

## **Town of Oswego Fire District Emergency Vehicles**

### **PURPOSE**

The Town of Oswego Fire District owns and maintains a number of motor vehicles, including fire apparatus, the purpose of which is to enable the appropriate number of firefighters shall respond to a particular emergency in a timely manner, with the necessary resources to appropriately dispose of the emergency. The Board of Commissioners has adopted this policy to ensure that these vehicles be operated and maintained in such a manner as to be ready for use for their designated purpose at any time.

### **Authorized use of district vehicles**

No fire department member may operate a Fire District vehicle without a valid, current and non-conditional and non-suspended motor vehicle driver's license. All drivers will participate in the NYS LENS program.

In accordance with State Law, the chief shall ensure that department members display only one blue light and are fully cognizant of safe driver rules and regulations to be followed while responding to alarms.

Apparatus drivers must be a minimum of 18 years of age for non-emergency training operation. Driver trainees operating district vehicles must be accompanied by a qualified driver at all times.

A qualified driver must be at least 21 years of age and approved by the line officers. Only qualified drivers shall be permitted to drive apparatus to and from alarms.

All drivers shall obey all traffic laws and traffic control devices when driving any fire district vehicle under ordinary travel conditions except as permitted by Vehicle and Traffic Law Sec. 1104. Any driver observed breaking any traffic laws or driving any vehicle in an aggressive manner will be subject to disciplinary and/or remedial action including suspension of driving privileges.

At no time shall a driver pass a stopped school bus that has its lights flashing. This applies to all apparatus whether responding to an alarm or on drill.

No member may operate a Fire District vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or any controlled substance.

Smoking is prohibited on or in apparatus.

Drivers of apparatus shall adhere to all applicable traffic laws while operating in non emergency status.

No one other than active members of the Oswego Town Fire Department may ride on apparatus without the consent of the Chief or Board of Fire Commissioners. Personnel who are members of other fire companies who are responding in accordance with applicable mutual aid agreements have consent to ride in district vehicles to and from an incident, or while participating in the battalion 91 program.

The Fire District requires all persons riding on fire apparatus to be seated in approved riding positions and be secured to the vehicle by seat belts whenever the vehicle is in motion. The District prohibits the riding on tail steps, sidesteps, running boards, or any other exposed position.

No apparatus will be taken out of the Oswego Town Fire District without consent of a chief.

The Fire District has the discretion to make one or more vehicles available to the fire department Chief, Assistant Chief(s) or other appropriate personnel. These uses may include official Fire District or Fire Department business.

The Board has the discretion to request that each non-emergency use of the vehicle shall be noted in a log book including the following: Operator name, Date, Beginning mileage, Ending mileage, Destination, and Purpose of use.

Any driver of an emergency vehicle involved in a motor vehicle accident may be required to undergo mandatory drug/alcohol testing per the Oswego Town Fire District Alcohol/Drug Policy.

### **Non-emergency response**

When responding to a call in a non-emergency response mode or normal flow of traffic (not responding to a true emergency) the vehicle will be operated without any audible or visual warning devices and in compliance with all state motor vehicle laws that apply to civilian traffic.

### **Warning devices and true emergencies**

When responding to a true emergency, if warning devices are activated, all audible and visual will be operated in unison regardless of time of day and/or traffic conditions.

The definition of a true emergency is a situation in which there is a high probability of death or serious injury to an individual or significant property loss, actions by an emergency vehicle driver may reduce the seriousness of the situation.

### **Response speeds**

The driver of an emergency vehicle shall operate the vehicle with due regard for the safety of all persons when responding to a true emergency. The speed at which the response is made should be at or below the posted speed limit, depending on road, weather and vehicle conditions at the time of the response.

There are instances where the vehicle may be operated above the posted speed limit. Operating the emergency vehicle in an emergency situation in excess of the posted speed limit should only occur when there are known life-threatening circumstances and when allowed by the state motor vehicle law. The speed should never be more than ten (10) mph over the posted speed limit up to a maximum of 65 mph. An exception should only be considered when operating on four-lane, non-congested highways, with excellent visibility. No apparatus should be driven in excess of 75 MPH under any condition.

### **Response in privately-owned vehicles**

When any member responds to the station or to the scene of an emergency in his/her private vehicle, each member must strictly adhere to all applicable motor vehicle laws. Except for Chiefs' vehicles, privately-owned vehicles are not provided with the same exemptions that are provided to emergency vehicles. No member of the organization will be permitted to violate any motor vehicle laws, including but not limited to speed, going through traffic control devices, or passing in an unsafe manner.

The above provisions shall not relieve the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons, nor shall such provisions protect the driver from the consequences of his reckless disregard for the safety of other.

The Fire District is the sole administrator of this policy. It will not be deviated from without specific approval by the Board of Fire Commissioners. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action by the Board of Fire Commissioners pursuant to Town Law including letter of counseling with recommended action, suspension of driving privileges or suspension up to and including dismissal from the fire department depending on the severity of the offense and the need for escalation of discipline due to repeat offenses.

Adopted: 08/16/2022