

Polson City/Rural FIRE DEPARTMENT Operating Guidelines

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301.02 Responding and Returning in Personal Vehicles

Page 01 of 02

301.02 - Responding and Returning in Personal Vehicles:

Purpose:

To ensure that every member of the organization while responding to an incident is provided with a guideline to operate safely and efficiently. It will also help maintain fire department operations.

All members who have the privilege of using a red light **shall not** use them outside Polson City/Rural Fire District and **will obey all Montana State Vehicle and Traffic Laws**. Remember a red light is only a courtesy light and the fire chief or a police officer can revoke this privilege at any time.

Not exceed the posted speed limit.

To drive in a safe and prudent manner that does not endanger life or property.

Will come to a complete and full stop at all intersections and all stop signs.

Maintain personal auto liability insurance with the appropriate amounts.

To operate safely in an emergency situation, a person must have complete control of his/her physical and mental capabilities. There will be no distractions while operating personal or fire department apparatus (i.e. smoking, texting, using the cell phone).

Lights allowed for response to the station or incident: Note: Your personal vehicle **is not** an emergency vehicle. Before you put a red light on your vehicle to respond to the fire hall or incident you may want to check with your insurance company to make sure if you are involved in an accident while responding, that you will still have coverage while responding to the fire hall or incident.

Montana Code: 61-9-227 states “may use a blinker-type or revolving red light or both on the front or the top of their privately owned motor vehicles.”

It will be the policy of the Polson Fire Department: A member must have the Red light card signed by the Chief or Asst. Chief in the vehicle. A dash light that is either a revolving, blinking or LED may be approved. The light can **only** have red lens. The light can either be in the grill area or on the dash. No other color can flash/blink or rotate forward towards on coming traffic. No member will be authorized to have alternating (wig wag) head lights on privately owned vehicles.

All members of this organization shall obey all Montana traffic laws;

- Must carry current liability insurance on personal vehicle used to travel to and from the fire hall. Should the member not be able to have valid insurance, they shall not respond by personal vehicle until insurance is obtained. Should the member not have insurance they must notify the Chief of this.
- Must have a valid Montana drivers license and be must be kept valid. Should there be a reason that a member no longer holds a valid license or fails to carry proof of insurance, the member could or may be suspended from all driving privileges of all department vehicles.
- Quarterly the Chief will be conducting driver's license history checks for the department members. License checks **will be** done upon application.

No member shall be allowed to participate in any emergency or training exercise that has consumed mind-altering substances (i.e. alcoholic beverages, including non-alcoholic type beverages and/or drugs). A volunteer operating in an emergency while under the influence of either alcohol or drugs is not only risking their own safety, but also, more importantly, risking the safety of fellow company members and the public we are trying to protect.

If this organization is in involved in a social situation where alcohol is present and being consumed, then a stand-by crew will be available to operate all vehicles and/or respond to emergencies. If this organization is attending a parade or convention, then vehicle operators will be designated and will not consume alcoholic beverages. Any other members who are consuming alcoholic beverages will not ride in an unenclosed area of the truck.

No member of the fire department will be allowed to stop at or drive to any emergency scene unless proper turnout gear has been secured or member can render aid. This is to insure accountability and reduce exposure to contaminated atmospheres. The fire chief, assistant chief or officer designee will only make direct response.

If the member does respond with the appropriate equipment and in a personal vehicle and must drive by the scene, the member will park on the same side of the incident out of the way of responding units and obtain a size-up and communicate the situation to the officer in-charge.

Parking on the same side of the incident not less than 50 yards from incident. This is to maintain and open scene for responding units.

All personnel will follow the Polson City/Rural Fire Department's Accountability Program.