



# **FRESNO COUNTY FIRE**

**PROTECTION DISTRICT**

## **PAID-CALL FIREFIGHTER POLICY & PROCEDURE HANDBOOK**

**POLICY NO.:** 300-04

**SUBJECT:** VEHICLE OPERATION  
PERSONAL AND DISTRICT OWNED

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** November 1, 2009

**REVISION DATE:** October 1, 2013

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Fresno County Fire Protection District  
Paid-Call Firefighter

### **POLICY/PROCEDURE:**

#### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of the Vehicle Operation policy is to establish the minimum criteria all members are expected to maintain during their tenure as a Paid-Call Firefighter (PCF) Company Member.

#### **POLICY:**

It shall be the policy of the Fresno County Fire Protection District to require all members to maintain a valid California Driver's License for the classification of vehicle they will be operating, and maintain established eligibility requirements for the classification they hold as a member. Specifics identifying individual responsibilities and eligibility standards are outlined in the procedures section of this policy. Full compliance is mandatory.

#### Procedure

#### All members shall:

1. Maintain a valid California Driver's License in the class appropriate for the vehicle they are qualified to operate (personal or District owned).
2. File with District administrative staff, as a part of their membership application, an "Authorization to Use Private Vehicles on District Business" document (FCO-72).

3. Have on file a completed "Application for Driver Authorization" document.
4. Submit a DMV print out of their driving record prior to membership acceptance.
5. If maintaining a Class A or Commercial B license, must meet the criteria as established for the level of license and certification, and be subject to the DMV pull notice program.
6. Participate in a Department/District sponsored Defensive Driving program, as directed.
7. Abide by all laws and regulations pertaining to the operation of a motor vehicle on the public roadway.
8. Have and maintain personal vehicle insurance as required by California state law.
9. Provide a copy of valid personal vehicle insurance (Proof of Insurance Card) to the PCF Program Administrator annually.

Members operating District owned apparatus and equipment shall:

1. Maintain a valid California Driver's License appropriate for the class of vehicle which they are qualified to operate.
2. Have a minimum of 12 months experience as a PCF Firefighter, or other fire service experience prior to entering the driver operator training program.
3. Have the approval of the appropriate Battalion Chief prior to acceptance into the driver operator training program.
4. Have successfully completed the minimum mandatory training requirements found in 300-01 Training Requirements to qualify them to serve the District as a PCF Fire Apparatus Operator (FAO).
5. Maintain currency in the established curriculum for Defensive Driving practices.
6. Maintain a DMV point count of three (3) or less at all times.
7. Immediately report any loss of DMV driving privileges to their immediate supervisor. Members failing to report lost driving privileges may face disciplinary actions, up to and including dismissal.
8. New PCF Driver Operators must complete three (3) supervised code-3 drives. The Battalion Chief has the discretion to add additional supervised responses if necessary. Once the training period has been completed the Station Captain will complete the PCF FAO Training Verification Form (Exhibit 300-01.3) and forward to the Battalion Chief for approval and signature. The form will then be forwarded to Sanger Headquarters. A copy will be maintained by the Fresno County Fire Protection District Administrative Officer and the Training Bureau.
9. Utilize all available passenger restraint systems, at all times, while operating the vehicle.
10. Adhere to the Fire District's General Orders regarding the operation of emergency vehicles, as referenced in this procedure.
11. Be subject to an annual skills evaluation following the current Fresno County Fire "Driver Authorization Checklist." (see Exhibit 300-04)

## Fire District General Orders for Safe Vehicle Operations:

The California Vehicle Code allows drivers of authorized emergency vehicles, when responding to emergencies, certain exemptions to the laws pertaining to speed and other traffic restrictions. It does not relieve the driver from their duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons using the highways, nor does it protect the driver from the consequences of one's arbitrary and careless exercise of exemption privileges. Drivers must be aware of the limitations surrounding the use of visible and audible emergency warning devices, such as the red lights and siren. The safety of the general public must take precedence, in all cases, over the response speed of an emergency vehicle.

