

Operating Guideline # 401

Emergency Vehicle Operator (EVO)

October 2, 2019



**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this Operating Guideline (OG) is to describe the manner in which persons who are selected to drive and operate fire department front line apparatus and support vehicles are designated and to set out the minimum qualifications for drivers of these vehicles.

**ISSUE/RATIONALE:**

Firefighters are called upon to drive a variety of Fire Department vehicles under both routine and emergency response conditions. These vehicles range from passenger type vehicles (SUV's/Pick-up trucks) to heavy trucks such as pumpers and tankers. Each type of vehicle has different control and handling characteristics and therefore the skill of the operator is a key factor when addressing safety. To prevent injuries to firefighters and members of the public as a result of vehicle collisions, it's imperative that fire department vehicle operators be properly trained and that they possess the requisite knowledge, skills and ability to operate these vehicles under challenging weather and emergency response conditions.

**GUIDELINE:**

**General**

1. The basis of the Muskoka Lakes Fire Department "Emergency Vehicle Operators" program is centered around two core elements. Firstly, strict adherence to the laws of Ontario in terms of licensing requirements and observance of the "rules of the road" as described in the Ontario "Highway Traffic Act". Secondly, adequate training is paramount to providing a good foundation for all vehicle operators so that driving and operating skills can be developed in a safe and controlled manner.
2. The driver of any fire department vehicle shall, at all times, be the holder of a valid Ontario driver's license of the proper class (along with any required endorsements) for the vehicle being operated. **Exception** - drivers who are enrolled in the departmental EVO training program who are under the direct supervision of a designated "Driver Trainer" may possess a valid class of license for the next less restrictive class as permitted by the Highway Traffic Act.
3. All fire department apparatus must be operated in accordance with the provisions of the Highway Traffic Act both under normal and emergency response conditions. The driver of the vehicle/apparatus is at all times responsible for the safe operation of the vehicle and the safety of the crew and the general public encountered whilst driving. The driver alone is responsible for all driving actions undertaken.
4. Under no circumstances may departmental vehicles be driven or operated by someone under the influence of alcohol, prescription drugs (where the use of the drugs is accompanied by a warning about the potential for impairment of any sort) or non-prescription drugs.
5. Any member of the department holding a valid class G drivers license may operate a vehicle which requires a class G license only under normal driving conditions (non-emergency use – no emergency lights/siren).

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6. As a condition of employment, each member of the department agrees and acknowledges that the fire department obtains regular “drivers abstracts” for all personnel on a regular basis, and that individuals who are identified as having poor driving habits as indicated by convictions registered against their drivers license are subject to such sanctions as deemed necessary by the fire chief.

**EVO-I – OPERATOR NON EMERGENCY**

7. Persons may be designated as an EVO-I by the Fire Chief or his designate when the following two conditions are met:

a) they have a valid Class “G” Ontario Driver’s License or greater (Class A, B, C, D, E or F) *and*

b) they have completed the departmental “Emergency Vehicle Operators” (EVO) Course as administered by the Training Division.

8. Only persons designated as an EVO-I are permitted to operate any departmental vehicle requiring a class G license under normal and emergency response conditions.

**EVO-II – PUMP OPERATORS AND DZ DRIVERS**

10. Persons may be designated as an EVO-II by the Fire Chief or his designate when the following four conditions are met:

a) they have a valid Class “D” Ontario Driver’s License or greater (Class A, B, or C) with the “Z” (Air Brake) endorsement;

b) they have completed the departmental “Emergency Vehicle Operators” (EVO) Course as administered by the Training Division;

c) they have completed the departmental required “Pump Operations” course; *and*

d) they have driven a sufficient number of hours on each specific apparatus in their station under the supervision of a designated departmental “Driver Trainer” and have demonstrated that they possess the appropriate knowledge, skills and abilities to safely operate the apparatus.

11. Persons designated as an EVO-II are permitted to operate any vehicle in the fire department fleet under normal and emergency response conditions (lights and siren).

**Fire Department Tankers**

12. Fire Department tankers present additional driver challenges because of the increased weight that the large quantity of water being carried presents. In all cases, but especially when operating tankers with partial loads, EVO-II’s must always operate these vehicle at safe speeds keeping in mind that water loads can shift (even in tanks with baffles) creating instability during directional changes, braking, adverse weather conditions or on compromised roadways. EVO-II’s MUST also be aware of the total weight of the apparatus being driven, and should avoid moving onto the shoulder. Operation of tankers on unpaved roadways (or parking lots) should only be undertaken after an evaluation of the roadway confirms that it is able to withstand the weight of the vehicle.

13. Only departmental personnel who have completed their probationary term shall be considered as EVO-II candidates.

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**RESPONSIBILITY:**

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

**DEFINITIONS:**

**“Driver Trainer” means** a person designated by the Training Division as having the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to supervise a new driver learning to drive a large fire department apparatus such as a pumper or tanker.

**REFERENCES:**

- Highway Traffic Act as amended from time to time
- Section 21 Committee Guidance Note GN 6-7, Driving Skills for Emergency Apparatus Response
- Section 21 Committee Guidance Note GN6-25, Safety Considerations for Fire Department Tankers
- MLFD OG 402, EVO Standing Orders
- MLFD OG 403, Pre and Post Trip Inspections
- MLFD OG 404, Reversing Apparatus
- All 500 series OG’s.
- Pumping Apparatus Driver/Operator Handbook Third Edition
- VFIS Emergency Vehicle Driver Training