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| **Operation of Personally Owned Vehicles** | Related Policies: Apparatus Safety |
| *This policy is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee’s civil liability in any way. The policy should not be construed as creating a higher duty of care, in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party civil claims against employees. A violation of this policy, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department for non-judicial administrative action in accordance with the laws governing employee discipline.* |
| Applicable KY Statutes: KRS Ch. 189.910-189.950Applicable KY Regulations: 803 KAR 2:015 Section 6 |
| NFPA Standard: 1451; 1500 Ch. 6.1, 6.2 |
| Date Implemented: | Review Date: |

1. **Policy:** When responding to alarms and while engaged in other fire department activities, personally owned vehicles shall be operated in a manner that provides for the safety of personnel and the public, with safe arrival at an emergency scene having a clear priority over unnecessary speed and reckless driving en route to an emergency incident.
2. **Purpose:** The purpose of this standard operating procedure is to provide a uniform policy governing the response of members to incidents in their private vehicles. The overriding concern is safety of responding firefighters and the public.
3. **Definitions**

**Emergency warning lights:** Red flashing lights that pursuant to state law consist of “one (1) or more flashing, rotating, or oscillating red lights, visible under normal atmospheric conditions from a distance of five hundred (500) feet to the front of the vehicle, and a siren, whistle, or bell, capable of emitting a sound audible under normal conditions from a distance of not less than five hundred (500) feet.”

**Audible warning device:** A siren, whistle or bell capable of emitting sound audible under normal conditions from a distance of not less than five hundred feet.

**POV:** Personally owned vehicle.

**Fire department authorized POV:** A personally owned vehicle registered to a member of the fire department that has been approved by the fire chief to have emergency warning lights and audible warning devices installed and/or used when responding to alarms.

1. **Use of Fire Department Authorized POVs**
2. Emergency warning lights and audible warning devices may only be installed in a member’s POV if approved by the fire chief.
3. Only vehicles that carry a minimum liability insurance coverage of $100,000 shall be approved for use by the fire chief as a fire department authorized POV. A valid copy of the insurance certificate shall be submitted and maintained on file by the fire chief.

1. Any member operating a fire department authorized POV in accordance with this policy must carry on his or her person an identification card or letter identifying them as a bona fide member of this fire department. The card or letter shall include:
	1. the name of the fire department
	2. the member's position within the fire department
	3. the member's term of service
	4. the name of a person within the fire department to contact to verify the information provided
	5. the date issued
	6. the date of expiration, which shall be one year after the date issued
2. No member shall operate a fire department authorized POV without an up to date card or letter in their possession.
3. The fire chief shall issue appropriate cards or letters on an annual basis to those members who are authorized to operate a fire department authorized POV. The cards or letters shall expire one year after issuance.
4. Emergency warning lights and audible warning devices that have been installed in a POV with the fire chief’s approval may only be operated when the vehicle is being driven by a member who has been approved by the fire chief.
5. Fire department authorized POVs shall be operated in full compliance with the Apparatus Safety standard operating procedure for all matters pertaining to seat belts, non-emergency travel, emergency response, responding with caution, and normal traffic response.

1. Fire department authorized POVs shall only be operated with emergency warning lights and audible warning devices activated while responding to an emergency. Emergency response shall be discontinued when required under the Apparatus Safety SOP.
2. Emergency warning lights on fire department authorized POVs may be used at an incident scene with extreme caution when necessary to alert traffic to an emergency situation in the roadway, or adjacent to the roadway. Fire department authorized POVs should only perform this function in emergency situations until fire apparatus or law enforcement arrives and can take over. POVs shall not be used for blocking or shielding.
3. **POV Operation**
4. **POV in General**
5. Personnel shall operate POVs in a safe and prudent manner at all times while responding to alarms and otherwise engaging in fire department activities.
6. Personnel are required to wear seat belts while operating POVs in response to alarms and while otherwise engaged in fire department activities. In addition, personnel operating POVs shall ensure that any passengers in the POV are wearing seat belts. In the event the operator is unable to ensure seat belt compliance by passengers, the operator shall discontinue the response or discontinue engaging in the fire department activity.
7. Aggressive or reckless driving will not be tolerated by any personnel responding to alarms and members who engage in aggressive or reckless driving will be subject to severe punishment, up to and including termination.
8. Personnel shall drive ***defensively*** when responding to alarms, and shall be prepared for the unexpected inappropriate actions of others.
9. Any POV used to respond to alarms shall carry the minimum state-required level of insurance. In addition, fire department authorized POVs shall carry a minimum of $100,000 of liability coverage, and the member shall maintain a copy of his/her insurance certificate on file with the fire chief.
10. Upon hearing apparatus being dispatched to an alarm, members are expected to report to the fire station, if possible. This requirement serves two purposes:
11. Ensures that apparatus have drivers and are adequately staffed.
12. Reduces the traffic congestion at the incident.

**Editor’s Note**: Fire departments that want firefighters to respond to the scene should replace this provision with: *Upon hearing apparatus being dispatched to an alarm, members are expected to report to the fire station or the incident scene, as the situation dictates*.

1. Officers may respond directly to the scene for size up and advance planning of apparatus placement.
2. If personnel must respond directly to the scene, they are to obey all traffic laws and the Apparatus Safety SOP. Personnel following behind apparatus must follow fire apparatus by a minimum of 500 feet and obey all traffic signals. Passing of apparatus or other responding personnel is prohibited.
3. Upon arrival at the scene, personnel arriving in POVs shall:
4. Park on the same side of the road as the incident when ever feasible, or park off the road in a lawful parking lot.
5. Park a minimum of 200 feet from the incident, to allow emergency vehicles access to the scene.
6. Park in a manner that does not restrict the flow of traffic.
7. Report to the Accountability Officer, as appropriate, for assignment.
8. **This section applies to personally owned vehicles that do not constitute fire department authorized POVs.**
9. Personnel operating POVs shall comply with all motor vehicle laws of the state.

1. Personnel operating POVs in response to alarms have no greater rights than any other civilian vehicle on the road.
2. Personnel responding to alarms in POVs are prohibited from exceeding the posted speed limit, passing through red traffic lights, passing through stops signs without stopping, passing through yield signs without yielding, passing vehicles in no passing zones, operating the wrong way on one-way streets, or parking in no parking zones.
3. Personnel responding to alarms in POVs must yield the right of way to duly authorized emergency vehicles including fire department authorized POVs.