

POLSON Volunteer FIRE DEPARTMENT Operating Guidelines

Issued By: Chief Thomas J. Maloney
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301.00 - Responding and Returning of the Apparatus:

The Polson Fire Department places a great deal of responsibility on the drivers of our emergency vehicles. Not only must emergency vehicles drivers provide prompt conveyance of the apparatus, equipment, and personnel to provide service to those in need, but as importantly, must accomplish this task in the safest and most prudent manner possible.

All responses for emergency situations shall be with full lighting and audible signals (air horns, sirens, etc.) In accordance with Montana State Vehicle and Traffic Laws. All driver's shall not exceed the posted speed limit by more than 10 miles per hour (10 mph) and will stop at all traffic safety devices (i.e. traffic lights, stop signs).

All members who have the privilege of using a red light **shall not** use them outside Polson 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.

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 fire department apparatus (i.e. smoking).

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 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 on the truck.

No member of the fire department will be allowed to stop 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.

Emergency vehicle drivers have in their care, custody and control most of the major assets possessed by this organization (the vehicle, portable equipment, personnel). Emergency vehicle drivers also have a higher standard of care to provide to the general motoring public and must make every attempt possible to provide due regard for the safety of others. Drivers must constantly monitor and reduce the amount of risk and exposure to potential losses during each and every response. Safe arrival at the emergency scene shall be, and must always remain, the first priority of all emergency vehicle drivers.

In order to accomplish this enormous task all emergency vehicles drivers shall become familiar with, and constantly abide by the following policies and procedures.

The emergency vehicle driver shall be aware of his/her rate of closure on other vehicles and pedestrians at all time to make sure that a safe following distance is established and maintained. All drivers shall follow the rule for safe following distance and allow 1 second of following distance for every 10 feet of vehicle length for speeds under 40 mph and add 1 additional second for each 10 mph for speeds over 40 mph.

Response speeds

When responding to a true emergency only, drivers shall operate the vehicle they are driving at as close to the **posted speed limit** as possible, but not to exceed ten (10) miles per hour over the posted speed limit, conditions permitting, even if permitted by the state vehicle code.

Examples of conditions requiring slower response speeds include but are not limited to;

- slippery road conditions
- inclement weather
- poor visibility
- heavy or congested traffic conditions
- sharp curves

Intersection Practices

Extreme care should be taken when approaching any intersection as intersections are the locations responsible for a large percentage of major accidents involving emergency vehicles. Drivers are required to practice the organizations intersection operating guidelines during all emergency responses. Unless being waved through by law enforcement, the driver of the apparatus shall stop at each intersection to ensure it is safe to proceed through.

Uncontrolled intersections

Any intersection that does not offer a control device (stop sign, yield or traffic signal) in the direction of travel of the emergency vehicle or where a traffic control signal is green upon the approach of the emergency vehicle all emergency vehicle drivers should do the following:

- Scan the intersection for possible hazards (right turns on red, pedestrians, vehicles traveling fast, etc.). Observe traffic in all 4 directions (left, right, front, rear)

- Slow down if any potential hazards are detected and cover the brake pedal with the drivers foot.
- Change the siren cadence not less than 200' from intersection
- Avoid using the opposing lane of traffic if at all possible. Emergency vehicle drivers should always be prepared to stop. If another vehicle operator fails to yield the right of way to an emergency vehicle, the emergency vehicle driver can not force the right of way, nor can you assume the right of way, therefore you do not have the right of way until the other vehicle yields to you.

Controlled intersections

Any intersection controlled by a stop sign, yield sign, yellow traffic light or a red traffic light requires a complete stop by the emergency vehicle driver. In addition to bringing the vehicle to a complete stop these additional steps must be followed as well;

- Do not rely on warning devices to clear traffic
- Scan the intersection for possible hazards (right turns on red, pedestrians, vehicles traveling fast etc.) as well as driver options
- Begin to slow down well before reaching the intersection and cover the brake pedal with the drivers foot, continue to scan in 4 directions (left, right, front,, back)
- Change the siren cadence not less than 200; from intersection
- Scan intersection for possible passing options (pass on right, left, wait, etc.) avoid using the opposing lane of traffic if at all possible
- Come to a complete stop
- Establish eye contact with other vehicle drivers; have partner communicate all is clear; reconfirm all other vehicles are stopped.

