

Operating Guideline # 201

Seat Belts

Created January 21, 2020

Reviewed June 16, 2022



PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Operating Guideline (OG) is to establish guidelines to provide for the use of seatbelts while personnel are travelling in their privately owned vehicles or in departmental vehicles.

ISSUE/RATIONALE:

Collisions involving fire apparatus are a major cause of injury and death to firefighters. Activities that require any occupant to leave their seated and belted position while riding on a moving vehicle, such as dressing in protective clothing, may result in serious injuries or death should the vehicle make a sudden stop or collide with other vehicles or stationary objects.

There is an exemption in Regulation 613 (Seat Belt Assemblies) made under the Highway Traffic Act that states that a "firefighter occupying a seating position behind the driver's cab in a fire department vehicle.....is exempt" from wearing a seat belt "where the performance of work activities make it impracticable to wear a seat belt assembly". Notwithstanding this exemption, it is the policy of the Muskoka Lakes Fire Department that all firefighters remain belted in while apparatus is in motion (no exceptions).

Where firefighters are assisting Emergency Medical Services personnel in an ambulance attending to a patient, seatbelts must likewise be worn.

In the event that an emergency incident is received when an apparatus is returning from an emergency or other duties that require the occupants to remove their seat belt and/or stand up to don bunker gear prior to responding, the vehicle should be safely pulled over to the side of the road and stopped to allow for the donning of the required protective equipment. Thereafter, it is a good health and safety practice for firefighters to return to their respective seats and fasten their seat belts prior to continuing to the emergency response.

GUIDELINE:

1. All personnel travelling in a moving fire department vehicle shall occupy a seat equipped with a seat belt and shall wear the seat belt provided, properly adjusted.
2. When responding to an emergency incident, all personnel riding in or operating a privately owned vehicle or in department vehicles shall wear seat belts. Emergency Vehicle Operators (EVO's) will ensure that all passengers are properly seated and seat belts are fastened prior to the apparatus being placed into motion.
3. Upon confirming that all personnel are wearing seat belts, the EVO shall ensure that a broadcast is made over the department radio to dispatch, that seat belts are being worn by all personnel. This information can be included in the standard broadcast to dispatch informing them that the apparatus is being moved. An example of such broadcasts could include:

Operating Guideline # 201

Seat Belts

Created January 21, 2020

Reviewed June 16, 2022



“Muskoka Lakes Fire Dispatch, Muskoka Lakes Pumper One responding to 4029 highway 169, Par two, all belted in for a report of”

4. Personnel are to don their personal protective clothing prior to entering the apparatus, or dress upon arrival at the scene. Personnel shall **not** dress while enroute to the scene. (SEE ALSO MLFD OG516 - Dressing on Fire Apparatus)

RESPONSIBILITY:

It is the responsibility of all staff to comply with the provisions of this Operating Guideline.

DEFINITIONS:

“Emergency Vehicle Operator” (EVO) means a Muskoka Lakes firefighter who has taken the necessary courses of instruction and have been approved by the Fire Chief to drive Emergency Vehicles.

REFERENCES:

- Section 21 Committee Guidance Note, GN-1-01, Fire Truck Occupant Safety
- Highway Traffic Act, RSO
- MLFD OG 516 – Dressing on Fire Apparatus