



# PARADIS VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

## STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE

# EMERGENCY RESPONSE USING PERSONALLY OWNED VEHICLES

### **1.0** Purpose and Scope

**1.1** **Purpose:** To provide authorization requirements and operational guidelines for use of privately owned vehicles in an emergency manner.

**1.2** **Scope:** These guidelines apply to all Paradis Volunteer Fire Department members responding to incidents in privately owned vehicles

### **2.0** Definitions

**2.1** **True Emergency-** Any situation in which there is a HIGH PROBABILITY of death or serious injury to an individuals or potential property loss; and actions by an emergency vehicle driver may reduce the seriousness of the situation.

**2.2** **Emergency Warning Devices-** Visual (emergency lights) and audible (sirens) devices used when responding to a Paradis Volunteer Fire Department emergency call.

### **3.0** Responsibilities

#### **3.1** Fire Chief

3.1.1 Authorizes use of privately owned vehicles for emergencies

3.1.2 Ensures compliance with requirements of these guidelines

3.1.3 Assigns compliance officers

#### **3.2** Compliance officers

3.2.1 Review guidelines to maintain compliance with all applicable Louisiana vehicle laws

3.2.2 Validates compliance with the guidelines and completes checklist

#### **3.3** Paradis Volunteer Fire Department members

3.3.1 Verify that privately owned vehicle insurance policy is valid for specified use.

3.3.2 Operate privately owned vehicle and emergency warning devices in compliance with these guidelines.

3.3.3 Maintain privately owned vehicle in good working order.

- 3.3.4 Attend VFIS Privately Owned Vehicle Emergency Drivers' Training annually.
- 3.3.5 Review and understand current Paradis Volunteer Fire Department Guidelines, local laws, and state laws pertaining to the operation of an authorized emergency vehicle.

## **4.0** Guidelines

### **4.1** Authorization to operate privately owned vehicle

- 4.1.1 Members of the Paradis Volunteer Fire Department may be granted authorization under Louisiana State Law to operate his privately owned vehicle in an emergency manner at the discretion of the Fire Chief.
- 4.1.2 The Fire Chief designates authorization by issuing and signing the back of the Paradis Volunteer Fire Department Privately Owned Vehicle Emergency Card.
- 4.1.3 It is the responsibility of the individual member to verify with his automobile insurance carrier that their insurance is valid when the vehicle will be operated in an emergency manner.
- 4.1.4 In order to operate a privately owned vehicle in an emergency manner; the member shall:
  - 4.1.4.1 Be an active PVFD member in good standing.
  - 4.1.4.2 Have obtained the minum of a yellow helmet (interior firefighter status) or minimum First Responder for medical response.
  - 4.1.4.3 Be a minimum of 18 years of age.
  - 4.1.4.4 Attend a VFIS Privately Owned Vehicles Class and Practical Training
  - 4.1.4.5 Be given written authorization to operate each privately owned vehicle as an Authorized Emergency Vehicle by the Fire Chief or Compliance Officer.
  - 4.1.4.6 Completed PVFD Computer Based Training on driver training.
  - 4.1.4.7 Possess a current State of Louisiana Driver's License and current insurance information should be kept on file by PVFD
  - 4.1.4.8 Be familiar with and adhere to all laws pertaining to operation of emergency vehicles.
  - 4.1.4.9 Follow all guidelines as currently set forth by PVFD.
  - 4.1.4.10 Be aware that this authorization is granted ONLY for a member of PVFD operating his own personal vehicle.

### **4.2** Requirements for Authorized Emergency Operation of Privately Owned Vehicles

- 4.2.1 The following items must be carried in the vehicle at all times

- 4.2.1.1 Current, valid vehicle registration
- 4.2.1.2 Proof of current insurance
- 4.2.1.3 Current State of Louisiana Operator's license
- 4.2.1.4 Written documentation from the Fire Chief granting authorization to operate as an Emergency Vehicle.

#### **4.3 All vehicles must be equipped with audible and visual emergency warning devices**

- 4.3.1.1 Lights- Red only, red and white, red and amber, or combination of those colors that include a pattern of light that is either alternating, flashing, or rotating which is discernable in all directions. Lights shall have sufficient intensity to be visible at 500 feet in normal sunlight. All vehicle warning lights for emergency purposes should comply with all requirements of the law.
- 4.3.1.2 Rear facing lights may be either red or amber/red. White rear facing lights should not be used to avoid impairing oncoming drivers.
- 4.3.1.3 Audible electronic sirens must have a minimum output of 58 watts.

