

DRIVING

A. Purpose:

The driving guideline is to provide a method to insure that our members are safe and conscientious drivers, and to provide for the safety of the general public when our members are driving the apparatus or their personal vehicles.

B. General:

1. DWI or DUI - No member will drive emergency if he/she has been convicted of DWI/DUI during the past three years. A member must wait three years from the date of the offense (or date of conviction) before re-applying for emergency driving status. If a member is convicted of a second DWI/DUI within five years of the first conviction, the member is terminated.

The same rationale is used for new candidates (e.g. if a candidate has two DWI/DUI on his record he/she will not be considered for membership).

2. Traffic Violations/Accidents - It will be the responsibility of each member to report traffic convictions and accidents to the Office Manager. Failure to provide said information will be detrimental to the member when his/her driving record is reviewed.
3. A semi-annual review will be used to determine a member's emergency driving status. The reviews will be conducted in May and November of each year.
4. The Office Manager will obtain each member's driving record during the first week of the above months. A Command Staff officer will then determine each member's points as applies to the Driver Evaluation Guideline. These findings will be presented at the next officers' meeting for review by the Command Staff.
5. The aforementioned point system will be used to determine if members are allowed to use warning devices (lights & siren) to respond to emergency calls. See Driver Evaluation Guideline.

C. Apparatus:

1. Only those firefighters specifically approved by the Command Staff may drive apparatus. Drivers must obtain a minimum of a Class B license and may request reimbursement for the upgrade.

2. The apparatus driver's sole responsibility will be the safe driving of the equipment. The front seat passenger shall operate all emergency equipment as well as continuous monitoring of traffic conditions and communicating with the driver.
3. Seat belts are to be worn by all seated firefighters in route and returning from all mobile apparatus assignments. All firefighters in the cab and jump seats shall remain seated with seat belts in use until the apparatus comes to a complete stop. Under no circumstances should personnel exit or mount the apparatus while in motion.
4. The driver shall be primarily concerned with safely driving the apparatus. The driver is not to operate sirens, air horns, or radio. The driver is to continually monitor driving conditions and listen for instructions. The driver shall be the initial pump operator, if the apparatus is so equipped.
5. The right side cab seat is reserved for the senior officer at the time of response. Those lower in rank shall vacate the seat, if requested.
6. Tailboard riding positions are prohibited.
7. Any time a PFD apparatus is backing, a ground guide is required. The person in the right front seat will insure that a ground guide is provided. No other personnel shall exit the apparatus until the air brake has been applied. If there are no passengers on the apparatus, the driver should exercise due caution while backing.
8. The ground guide must have a hand held radio on primary when performing duties as backup man/ground guide. Other frequencies may be used, but care must be taken to reset the radio to the proper channel. Radio contact is not necessary at fire stations during daylight hours.
9. Any PFD personnel who are at a fire station and hear a backup alarm have the responsibility to check and see that any and all apparatus in reverse have a backup man/ ground guide. If an apparatus is found to not have a backup man/ ground guide, then he/she shall immediately assume the role of backup man/ ground guide.
10. Backup alarm override switches will no longer be utilized. If a PFD apparatus is in reverse it will have a backup alarm active.
11. In areas with dim lighting a hand light or rear lighting will be utilized for lighting the ground behind the apparatus.

12. In the event the driver is the only person on the apparatus, the operator will position the apparatus on the apron to provide a straight back-in, once the driver has positioned the apparatus he/she may exit the apparatus, check behind the apparatus for obstructions and to insure the apparatus is aligned properly with the bay. Once this is accomplished the operator may back the vehicle into the bay.
13. During hose packing operations, tailboard work positions are permissible if done under the direction of a ground guide in contact with the vehicle's operator.
14. If an apparatus is involved in any accident in which direct contact is made with another object, the driver is under immediate driving suspension until officers' review. (see Accident and Investigation)
15. High water conditions may exist throughout the area during storms and runoff periods. The following list of considerations is to be taken into account for emergency and non-emergency response. In most cases, PFD apparatus will have very few problems "navigating our waters". The following guidelines are to be adhered to for preventing apparatus damage, preventing accidents, and still providing timely response. The objective is to arrive safely!

A. High Water:

1. Reduce speed to 5 mph or less
2. After entering the high water, apply brakes slightly to dry out linings.
3. After exiting high water, apply the brakes to verify proper brake performance.
4. Drive slowly! Do not produce a wave effect, as damage to other vehicles and property will occur.
5. Most water induced mechanical failures in vehicles are caused from excess speed and high water being sprayed by the vehicle's engine cooling fan.
6. Never park in high water areas since water will infiltrate chassis and wiring components.

