

## **Chapter 4-4**

### **1. Purpose**

This SOP covers the responsibilities of firefighters while responding to PVFD incidents in their personal-owned vehicle (POV).

### **2. Scope**

This SOP applies to all PVFD personnel. Emergency equipment (flashing red lights and siren) mounted on the POV is not a requirement for a firefighter to be bound by this SOP.

### **3. Introduction**

PVFD relies on personnel to respond to the station in their POV as quickly as possible when we are dispatched to emergency incidents. When responding to the station (or directly to the incident, as detailed below) it is imperative that PVFD personnel do so in a safe manner.

Special rights are granted to emergency vehicles by state law (contained in KRS 189). However, that does not allow personnel to act without due regard for the safety of everyone on the road. A vehicle that does not have proper emergency equipment on it is not considered an emergency vehicle, and shall not be driven as such. Driving in a reckless manner, with or without emergency equipment, is grounds for PVFD discipline as well as punishment through the legal system.

PVFD members are required to maintain their own insurance coverage on their POV that will cover their liability during PVFD responses.

### **4. Flashing Lights and Siren**

The Chief may grant permission for PVFD members to use emergency equipment on their POV while responding to PVFD incidents. This is a granted privilege that can be revoked at any time if the Chief has evidence that it is being abused. Abuse includes driving in a reckless manner, using emergency equipment at inappropriate times, or having improper equipment on the POV. The right may also be revoked if the Chief has evidence that the member's POV is not kept in road-worthy condition. When a POV has emergency equipment in use, it is considered an emergency vehicle. As such, the driver is bound by the same duties as if the POV was a fire truck.

To be eligible for a flashing light and siren permit, the following conditions must be met:

- New firefighters must be on the dept. for at least 1 year.
- Transfer firefighters must be on the dept. for at least 6 months. This requirement may be waived if the member's previous experience can be verified by PVFD.
- The firefighter must complete a defensive driving course approved by PVFD.
- The firefighter's vehicle must pass an inspection by PVFD to verify compliance with this SOP.

To be approved for PVFD responses, all emergency vehicles must have the following equipment, at a minimum:

- Flashing red light(s) visible in all directions for at least 500' during normal conditions.
- Siren audible at least 500' to the front during normal conditions.

Additional lighting may be added to enhance the vehicle's visibility. Emergency lights must not be mounted in a manner that impedes other drivers' ability to see and recognize the normal signal and brake lights of the emergency vehicle.

### **5. Responding to the Station**

When PVFD is dispatched to an incident, all firefighters that are not part of the PVFD command staff shall respond to the station to staff apparatus. The only exception is if the firefighter must first pass the scene, and the firefighter can be of immediate assistance. In this case, the firefighter must stop and render aid as appropriate. If additional firefighters are in the same situation, they should stop only if needed, then continue on to the station as soon as possible.

Before responding to the station, firefighters must listen to the dispatch and know the following:

- What is the nature of the run?
- Where is the run?
- Is this an emergency response?

Then, the firefighter should respond to the station in the appropriate manner.

## **6. Responding Directly to the Scene**

Only authorized personnel should respond directly to emergency scenes in their POV. Authorized uses include command officers, first responders, and firefighters who are forced to stop at a scene and render aid.

Vehicles that are used for first response or command use must be maintained in a manner that will present a positive public image. First responder vehicles must have appropriate emergency equipment, since they will be required to make code 3 runs. If a POV does not meet this standard, the first responder shall use 8499 (or 8498 in its absence).

## **7. Code 3 Driving**

Firefighters respond to the station either "Code 1" or "Code 3". Code 1 means non-emergency. No lights or siren are to be used. All traffic laws must be obeyed, since this is the same as normal daily driving. Using only emergency lights and no siren is called "Code 2", and is prohibited for anyone except an ambulance that is transporting a patient.

Code 3 means emergency response. This means red lights and siren must both be used. During Code 3 responses, the firefighter must use all necessary caution to avoid causing an accident. Traffic laws and signals may be disregarded in accordance to KRS 189, only while the firefighter uses due regard for the safety of everyone on the road. PVFD firefighters shall not use excessive speed or drive in a manner that creates undue risk to anyone. Failure to follow these precautions will cause the firefighter to be held liable for causing traffic accidents.

## **8. Driving while Impaired**

PVFD personnel shall not operate vehicles if they are impaired by alcohol, drugs (prescription or otherwise) or any other condition that may affect their ability to control a vehicle. Therefore, a firefighter who is intoxicated shall remove their self from duty until sober. Failure to do so will be grounds for disciplinary action.