

# Grant County Fire Protection District 3

## POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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### TACTICAL ACTION GUIDELINES

1. NUMBER: 9.1.1
2. SUBJECT: ***Emergency Vehicle Driving Standards and Rules***
3. POLICY: Operating an emergency vehicle requires skill and experience beyond that which is normally acquired through the routine use and operation of motor vehicles. This Policy and Procedure outlines the responsibilities and requirements pertaining to all operators of the Districts apparatus and vehicles.
4. SCOPE: This Policy and Procedure is applicable to all personnel of Grant County Fire District 3.
5. RESPONSIBILITIES:
  - A. The District Fire Chief is responsible for ensuring that this Policy and Procedure is adhered to.
  - B. All personnel are responsible for complying with this Policy and Procedure.
6. PROCEDURE:
  - A. Volunteer Staff (Under 21) Operators Requirements:
    1. Due to the lack of general driving experience and considering the amount of training and related activities of a young member of an emergency service organization, all staff under the age of eighteen (18) should not be allowed to drive emergency vehicles under any circumstances.
    2. The trainee's driving of emergency vehicles shall be limited to training and non-emergency activities. Exception: If an emergency situation occurs and there is not a certified operator present at that time, and the trainee has been trained sufficiently and approved by the officer in charge to act in this capacity, the trainee may operate the vehicle during that emergency.
    3. Detailed training records shall be kept on all trainees during their training period. The training records should include, but not be limited to, hands-on experience and classroom time on theory, (4 (four) hours classroom/2 (two) hours "hands-on" minimum annually).
  - B. Career and Volunteer Staff (age 18 to 65) Operators Requirements:

Drivers should meet the following:

    1. All new candidates for, or existing operators of, emergency vehicles shall be subject to periodic medical evaluation as determined by the Board of

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Commissioners. The purpose of the physical examination is to determine if the candidate has the physical ability to adequately perform his or her duty as an operator of emergency vehicles.

2. All new drivers must complete the current state-mandated Emergency Vehicle training. After the initial training, all Grant County Fire District #3 Emergency Vehicle Operators must complete annual refresher training as outlined by the current state mandated training.
  3. New candidates should have sufficient hands-on training to effectively demonstrate their capability of handling emergency vehicles necessary to perform their duties, 2 (two) hours minimum.
  4. Experienced drivers should receive annual refresher training as determined by the current state mandated training.
  5. All candidates for operators of emergency vehicles shall meet the requirements of the Districts training program which is the current state mandated training from the Washington Fire Chiefs. The training program should include, but not be limited to, the following: Preventative Maintenance, Record Keeping, Legal Requirements, Defensive Driving and Unusual Circumstances Driving. Specific training in vehicle functions -- such as Vehicle Systems, Pumps, Tanks, Aerial Devices, Hydraulics, etc.
  6. A Department of Motor Vehicles check should be done on every trainee upon initial entry to the training phase and at the discretion of the District Fire Chief and/or Board of Commissioners on a case-by-case basis. This report is to be secured by the Washington State Department of Motor Vehicles by the District. This report should reflect not more than two (2) Class B and no Class A violations in a three (3) year period.
  7. The District's Driver Training Program and procedures should be based upon current recognized safety standards and policies as well as manufacturer's suggested procedures.
- C. Requirements for Vehicle Operators (age 65 and older) Operators Requirements: Drivers over age sixty-five (65) should not be permitted to drive emergency vehicles in emergency situations. If it is necessary for an individual over sixty-five (65) to operate emergency vehicles, the following must be adhered to:
1. Meet all requirements for operators in the twenty-one (21) to sixty-five (65) year class.
  2. An annual physical shall be completed by a licensed physician stating the operator is physically capable of driving an Emergency Vehicle in an emergency situation. A signed copy of the completed physical examination must be kept in the personnel file. The physical should include, but not be limited to, the following:
    - a. No impairment of the use of foot, leg, hand, arm or fingertips, or any other structural defect or limitation likely to interfere with safe driving.
    - b. Does not have diabetes mellitus to a degree presently requiring the

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- use of insulin for control.
  - c. Has no heart condition likely to cause loss of consciousness or sudden death.
  - d. Has no respiratory ailment likely to interfere with safe driving.
  - e. Has no arthritic, rheumatic, muscular or vascular condition which interferes with the ability to drive safely.
  - f. Does not have epilepsy or any other condition likely to cause sudden loss of consciousness or loss of ability to control a vehicle.
  - g. Has no mental, nervous, organic, or functional disease or any psychiatric condition likely to interfere with safe driving.
  - h. Must meet the following minimum vision requirements: At least 20/40 (Snellen) in each eye and in both eyes together, with or without glasses; at least seventy (70) degrees side vision in each eye; the ability to distinguish red, green, and yellow (or amber).
  - i. Meet hearing requirements by perceiving a forced whisper at five (5) feet with the better ear, or meet specified requirements as measured by a testing device, with or without a hearing aid.
  - j. Evaluate medication (if taken) to determine if any chemical impairment would result and interfere with their ability to operate an emergency vehicle.
  - k. Must not be diagnosed as an alcoholic.
  - 3. A copy of the Physicians Certificate will be sent to our current insurance carrier.
- D. Department of Motor Vehicles Transcript Evaluation Requirements:
- 1. Class A Violation:  
An individual who has had a Class A violation within the past three (3) years normally receives a license suspension from the Department of Motor Vehicles which issued the license. In addition, insurance carrier guidelines call for suspension of driving privileges for anyone convicted of a Class A violation for a period of eighteen (18) months. Additionally, any of these individuals would also be required to attend an approved driver-improvement program, or equivalent training, and be recertified to operate emergency vehicles.
  - 2. Class B Violation (age 21 - 65):
    - a. Any individual who has a combination of two (2) Class B moving violation convictions and/or chargeable accidents in a three (3) year period will be issued a warning letter from the chief officer or administrative officer of the District.
    - b. Any individual who has a combination of three (3) moving violation convictions and/or chargeable accidents in a three (3) year period will be issued a suspension of driving district vehicles for a period of ninety (90) days by the chief officer or administrative officer of the emergency service organization.
    - c. Any individual who has more than three (3) moving violation