B. Heavy rains, slick streets, icy conditions:

1. Extreme caution is to be observed.
2. Reduce top speed substantially-35 mph maximum.
3. Do not tailgate--keep at least one hundred feet distance.
4. Utilize extreme caution while braking.
5. All apparatus equipped with retarders shall be in the "low" power position or "off".

D. Operation of Personal Vehicles:

1. All firefighters (this includes firefighter candidates and junior members) driving their personal cars to the scene of an emergency shall obey all Texas State Laws and Statutes.
2. Firefighters (this excludes firefighter candidates and junior members) may install approved audible and visual warning devices on their personal cars if they so desire and at their own expense. These devices shall meet all the requirements Laws Applicable to Emergency Vehicles, as it applies to warning devices on the emergency vehicles of volunteer firemen. The Command Staff must approve the individual's use of personal warning devices on an individual basis.
3. Those firefighters having audible and visual warning devices meeting these requirements shall drive their personal vehicles in a safe and prudent manner when making a response to the scene of an emergency and they shall follow all the restrictions of Laws Applicable to Emergency Vehicles.
4. Only those vehicles meeting the requirements of the Laws Applicable to Emergency Vehicles shall respond emergency under any circumstances. Both visual and audible devices must be used.
5. The use of audible and/or visual warning devices for other than sanctioned departmental emergencies will result in disciplinary action. Any firefighter responding emergency without approved equipment is subject to the full punishment under the law.
6. Personal Vehicle Driving Enforcement
 - a. The Command Staff shall be the ruling authority for all personal vehicle driving infractions and complaints.
 - b. If a complaint is received regarding a personal vehicle the Command Staff shall obtain all necessary information regarding the complaint including a discussion with the complainant and driver.
 - c. The primary purpose will be concerned with the manner in which members drive their personal vehicles while representing the Ponderosa Fire Department and with the type, number, or quality of the emergency equipment used.
 - d. Action by the Command Staff shall be in addition to any action taken by those empowered to uphold laws.

As a minimum:

1. A firefighter shall be verbally reprimanded for the first driving grievance, and a note to file provided.
 2. A firefighter shall be suspended for a minimum of 30 days for a second grievance. A letter will be provided to the file.
 3. A firefighter shall be suspended for not less than one (1) year for a third grievance. This must be fully documented and filed.
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7. All personally owned and operated vehicles utilized for transporting PFD personnel and/or equipment and used for authorized departmental functions shall meet or exceed any applicable local, state, or federal laws. This specifically relates to State of Texas inspections, driver's license, insurance, licensing of the vehicle, and any other item relating to the condition and safety of the vehicle.
 8. Any member not complying with the above is subject to immediate suspension until satisfying all applicable standards. It is the Command Staff discretion to reinstate the suspended member.
 9. All personnel in POV's must yield the right of way to all fire, EMS, and police units in emergency responses.
 10. Firefighters are not to park their POV's within the area used for apparatus use or staging. POV's are to only park on the right side of the roadway away from the scene. Utilize a driveway, parking lot or other open space away from the emergency.
 11. All active members should display a departmental supplied identification decal on their POV. The location should be on driver's side rear window. No other PFD identification materials may be used without the consent of the Fire Chief. Upon the sale of the vehicle or membership termination the individual shall remove any and all PFD markings.

DRIVER QUALIFICATIONS

- A. To qualify to drive PFD vehicles non-emergency, and to drive POV's emergency, these minimum qualifications must be met:
1. Be 18 years old.
 2. Have acceptable driving record as per related policy.
 3. Have attended a DDC course or equivalent within the last five years.
 4. Have the approval of the Company Lt.
 5. Have the approval of the respective station Captain.
 6. Have the approval of the Command Staff (POV emergency driving only).
 7. Have approved driver in the officers' seat (PFD apparatus only).
- B. To qualify to drive PFD vehicles emergency status, learning and regular response, the above minimum qualifications apply and the following additional criteria must be met:
1. Class B license (as applicable to vehicle)
 2. Receive recommendation by the Company Lt. and station Captain.
 3. Approval by the Command Staff at a regular officers meeting.
- C. After a suitable period of driving with direct supervision, the Captain may request the trainee to be placed on the approved driving list per qualified apparatus.
- D. During the driver-training phase, the member must ride with an approved driver in the officer's seat. Training issues to be addressed include but are not limited to the following:
1. Lane placement
 2. Lane choice during emergency responses
 3. Use of mirrors
 4. Department Procedures regarding backing
 5. Control of Speed
 6. Interface with intersections/clearing and proceeding through the intersection
 7. Map reading/familiarization with district territory
 8. Safety issues (seatbelts, not exiting the vehicle until air brakes are set, etc.)
 9. Placement of vehicle at various scenes
 10. Use of braking devices (Jake Brakes, Drive line Retarders, Emergency Braking, Air Brakes)
 11. Use of emergency devices (emergency lights and sirens)

