



## **VOLUNTEER DRIVER VEHICLE OPERATIONS**

NOTE: Emergency response personnel shall use mobile equipment in a manner providing maximum protection for the general public.

### **OFF-ROAD APPARATUS OPERATIONS**

When required to operate fire apparatus off road to abate an emergency, it shall only be done within the design limitations as recommended by the manufacturer. Operators must consider the angles of approach and departure and take care to avoid high centering when operating off paved roads.

- Headlights and taillights shall remain illuminated at all times the vehicle is in operation off-road. In addition, emergency lights shall be illuminated whenever visibility is less than 300 feet. Move quickly through soft, loose, muddy areas to prevent bogging down. Maintain smooth steady speed/RPM. Don't lock brakes on a downhill slope. When crossing watercourses maintain a slight pressure on the brakes to keep pads and linings dry.
- Park across slope if possible. Utilize both chock blocks. Continually assess the situation to ensure that an escape route is available.
- When returning to paved road check the undercarriage for damage, check the tires for damage, make certain that the lug nuts are tight and remove any rocks lodged between dual tires.
- When traversing a side-hill reduce speed and keep the vehicle to the upper side of the roadway.

### **CHOCK BLOCKS**

- All County Fire equipment shall be equipped with the correct number of chock blocks.
- Each individual operator of County Fire mobile equipment has the primary responsibility to park his/her vehicle in a safe and secure manner based on conditions.
- Chock blocks shall be used whenever a volunteer/employee is under a vehicle, e.g., performing preventive maintenance, repair, etc.

### **BACKING**

- Vision to the rear is often impaired by the vehicle's body construction. This is particularly true in vehicles larger than pickups or sedans.
- To reduce vehicle-backing accidents, a backing guide will be used whenever a vehicle is moved backwards, and a guide is available.

- The guide must be told where the driver intends to go. Even when using a guide, the driver is responsible for the vehicle.
- The guide stands behind the vehicle on the side of greatest danger. The guide stands diagonally off the rear corner; far enough back to stay clear of the vehicle yet close enough to be seen in the mirror by the driver. The guide will use four standard signals.

## **GOLDEN CIRCLE**

Prior to vehicle movement, the driver shall walk around vehicle and inspect the area before moving forward or backwards.

## **VEHICLE SAFETY INSPECTIONS**

County Fire equipment should be inspected for safety elements weekly and after each response before returning the equipment to service.

## **WINCH OPERATIONS**

- Before commencing winch operations, the operator shall ascertain that the winch has sufficient capacity for the task at hand.
- The vehicle on which the winch is mounted shall face within fifteen degrees of the same direction as the cable and be securely parked.
- Do not winch and drive the vehicle at the same time. Use a purchase point on the object being moved that is sufficiently strong.
- Replace any cable or wire rope that is worn or frayed.
- Cable failures, while under strain, may cause a violent whipping action across this entire area. Do not straddle or step over winch cable during winching operations.
- Do not stand near the cable or winch while winching if the cable, chain, hook, etc. breaks the cable can hit a person with enough force to cause great bodily harm.
- Do not stand behind a vehicle while it is being winched.
- Do not allow any persons within the bight area of the cable.
- Post an assistant in a safe position in plain view of the engine operator to observe and stop the winching operation. If the winch operator loses sight of the assistant, stop the winching operation immediately.
- NOTE: Never wrap cable around stationary object, always wrap object with tow chain and attach hook to chain.

## **SNATCH BLOCK OPERATIONS**

- Use the snatch block whenever possible; this reduces the chance of cable breakage or damage. Wrap tow chain around an immovable object/anchor.
- Do not use telephone or power poles or dead or diseased trees as an anchor.
- Do not stand in the areas between the legs of the cable run.
- Failure of the snatch block may result in a serious injury. Do not exceed rated capacity of the snatch block or winch cable.

## **REWINDING SAFETY**

- While rewinding, never allow the person guiding the cable to get so close to the engine that he/she is obscured from the driver's vision.
- Do not allow the cable to slide through hands even with gloves on.
- Pass cable hand over hand to guide it onto the drum.
- Gloves are to be worn at all times during winch operations.

## **BRIDGES**

- When traversing bridges, gross vehicle weight limitations shall not be exceeded except by permit granted by the appropriate engineering authority or during suppression activities.
- If no limitation is posted, inspect the bridge, including the underside. Look for concrete abutments with firmly planted foundations. Girders should be steel or concrete. Wood members should span only short distances (10 feet or less), be stout, and not be old or rotten. Consider offloading water and equipment. Have firefighters walk across the bridge after the vehicle crosses.
- If the bridge is questionable, do not traverse it. Develop an alternate route and communicate the deficiency to other units.

## **SUBSTANCE ABUSE WHILE OPERATING A COUNTY VEHICLE**

When the operator of a commercial motor vehicle is involved in an accident, he/she may be tested for alcohol and controlled substances if the following circumstances exist:

- The operator was using the vehicle to perform safety sensitive functions and the accident involved the loss of human life; or
- The operator received a citation under state or local law for a moving violation arising from an accident the accident involved bodily injury requiring treatment away from the scene and/or resulted in damage to vehicle that required the vehicle to be towed or transported away.