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convictions or three (3) chargeable accidents or any combination of more than three (3) of the formerly stated violations in a three (3) year period will be issued a suspension of driving district vehicles for a period of one (1) year. In addition, the same individual would be required to complete an approved driver improvement program and be recertified to operate emergency vehicles.

**Note:** Unusual circumstances with individual cases would be evaluated on a one-to-one basis.

3. Class B Violation (age 18 - 21 and over 65):
  - a. Any individual who has a combination of two (2) Class B moving violations or chargeable accidents in a three (3) year period shall be issued a warning letter from the District Fire Chief.
  - b. Any individual who has more than two (2) Class B moving violation convictions or chargeable accidents or a combination of more than two (2) of the above in a three (3) year period will be issued a suspension of driving department vehicles for a period of one (1) year. In addition, this individual would be required to complete an approved driver improvement program and be recertified to operate emergency vehicles.

### E. Violations:

Designation of Type A and Type B violations are based on a survey of state point systems. Violations receiving higher numbers of points are classed as Type A.

1. Type A Violations:
  - a. Driving while intoxicated.
  - b. Driving under the influence of drugs.
  - c. Negligent homicide arising out of the use of a motor vehicle (gross negligence).
  - d. Operating during a period of suspension or revocation.
  - e. Using a motor vehicle for the commission of a felony.
  - f. Aggravated assault with a motor vehicle.
  - g. Operating a motor vehicle without owner's authority.
  - h. Permitting an unlicensed person to drive.
  - i. Reckless driving.
  - j. Hit and run driving.
2. Type B Violations: All moving violations not listed as Type A violations. (Exceeding a posted speed limit is a Type B Violation).

**Note:** Unusual circumstances with individual cases would be evaluated on a one-to-one basis.

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### 7. DRIVING RULES:

- A. Personnel driving apparatus shall possess a valid Operator's License issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles, State of Washington; and shall know provisions of the Vehicle Code and Fire District Regulations; and be familiar with other pertinent information regarding their privileges and responsibilities as operators of Fire District Automotive Equipment.
- B. Personnel qualified to operate engines, trucks and other apparatus shall respond to all alarms with due regard under the directions of the officer in charge who will direct the course and rate of response. In case of careless or reckless driving, or if the driver fails to heed the directions or orders of the officer in charge, said officer shall file written charges against the offender immediately upon return to station.
- C. Personnel operating or having apparatus or equipment in their charge will be responsible for its proper and safe response to alarms. Ensure that personnel and equipment are secured before moving apparatus. They will maintain speed consistent with the principles of safety, particularly when approaching intersections having signals, and especially when RED light is opposed. They shall at all times have complete control over their apparatus.
- D. Personnel operating apparatus on non-established roads will use caution, expect the unexpected and drive with due regard for one's self and others.
- E. A low rate of speed shall be maintained when passing over excavations, descending grades, traveling over wet pavements, etc.
- F. In case of an accident in a District vehicle, it shall be the duty of the driver to notify the duty officer, who in turn will notify dispatch and refer it immediately to the Sheriff's Department or the Washington State Patrol. District personnel and apparatus will remain at accident scene. Personnel will assist in whatever way is needed. The District Fire Chief shall be notified as soon as possible.
- G. Drivers operating apparatus shall not drive over hose except where unavoidable, being cautious not to drive over couplings, and where possible shall lead hose on the hydrant side of the street close to the curb, keeping apparatus from the center of the street.
- H. Drivers, when taking suction at hydrant, will keep apparatus as close to the curb as possible to prevent the blocking of traffic.
- I. Drivers, when laying out hose to fire, keep the hose next to curb as close as possible and away from center of street.
- J. When it is proven that damage to apparatus or to citizens or their property is the result of a violation of a Driving Rule, or from careless or reckless handling of the apparatus, the offender shall be subject to disciplinary action consistent with the offense and the amount of damage.
- K. Use of Safety Belts. Personnel of the District, while operating or riding in any apparatus which is equipped with safety belts, shall secure the belts on their person.
- L. Responding to or returning from alarms all personnel will be in a seated position with seat belt fastened.
- M. In instances where the station is being closed up, or personnel are getting on their