- E. In addition to and in conjunction with the above, the training member must train in the use of the truck systems, i.e. standard pump operations and complete familiarization with equipment and compartment contents on the vehicle. Standard pump operations are defined as follows:
1. Putting truck in pump gear and taking truck out of pump gear.
 2. Thorough understanding of valve operations (recirculating, tank to pump, trash lines, primary attack lines, and auxiliary discharges).
 3. Use and availability of adapters and connectors for various applications.
 4. Familiarity with LDH, hydrant operations and water hammer.
- F. Before being allowed to drive the apparatus under emergency conditions, the member must show proficiency in operating the pump in non-complex situations. A non-complex situation is defined as a scene that does not require water relays, drafting, or the use of dry hydrants. The member should have an understanding of how to use a water manifold and gated Y.

After the Member has participated in drivers training with an approved driver and has met the minimum requirements set above and has been recommended by the Company Lt., the driver must drive on a minimum of three emergency runs with the station Captain or designee in the officer seat. After these three responses, the Captain will re-evaluate the driver and either approves the driver for emergency response status or requires the driver to drive with the Company Lt. or with the Captain until that time which the driver is deemed competent and safe.

After the member has obtained the minimum requirements as set forth above, and is in the evaluation phase (waiting to obtain 3 emergency responses with the Captain) the member may respond in the truck to a scene in a non-emergency mode. This may be necessary to get the apparatus to the scene in the absence of an approved driver.

See also: Driver Training Approval Checklist

DRIVER TRAINING APPROVAL CHECKLIST

Name of Driver			
Name of Reviewer			
<u>PVFD DRIVER TRAINING IN APPARATUS (MINIMUM)</u>	<u>COMPLETED</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>TRAINING REPORT</u>
18 Y/O			
Acceptable Driving Record (see Driving Policy)			
DDC or Equivalent in Last Five Years			
Approval of the Company Lt.			
Approval of the Station Captain			
Class B License or Training to Recieve			
Training in Basic Pump Operations			
CEVO / PVFD Driving Class and Test			
<u>PVFD DRIVER TRAINING FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE (MINIMUM)</u>			
<u>MUST COMPLETE ALL OF THE ABOVE</u>			
Demonstrate Proficiency in Driving of Apparatus with Approved Instructor (Attach Copy of Training Reports)			
Demonstrate Proficiency in Driving of Apparatus to the Company Lt. (Attach Copy of Training Reports)			
Demonstrate Proficiency in Driving of Apparatus to the Station Captain or Designee (Attach Copy of Training Reports)			
Demonstrate Proficiency in Pump Operations to the Company Lt. (Attach Copy of Training Reports)			
Demonstrate Proficiency in Pump Operations to the Station Captain or Designee (Attach Copy of Training Reports)			
Drive with the Station Captain or Designee (Three Emergency Responses) until the Captain is Confident of the Drivers Ability			
Presented for Approval at a Regular Officer's Meeting			

DRIVER EVALUATION

A. Objective:

To establish a method of evaluating Ponderosa Volunteer Fire Department members for consideration of:

1. Operating department apparatus
2. Using lights / sirens POV's
3. Maintaining membership

B. Historically, there are five factors that show a statistical significance in traffic accident phenomenon. These are length of membership, age of the driver, marital status, violations and the number of accidents. The points assigned to each category are as follows:

1. Length of Employment

Under 1 year	20
1 to 2 years	15
2 years and over	10

2. Age

Under 21	45
21 to 24	30
25 to 29	15
30 to 65	10

3. Violations

3 or more	60
2	30
1	20
0	10

4. Accidents

2 or more	60
1	30
0	10

5. Martial Status

Single/Divorced	10
Married	0

The following criteria have been established:

1. Points - if a member has 195 points or above, his/her membership will be terminated.
2. Points - Any member scoring between 125 and 195 points will have his/her driving record reviewed by the Command Staff. After review, the Command Staff will decide if the person may drive the department apparatus, or a POV utilizing emergency warning devices.

Example: A member who has been a member for 4 years, is 27 years old, has one violation, one accident, and is single. Add the appropriate category from (A) + (B) + (C) + (D) + (E) or $10+15+20+30+10 = 85$ points.

