trained, in good physical condition, have a proper safe driver attitude, and are capable of handling the apparatus with a high degree of skill and common sense. These factors show that not everybody will qualify as a fire district driver. Many personnel who do not qualify as a driver and excel in other fire district duties and should not feel discouraged because they are not a driver.
2. **RESPONSIBILITIES:** It is the responsibility of each individual member to ensure they are in compliance with this guideline. It is the responsibility of the Fire Chief to enforce this guideline.
3. **GUIDELINE:**
  - 3.1 Driver's Requirements
    - A. Personnel shall **NOT** drive a district vehicle under emergency conditions (priority) prior to being authorized by the Fire Chief or designee. Personnel under 21 years of age shall **NOT** drive a district vehicle under emergency conditions (priority) unless authorized by the Fire Chief.
    - B. Personnel between 18 and 21 years of age may drive staff and support vehicles routine, after successfully completing all training requirements and being authorized by the Fire Chief or designee.
    - C. All personnel driving district owned vehicles and privately owned vehicles on fire district business shall possess and maintain a valid Washington State Driver's license and vehicle insurance coverage.
    - D. All drivers of district vehicles shall possess and maintain a valid Washington State Driver's license, vehicle liability insurance coverage, and Emergency Vehicle Accident Prevention (EVAP) certification card or equivalent.
    - E. The Fire Chief or designee shall be notified in writing within seven (7) days whenever a district driver is without a license or insurance.
    - F. The district shall conduct a Motor Vehicle Records (MVR) check annually for approximately one-third 1/3 of all district personnel, using the Driver's Evaluation



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Point System to determine personnel driving status. The Fire Chief or designee shall review MVRs and recommend corrective action when needed scores total five (5) or more. Any disciplinary action recommended shall strictly follow the district's disciplinary guideline

- G. An MVR check shall be conducted by the District for all new applications (career and volunteer) any applicant with a score of seven (7) or more shall be denied.

### Driver's Certification

All fire fighters and personnel involved in fire suppression or emergency medical responses will be required upon completion of probation to complete Driver Certification on certain district apparatus.

- A. District apparatus are divided into three (3) categories:

#### **Level One:**

Light Apparatus, (2 X 4 and 4 X 4) cars, vans, and trucks less than one ton

#### **Level Two:**

Medium Apparatus, (2 X 4 and 4 X 4) one and two ton

#### **Level Three:**

Heavy Apparatus, (2 X 4, 4 X 4, 6 X 6) over one ton

- B. New personnel will start with level one and work their way up through level three, completing a Mason County Fire District #4 VFIS insurance packet for each level.
- C. The training officer will oversee the Driver training program and assign Officers to the trainees.
- D. Former firefighters or lateral transfers with prior driving experience may challenge Level One and Two, via road test, but must complete Level Three. They must have a valid EVAP card on file. Of note, they must obtain an updated card before they drive on emergencies.
- E. Once signed by the Chief of the District, all Driver Certification Packets will be placed in the individuals personnel file.

### Driver's Training

All drivers shall participate in an Emergency Vehicle Accident Prevention (EVAP) course accepted by Washington State Fire Service Training.



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- A. Recertification is required every four (4) years, to include review of this guideline; classroom instruction to improve driving skills; a road course and driving rodeo for each type of vehicle for which the driver is authorized; and a written evaluation.
- B. All drivers shall complete an annual check ride for each type of vehicle they are authorized to drive.
- C. All entry-level drivers shall complete a minimum of two (2) hours of road time for each type vehicle prior to authorization. All individual training hours will be kept in the member's training file.

### **Driver's Physical Condition**

- A. Mason County Fire District #4 drivers shall not drive any fire district vehicles under the following conditions:
  - 1) Having a history of the following, unless released and certified by a physician: heart attacks, strokes, fainting, seizures, sudden onset of sickness or disease.
  - 2) Under the influence of alcohol.
  - 3) Under the influence of any drug or substance that may impair the driver's ability for safe driving.

### **5.4 Apparatus Condition in Station**

- A. Seat belts shall be left in a position which will enable the next user to easily find and buckle the belt.
- B. Switches shall be left in the sequence pre-planned for the vehicle. The "Master Switch" may not be the single switch for all lighting.
- C. Manual shift transmissions shall be left in the neutral position. Automatic transmissions shall be left in the appropriate "park" position.

### **5.5 Before Response**

- A. All personnel shall be secured in seat belts prior to any district vehicle going into motion.
- B. Riding on vehicle tailboards and sideboards at anytime, including parades, etc. is prohibited.
- C. Personnel shall obey all traffic laws when responding to the station or to the emergency scene.

### **5.6 Pre-Planned Routes**



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- A. The emergency vehicle driver shall check the map and locate the given address and select the safest route prior to the emergency vehicle responding. The main factors to be considered are:
- 1) Location of facilities (and their entrances and exits).
  - 2) Events affecting traffic flow.
  - 3) Characteristics of local roads and streets.
  - 4) Road conditions. Operator must be informed – conditions can be noted on maps.

### **5.7 Use of Signaling Equipment**

- A. Headlights will be on any time the emergency vehicle is being driven. Headlights may be turned off when the vehicle is parked at the emergency scene at night to prevent blinding oncoming traffic.
- B. All fire district vehicles responding priority to an emergency shall use red lights. The siren shall be used when necessary to warn other drivers of the emergency nature of the situation, but in no case shall they be required to use audible signals while parked or standing. **Note: Both red lights and siren must be in use in order to have the right of way over any other non-emergency vehicles and pedestrians.**
- C. When an apparatus is at a location during an emergency, except when off the right-of-way, red emergency lights shall be left on. Traffic cones and/or flares shall be set when the situation warrants.