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- turnouts, the apparatus should pull out in front and wait for incoming personnel.
- N. All drivers shall be at least 18 years old and meet the established requirements of the training program for drivers prior to operation of District vehicles.
  - O. While parked, at an incident, all apparatus will have rear wheel chocked in front and to the rear of the wheel. Brakes shall be set to prevent any rolling of the vehicle.
  - P. All apparatus shall be backed up with the use of a backup person. If a backup person is not available, the driver will walk completely around the vehicle prior to backing.
  - Q. Whenever it becomes necessary to back up apparatus, firefighters shall do so only after having convinced themselves that it can be done with safety after receiving the signal from the firefighter acting as lookout, who shall be stationed at or near the rear of the apparatus. At no time shall speed exceed the speed at which the flagman can walk when backing up. State of Washington approved backing signals and procedures shall be utilized anytime Fire District apparatus is backed.
  - R. No civilian will be allowed in District vehicles except with permission of the Duty Officer.
  - S. All personnel operating private vehicles in response to alarms will do so in accordance with all Washington State motor vehicle laws.
  - T. Headlights will be turned on, on all District apparatus, at all times that they are responding to an emergency.
  - U. Whenever firefighters are getting on or off an apparatus the vehicle will be at a complete stop.
  - V. Stunt driving and horseplay will not be allowed.
  - W. No apparatus will be backed up without first sounding the horn. Three honks to move backwards.
  - X.
  - Y. Drivers of apparatus will obey all existing traffic laws upon returning to station.
  - Z. Firefighters driving apparatus shall exercise great care and caution in starting and stopping apparatus; shall never start from a standstill, with what might be construed a jump start, but should cause the apparatus to gain momentum gradually before attempting to shift from first to intermediate gears, and at the same time, shall not have the motor racing when starting. In bringing apparatus to a standstill shall control the speed so that the apparatus can be brought to a stop in such a manner as would not cause the wheels to lock and slide along the pavement or cause the apparatus to skid.
  - AA. To guard against collisions and accidents in response to an emergency alarm, the sirens on the apparatus shall be activated (as appropriate for current traffic conditions). When apparatus is following other apparatus different siren sounds shall be used to prevent all apparatus sounding as one. All proper dispatch shall be used in reaching the scene, consistent with safety. Firefighters driving apparatus must, at all times, observe the rules of safety and follow the traffic rules, and shall see that the apparatus is under control at street intersections. Racing to and from fires is strictly prohibited. When approaching intersections with traffic light showing RED, speed must be reduced so that apparatus is under

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- complete control, proceeding with caution. Siren on apparatus must not be sounded when returning from fires. When leaving the scene of an emergency, apparatus shall proceed around the block and return to the station by direct route, avoiding streets with congested traffic. Red lights and siren shall be used when responding to emergencies only.
- BB. Drivers shall at no time shift into reverse gear when apparatus is moving forward.
- CC. Officers and firefighters driving apparatus shall be held responsible for the observance of the above orders pertaining to the response to alarms and must obey all traffic rules and regulations in returning from fires.
- DD. When hose is driven over at fires or drills, the driver shall report it to the Officer in charge. The hose that was driven over shall be taken out of service and tested.
- EE. Drivers, at no time, when taking up hose at fires shall cause the apparatus to be driven within the fire lines or across hose that is still in use at fires.
- FF. Drivers shall, when working engines at fires, take reading of hydrant pressure while pumping and at rest. If low pressure is noticed, report same to the station officer immediately after returning to quarters, also report any defects of hydrants from which their apparatus was connected. Station Officer will forward such reports to the district office.
- GG. Driver assigned to direct pumping engines shall act as engineer and be in charge of the operations of such apparatus at fires.
- HH. When apparatus is not in operation at a fire, driver shall report to duty officer for orders.
- II. Firefighters shall carefully look over their apparatus after each response and report any defects found to their station officer.
- JJ. Smoking shall not be permitted while driving or riding on apparatus.
- KK. All persons responding on apparatus, except driver, will do so with full wildland/structural turnouts on aside from helmets as helmets are not recommended to be worn while the apparatus is underway. Drivers may choose not to wear portions of their turnouts that may interfere with the driving of the vehicle.
- LL. Member in right front seat shall check map for street address and possible hydrant location while responding.
- MM. Drivers shall be familiar with and follow all state laws pertaining to the response of personally operated vehicles and District apparatus including:
1. RCW 46.04.040 - Authorized emergency vehicles.
  2. RCW 46.37.184 - Red flashing lights on fire department vehicles.
  3. RCW 46.37.185 - Green light on fireman's private vehicle.
  4. RCW 46.37.186 - Fire department sign or plate on private car.
  5. RCW 46.61.015 - Obedience to police officers, flagmen or firefighters.
  6. RCW 46.61.021 - Duty to obey law enforcement officer.
  7. RCW 46.61.035 - Authorized emergency vehicles.
  8. RCW 46.61.210 - Operation of vehicles on approach of authorized emergency vehicles.
  9. RCW 46.61.640 - Crossing fire hose.