SUMMARY OF LAWS APPLICABLE TO EMERGENCY VEHICLES

CHAPTER 541, SUBCHAPTER C VEHICLES, RAIL TRANSPORTATION, AND EQUIPMENT

§ 541.201. Vehicles

In this subtitle:

A. "Authorized emergency vehicle" means:

1. a fire department or police vehicle;
2. a public or private ambulance operated by a person who has been issued a license by the Texas Department of Health;
3. a municipal department or public service corporation emergency vehicle that has been designated or authorized by the governing body of a municipality;
4. a private vehicle of a volunteer firefighter or a certified emergency medical services employee or volunteer when responding to a fire alarm or medical emergency;
5. an industrial emergency response vehicle, including an industrial ambulance, when responding to an emergency, but only if the vehicle is operated in compliance with criteria in effect September 1, 1989, and established by the Texas Industrial Fire Training Board of the State Firemen's and Fire Marshals' Association of Texas; or
6. a vehicle of a blood bank or tissue bank, accredited or approved under the laws of this state or the United States, when making emergency deliveries of blood, drugs, medicines, or organs.

**CHAPTER 545, SUBCHAPTER B
DRIVING ON RIGHT SIDE OF ROADWAY AND PASSING**

§ 545.058. Driving on Improved Shoulder

- A. A limitation in this section on driving on an improved shoulder does not apply to:
1. an authorized emergency vehicle responding to a call;
 2. a police patrol; or
 3. a bicycle.

**SUBCHAPTER H
SPEED RESTRICTIONS**

§ 545.365. Speed Limit Exception for Emergencies; Municipal Regulation

- A. The regulation of the speed of a vehicle under this subchapter does not apply to:
1. an authorized emergency vehicle responding to a call;
 2. a police patrol; or
 3. a physician or ambulance responding to an emergency call.
- B. A municipality by ordinance may regulate the speed of:
1. an ambulance;
 2. an emergency medical services vehicle; or
 3. an authorized vehicle operated by a blood or tissue bank.

**SUBCHAPTER I
MISCELLANEOUS RULES**

§ 545.407. Following or Obstructing Fire Apparatus or Ambulance

- A. An operator, unless on official business, may not follow closer than 500 feet a fire apparatus responding to a fire alarm or drive into or park the vehicle in the block where the fire apparatus has stopped to answer a fire alarm.
- B. An operator may not:

1. follow closer than 500 feet an ambulance that is flashing red lights unless the operator is on official business; or
2. drive or park the vehicle where an ambulance has been summoned for an emergency call in a manner intended to interfere with the arrival or departure of the ambulance.

§ 545.408. Crossing Fire Hose

An operator may not, without the consent of the fire department official in command, drive over an unprotected hose of a fire department if the hose is on a street or private driveway and is intended for use at a fire or alarm of fire.

CHAPTER 546 OPERATION OF AUTHORIZED EMERGENCY VEHICLES AND CERTAIN OTHER VEHICLES

SUBCHAPTER A. AUTHORIZED EMERGENCY VEHICLES

§ 546.001. Permissible Conduct

A. In operating an authorized emergency vehicle the operator may:

1. park or stand, irrespective of another provision of this subtitle;
2. proceed past a red or stop signal or stop sign, after slowing as necessary for safe operation;
3. exceed a maximum speed limit, except as provided by an ordinance adopted under Section 545.365, as long as the operator does not endanger life or property; and
4. disregard a regulation governing the direction of movement or turning in specified directions.

§ 546.003. Audible or Visual Signals Required

Except as provided by Section 546.004, the operator of an authorized emergency vehicle engaging in conduct permitted by Section 546.001 shall use, at the discretion of the operator in accordance with policies of the department or the local government that employs the operator, audible or visual signals that meet the pertinent requirements of Sections 547.305 and 547.702.

§ 546.005. Duty of Care

A. This chapter does not relieve the operator of an authorized emergency vehicle from:

1. the duty to operate the vehicle with appropriate regard for the safety of all persons; or
2. the consequences of reckless disregard for the safety of others.

§ 547.702. Additional Equipment Requirements for Authorized Emergency Vehicles

B. An authorized emergency vehicle may be equipped with a siren, exhaust whistle, or bell:

1. of a type approved by the department; and
2. that emits a sound audible under normal conditions at a distance of at least 500 feet.

C. The operator of an authorized emergency vehicle shall use the siren, whistle, or bell when necessary to warn other vehicle operators or pedestrians of the approach of the emergency vehicle.

D. Except as provided by this section, an authorized emergency vehicle shall be equipped with signal lamps that:

1. are mounted as high and as widely spaced laterally as practicable;
2. display four alternately flashing red lights, two located on the front at the same level and two located on the rear at the same level; and
3. emit a light visible at a distance of 500 feet in normal sunlight.

E. A private vehicle operated by a volunteer firefighter responding to a fire alarm or a medical emergency may, but is not required to, be equipped with signal lamps that comply with the requirements of Subsection (c).

F. A private vehicle operated by a volunteer firefighter responding to a fire alarm or a medical emergency may be equipped with a signal lamp that is temporarily attached to the vehicle roof and flashes a red light visible at a distance of at least 500 feet in normal sunlight.

G. A police vehicle may, but is not required to, be equipped with signal lamps that comply with Subsection (c).