#### **4.4 Guidelines for Use of Authorized Privately Owned Vehicles**

- 4.4.1.1 Authorized Paradis Volunteer Fire Department members shall use extreme caution when responding to emergencies in privately owned vehicles. These vehicles are not as visible or recognizable to the public as the distinguishably marked fire apparatus or department vehicles. Always remember that you are responsible for operating your vehicle with due regard for the safety of all persons during your response. Flashing lights and blaring sirens sometimes confuse other drivers. Be patient and understanding to those around you.
- 4.4.1.2 Concerning congested "vehicle or pedestrian" traffic areas or areas with no shoulders or reduced shoulder widths: use of emergency lights and siren shall be limited in use, or not be utilized, to provide due regard of the safety of all persons.
- 4.4.1.3 Firefighters are required to follow all Louisiana State Vehicle Laws. A copy of statuses related to the operation of an emergency vehicle will be issued in the privately owned vehicle Emergency Driver's class.
- 4.4.1.4 PVFD members are to use personal emergency warning devices only within the PVFD district responding to a potential true emergency in the PVFD district, and/or when ordered to do so by the officer-in-charge.
- 4.4.1.5 The primary usage of emergency lighting is to respond to a PVFD station to board an apparatus for response to potential true emergencies.
  - 4.4.1.5.1 Paradis Volunteer Fire Department members should make an attempt to respond to a station whenever possible, especially when the incident is located on a highway in the district. This serves to reduce exposure to members

on these roadways, reduce the congestion of additional vehicles on emergency scenes, to provide for accountability of members, and the improve response with personnel numbers on PVFD equipment.

- 4.4.1.6 When responding, it is understood that there will be times where members will potentially pass the scene of an incident to reach a fire station. Responding members should make all attempts to reach a station whenever possible to ensure response of supporting equipment to mitigate the incident.
- 4.4.1.7 Paradis Volunteer Fire Department officers should validate the appropriate route for response based on incident location, proximity to the nearest station, tactical need, equipment needed to mitigate the incident. The standard operating guideline allows PVFD officers to make tactical decisions based on the above-mentioned criteria and determine if direct response to an incident is required.
- 4.4.1.8 Both audible and visual warning devices should be used when responding to a PVFD potential true emergency call. Failure to do so is dangerous, violates these guidelines, and may result in suspension or revocation of emergency driving privileges.
- 4.4.1.9 Three response codes are used to indicate the type of response a Paradis Volunteer Fire Department member should use when responding to a call:
  - 4.4.1.9.1 Code 1: No lights or siren. Obey all traffic laws.
  - 4.4.1.9.2 Code 2: Lights on, siren as needed.
  - 4.4.1.9.3 Code 3: Lights and Siren Operating.
    - 4.4.1.9.3.1 Paradis Volunteer Fire Department members are not to exceed the posted speed limit by more than 10 mph
- 4.4.1.10 When responding code 3 to a call and the order is given to respond code 1, members shall turn-off all emergency warning devices and proceed to the scene or station obeying all posted speed limits and traffic laws.
- 4.4.1.11 In cases where a firefighter responds to the scene in his privately owned vehicle, the member should park his vehicle in a location away from the fire ground to allow clear access for incoming emergency vehicles. The vehicle should be properly parked to avoid becoming a hazard. Whenever possible, vehicles should be parked off the roadway.
- 4.4.1.12 Members should drive in the left lane of a multi-lane road if emergency warning devices are activated.
- 4.4.1.13 Any member that has consumed alcoholic beverages prior to a call shall not respond to any calls; nor shall they operate any emergency vehicles.

4.4.1.14 Any member that is taking prescription drugs and/or over the counter medication that could impair his judgement or physical coordination shall not respond to any incident, nor shall he operate an emergency vehicle.

**4.5** Paradis Volunteer Fire Department members responding in privately owned vehicles with emergency warning devices must always remember that that they are placing themselves, the PVFD, and the Fire Chief in a position of liability if a traffic accident occurs.

**4.6** Failure to comply with any part of these guidelines may result in the suspension or revocation of emergency driving privileges.

## **5.0 Approval**

---

Fire Chief, PVFD

---

Effective Date

---

Firefighter member