### **5.8 Response Speed**

- A. During an emergency response, any District owned emergency vehicle may exceed the maximum speed limits so long as life and property are not endangered. To ensure a safe response to emergencies, vehicles shall be operated with judgment rather than with speed.
- B. All vehicles responding shall use caution and shall keep safety in mind. Driving conditions, such as road, weather, lights, and traffic conditions, may dictate further reductions in speed. When not responding to alarms, all traffic laws shall be obeyed.
- C. Extreme caution must be used at **non-controlled intersections** and the right of way shall not automatically be assumed. Speed shall be dictated by traffic and weather conditions, and the emergency vehicle shall be under control and have the capability of stopping at any point in the intersection short of a collision.



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- D. When entering a **controlled intersection** which is controlled by a traffic signal or stop sign, and the signal is against the responding unit, the unit shall approach the intersection and reduce vehicle speed as required in order to stop if necessary at the intersection, and shall accelerate only after control of the intersection is assured. To clear the intersection safely, it may be necessary to stop at each obscured traffic lane on multi-lane streets.

### 5.9 Backing the Emergency Vehicle

- A. When backing an apparatus in any situation, a minimum of one person shall be stationed at the rear in a position to communicate with the driver and act as a guide. The guide shall be positioned at the left rear or right rear of the apparatus, as conditions dictate. If communications between the driver and the guide are lost, the driver shall bring the apparatus to an immediate halt. The apparatus shall remain stopped until communication between the driver and the guide is restored. If it is impossible to obtain a guide, and it is necessary to back the apparatus up, the driver shall get out of the apparatus and check the area prior to backing. Backing shall be done slowly. Drivers and guides shall use the standard signals for maneuvering apparatus. While backing engines in a non-lighted area, the rear spotlights will be directed to shine on the guides or to both sides of the vehicle.

### 5.10 Parking at Emergency Scenes

- A. All apparatus at emergencies shall be parked in such a manner that will permit as free a flow of traffic as possible, including fire District traffic, consistent with the emergency.
- B. When an apparatus is at an emergency location, except when off the right of way, red emergency lights shall be left on. Traffic cones or flares shall be set when the situation warrants. Headlights or bright white lights that could blind passing traffic may be turned off at night.
- C. Vehicles parked at the emergency scene should be positioned in a manner to protect personnel from oncoming traffic when the situation warrants.
- D. Wheel chocks shall be used at all incidents for Level Two and Three vehicles.

### 5.11 Miscellaneous

- A. Emergency vehicles shall **NOT** pass a school bus while the bus is displaying red flashing lights and/or stop paddle.



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- B. Drivers are not required to wear protective equipment (bunker gear) while driving a district vehicle; however, the gear must be readily accessible when arriving at the scene and must be put on before the driver performs any work. It is recommended that bunker boots and pants be worn as long as they do not interfere with the safe operation of the vehicle.
  
- C. Two wheel chocks shall be used at all incidents and should be used anytime Level Two and Three apparatus is parked other than in the engine bays.

### 5.12 Vehicle Accident Reporting

- A. The driver of a district vehicle involved in an accident is responsible for reporting all accidents and shall complete the required forms immediately following the accident or as soon as is practical.
  
- B. The Company Officer (or person in the right seat) of the vehicle involved shall assist the driver in completing the required forms and notifying the proper authorities through the dispatch center (Macecom) of the following information:
  - 1) Exact location and the nature of the accident (pedestrian, two-car accident, etc.)
  - 2) Number of injuries and assistance required (aid car, ALS, BLS, etc.)
  - 3) Request the Washington State Patrol or Mason County Sheriff and the Duty Officer and/or Chief Officer to the scene.

### 5.13 Accident forms

- A. Accident report forms are located in every vehicle and every station. They shall be filled out immediately after the accident and forwarded to the Fire Chief. Accidents involving a district vehicle on district property or damage to just district vehicles require completion of the Action Form.
  
- B. Accidents involving District vehicles and another vehicle require the following:
  - 1) Vehicle Accident Report (VFIS packet)



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- 2) Driver's Accident Information Kit
  - 3) Accident Report Form from any law enforcement agency
  - 4) When District personnel are injured, complete the Action Form describing the incident.
  - 5) District insurance accident form.
- 5.14 The Company Officer or Driver shall initiate an accident investigation that obtains the following information:
- 1) Names, addresses, and phone numbers of all parties involved and witnesses.
  - 2) If possible, obtain statements of witnesses.
  
  - 3) Names of insurance companies.
- 5.15 The unit involved will render assistance or aid to the injured.
- 5.16 The unit involved will continue response to the emergency under the following conditions.
- A. Assign one member (preferably the driver) to remain at the scene with a first aid kit to render assistance (minor injuries only) and initiate accident investigation.
  
  - B. Conduct a mechanical check of the apparatus to determine any damage incurred will not affect vehicle operation. (*Note: Special consideration should be given to brakes, steering, lights, radiators, etc.*)
- 5.17 Apparatus will be placed out of service under the following conditions:
- A. Serious injury or suspected death.
  - B. Serious damage to property (at the discretion of the officer).
  - C. Damage to fire district vehicle where, in the opinion of the officer, the vehicle could not safely continue response, i.e. damage to steering, brakes, lights, etc.
  - D. If the vehicle is not able to respond to the emergency, leave the vehicle in place until released by the Washington State Patrol or Mason County Sheriff.



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5.18 Safety Committee responsibilities are as follows:

- A. Establish an accident prevention program.
- B. Investigate all accidents.
- C. Convene an Accident Review Board.
- D. Observe and report unsafe practices.
- E. Recommend changes to the Fire Chief in procedures or equipment that would enhance the safety program.

5.19 Disciplinary Action

The District disciplinary procedures shall be applied whenever a driver violates the conditions of this guideline.