Railroad intersections

At any time an emergency vehicle driver approaches an unguarded rail crossing he/she shall bring the apparatus or vehicle he/she is operating to a complete stop before entering the grade crossing. In addition the emergency vehicle driver shall perform the following prior to proceeding:

- turn off all sirens and air horns
- operate the motor at idle speed
- turn off any other sound producing equipment or accessories
- open the windows and listen for a train's horn

Non-emergency response

When responding to a call in a non-emergency response mode or normal flow of traffic (non-code 3 or when 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.

Ordinary travel procedures

All drivers shall obey all traffic laws and traffic control devices when driving any fire department vehicle under ordinary travel conditions. Any driver observed breaking any traffic laws or driving any vehicle in an aggressive manner will be subject to disciplinary action including, suspension of driving privileges.

Riding policy

The department 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 emergency vehicle driver and/or the person riding in the officer position shall verify that all personnel are properly seated and in seat belts before the vehicle is moved. Standard communication signals should be formulated and utilized by all personnel.

The department prohibits the riding on tailboards, sidesteps, running boards, or any other exposed position.

Backing

The department recognizes that backing emergency vehicles is made hazardous by the fact that the driver cannot see much of where he/she intends to go. The department recommends that whenever possible drivers should avoid backing as the safest way to back up a vehicle is not to back up at all. When it is necessary to back-up any departmental vehicle all drivers shall follow one of the two following measures.

- The department's first choice of backing procedures is that before any vehicle is put into reverse and backed that a **spotter** be put in place near the rear of the vehicle. The spotter should be safely positioned so that the emergency vehicle driver can see them at all times. If at any time the emergency vehicle driver loses sight of the spotter, he/she shall stop immediately until the spotter makes himself/herself visible again.
- If conditions exist that make use of spotters impossible, all drivers, before attempting to back up any fire department vehicle, shall stop the vehicle and do a complete walk around the area intended to be travel to ensure it can be done safely; no person or persons are directly behind the vehicle or in its intended path of travel. The emergency vehicle driver should also note all potential obstructions in the intended path of travel.

The following abbreviations will be used through out the rest of this guideline.

ENG - Engine
ETE - Engine Tender
TE - Tender
TR- Truck
R - Rescue
BRU - Brush Unit
BT – Boat

The following listed below will represent the responses of the city and rural fire departments, but not limited too. When a fire occurs in the city the first Rural Engine will respond as mutual aid. When a fire occurs in the Rural, North of the City Station #2 and Station #3 will respond to all working structure fires and wildland fires. Station #2 and Station #3 will contact the incident commander on scene to see if response is necessary and for all other calls for assistance. On all rural structure fires and large emergencies one city engine will respond.

Note: All responses can and may be officer or senior firemen's discretion depending on the dispatch of the call given. These Guidelines / (SOG's) are only what is recommend per response. We will try to follow the SOG's as close as possible, but there will be times when they will not be followed.

301.00 – Alarms: Keep in mind they can and may be the same as the Structure fires;

ENG- minimum of 3 firefighters with at least 2 SCBA qualified and prepared for fire attack.

301.01 - Structure Fires, Unknown Fires, and Odors of Gas:

ENG- minimum of 3 firefighters with at least 2 SCBA qualified and prepared for fire attack.

ENG- minimum of 3 firefighters with at least 2 SCBA qualified and prepared for water supply.

TR- Minimum of 3 firefighters with at least 2 SCBA qualified and prepared for search and rescue, ventilation.

Rural ENG- Minimum of 3 firefighters and prepared to be the RIT team.

R- minimum of 1 firefighter and a maximum of 3 and be prepared as assigned.

301.02 - Rural Fires:

ENG- minimum of 3 firefighters with at least 2 SCBA qualified and prepared for fire attack.

TE- Minimum of 1 firefighter to provide water supply.

ENG- minimum of 3 firefighters with at least 2 SCBA qualified and prepared for fire attack.

R- minimum of 1 firefighter and a maximum of 3 and be prepared as assigned.

ETE- Minimum of 1 firefighter to provide water supply. When 326 will be first on scene ,it will respond with a minimum of 2 firefighters.

City ENG- minimum of 3 firefighters with at least 2 SCBA qualified and prepared for water supply.