The following guidelines for the safe operations of emergency vehicles have been established in accordance with the California Vehicle Code:

1. The fact alone that a vehicle is an emergency vehicle does not relieve the driver from the duty to comply with the rules of the road.
2. All drivers must comply with the Basic Speed Law, which states that a vehicle will be driven no faster than what is dictated by the immediate surroundings and situation.
3. Before a pedestrian or motorist can yield the right-of-way, that person must be afforded the opportunity to do so.
4. In traversing an intersection in a Code 3 situation, an emergency vehicle must drive slowly enough to stop without collision if its right of way is violated. It may be necessary to completely stop first and then proceed cautiously when the intersection is clear.
5. Avoid pulling immediately behind another vehicle and suddenly sounding the air horn and/or siren. An unaware driver may stop right in front of you, causing a rear end collision. *Always account for reaction time!*
6. Do not pass on the right unless no other lane choice is available. When passing on the right does so slowly and be mindful that other drivers have been taught to yield the right of way by pulling their vehicles to the right. Pass to the right only when you are certain the other vehicle has seen you and recognizes your intent to pass on the right.
7. Do not sound the siren at the highest pitch for prolonged periods of time. Studies show that sirens are most effective when operated throughout the entire tonal range.
8. Keep emergency vehicles near the center of the roadway when possible so that oncoming vehicles can more easily see the red lights approaching.
9. Do not follow another emergency vehicle too closely. Many motorists focus on the lead vehicle and may not react to having more than one emergency vehicle overtake them in the same maneuver. Avoid having another driver pull out in front of you by following no closer than 500 feet.

10. The best route of travel to an emergency incident may require the use of the freeway system. The use of the emergency warning system (red lights and siren) is not a requirement while traveling at the same common freeway speeds which other vehicles are traveling. In fact, some vehicles may be traveling at speeds faster than what the fire apparatus is designed to travel. In these cases, the discontinuation of the emergency warning system may be recommended in order to create a lesser state of confusion for the general public.
11. The use of the air horn will be kept to a minimum so as to keep from drowning out the siren. During Code 3 responses, the air horn should be used only when approaching intersections or to alert vehicular traffic that you are seeking the right-of-way. In all cases, two or three blasts of the air horn should prove to be sufficient.

#### Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Violation Points System:

The DMV keeps a public record of all traffic convictions and accidents for a thirty-six month period, or longer, depending on the type of driving conviction.

A traffic conviction for unsafe driving accounts for one (1) point. Any accident where fault has been found to you as the driver, accounts for one (1) point.

A traffic conviction for reckless driving, driving while intoxicated or while under the influence of drugs, or hit-and-run, accounts for two (2) points.

A violation received in a commercial vehicle carries one and one half (1 ½) times greater the point count normally assessed.

#### Minimum Eligibility Requirements:

1. All PCF Company members seeking to operate apparatus and equipment owned or operated by the Fire District, shall meet the minimum eligibility standard in order to be considered for that classification.
2. PCF Company members accumulating three (3) violation points, as explained above, and as described in the California Department of Motor Vehicles Commercial Driver's Handbook, within the last three (3) years, shall be considered to be in a status of "Warning" with the Fire District.
3. PCF Company members accumulating four (4) violation points within the last three (3) years may have all District driving privileges revoked.
4. The provisions outlined in items 2 and 3 shall apply regardless of whether or not negligent driving was found to be the cause for issuance of the DMV violation points, and whether or not the points were assessed while performing the duties as a member representing the Fire District.

#### **POLICY RESPONSIBILITY:**

Board of Directors, Fire Chief, District Administrative Officer, Division Chiefs, Battalion Chiefs, Station Captains, Paid-Call Company Officers, Paid-Call Fire Apparatus Operators, Paid-Call Firefighters.