Members may respond in their own personal vehicles as long as proper turnout gear is secured, have to drive by the alarm or all of the apparatus has left the station. **All members will follow the departments' accountability program once they arrive on scene.**

301.03 - Brush, Grass Fires and Wildfires:

All Brush Units with 2 firefighters minimum and 3 maximum.

301.04 - Dumpster and Rubbish Fires:

ENG- minimum of 3 firefighters with at least 2 SCBA qualified and prepared for fire attack.

All other apparatus will standby in quarters with full crews.

If the dispatch advises that structures are threatened then:

ENG- to respond minimum of 3 firefighters with at least 2 SCBA qualified and prepared for fire attack. 1- ENG to stand by in the fire station with full crews and wait for directions from the incident commander.

TE- Minimum of 1 firefighter to provide water supply.

R- minimum of 1 firefighter and a maximum of 3 and be prepared as assigned.

Additional units may respond if needed.

301.05 - Vehicle Fires:

2- ENG's with a minimum of 3 firefighters with at least 2 SCBA qualified.

R- minimum of 1 firefighters and a maximum of 3 and be prepared as assigned.

BRU- with a minimum of 2 firefighters to assist in traffic control.

Tender to stand by in quarters with full crews.

301.06 - Motor Vehicle Crashes:

Note: If dispatch advises that there is entrapment or unknown entrapment the Resuce will go first with 2 qualified people.

ENG-minimum of 3 firefighters with at least 2 SCBA and Hurst Tool qualified to perform extrication and fire control. This unit may be called upon to assist in hazardous materials control with its members who are qualified.

R- minimum of 1 firefighter and a maximum of 3 and be prepared as assigned.

Crashes in Rural areas such as Buffalo Bridge/Irvine Flats: Due to the Rural District response area the following may apply as follows;

ENG or ENG/TE- The closest engine will respond (if the call is Buffalo Bridge/Irvine Flats area 333 or 337 will respond) if in the event that 333 or 337 cannot respond the next closest engine

will respond. A minimum of 3 firefighters with at least 2 SCBA and Hurst Tool qualified to perform extrication and fire control.

R- Minimum of 1 firefighter and a maximum of 3 and be prepared as assigned.

ENG- and Tender to standby in quarters with full crews

Bru- This unit will be enroute as quick as possible. The brush unit needs to be enroute after the engine and rescue units filled in case the incident requires the use of a 4x4 unit to get equipment and personnel to the scene.

Note: Jaws requests outside the Polson Fire Department boundaries will require notification of the proper fire department for engine support.

301.07 - Bomb Threats:

Only when called and will follow structure fire response and stage at a safe area.

301.08 - Water Emergencies:

BRU- with 2 firefighters to secure the boat when not in the slip at marina slip #22

Boat will respond when called for. The boat will respond with a minimum of two firefighters one of which will be a pilot.

1- ENG. zoned response to assist as need

The incident commander will call upon any additional units.

301.09 - Wires Down:

ENG.- with a minimum of 3 firefighters.

BRU- with 2 firefighters.

The incident commander will call any additional units.

301.10 - Mutual Aid:

At the request of the requesting incident commander.

If an ENG is requested, ENG will respond with a minimum of 4 firefighters with 3 SCBA qualified.

If a TE is requested, TE will respond with a minimum of 1 qualified operator.

301.11 – Medical Assist Calls (EMS):

To either respond with 301 or 302 command vehicle or take an engine with a minimum of 3 fire fighters.

301.12 – Ice Rescue:

R - minimum of 2 firefighters and a maximum of 3 and be prepared for ice rescue.

ENG - minimum of 3 firefighters with at least 2 ice rescue qualified.

Additional units may respond if needed.

301.13 - Number Personnel on Apparatus

Engine –	3-minimum – 5-maximum (3-1-1 and 3-1-8/ 3-minimum – 6-maximum)
Truck-	3-minimum – 5-maximum
Tender –	1-minimum – 2-maximum
Brush-	2-minimum –3-maximum
Rescue –	1-minimum – 3-maximum
Boat -	2-minimum –6-maximum

If a chief officer is on the scene, each apparatus crew shall remain with their apparatus and wait for direction. If no chief officer is on the scene, the officer or senior firefighter shall assume incident command and direct the other responding apparatus on their assignment.