

# VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATION PRIVATELY OWNED VEHICLES



## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR COLUMBIA-RICHLAND COUNTY FIRE SERVICES

### A. SCOPE

This protocol is designed to set forth procedures for Volunteer Firefighters who apply for certification to operate an authorized, privately owned vehicle for the purpose of responding to fire and emergency scenes. The privately owned Authorized Emergency Vehicle as set forth in section 56-6-170 of the South Carolina Code of Law, and defined as: A vehicle designated by the County Fire Marshal which is used to transport an emergency worker to an actual fire or emergency, under the conditions specified in this and other relevant county and city policies, and as set forth in section 56-5-4970 and 56-5-4700 of the South Carolina Code of Law.

### B. APPLICATION

- A. Any Richland County Volunteer Firefighter seeking certification to operate an authorized, privately owned emergency vehicle must complete an application with the Richland County Fire Marshal's Office.
  1. The application is available on the RCESD Webpage.
  2. The application is available by email request: [kingm@rcgov.us](mailto:kingm@rcgov.us).
- B. The Volunteer Firefighter shall:
  1. Ensure all application captions are completed.
  2. Ensure the application is notarized
  3. Ensure their Volunteer District Chief and/or Senior Station Officer reviews and recommends approval or non-approval, and signs and dates the application.
  4. Ensure the CRFD Volunteer Coordinator certifies the Volunteer's status as a Firefighter (including station assignment), and signs and dates the application.
- C. The following documents shall be obtained, and included with the submission of the application:
  1. Current 10 year driving record
    - i. Driving record must demonstrate a safe driving history.
  2. Digital photographs:
    - i. Applicant (head shot)
    - ii. Applicant's Vehicle (to include license tag)
      1. Digital Photos may be emailed to: [kingm@rcgov.us](mailto:kingm@rcgov.us)

3. Copy of EVDT/EVOC Certification.
4. Verification letter from Volunteer's private insurer of coverage during Volunteer Emergency Operations:
  - i. Must be on Insurer's Company letterhead.
5. A signed copy of this policy by both the volunteer and owner of the vehicle (if not the same person) agreeing to comply with all State, County, and City laws and regulations and policies relating to the operation of an emergency vehicle.
  - i. If the applicant does not own the vehicle listed on the application, he/she must submit a letter from the vehicle's owner authorizing the use of the vehicle in emergency service, and operation by the applicant.
- D. Once the application is completed, and all documentation obtained, the volunteer will forward the application package in its entirety to:
  1. The Richland County Fire Marshal; Attention Deputy Director Mike King
- E. The application package will be reviewed, and will be either tentatively approved (pending vehicle inspection results), or denied.
  1. If denied, the applicant will be contacted in order to be given the opportunity to provide additional information, and or explanation.
  2. If tentatively approved, the Volunteer will be contacted in order to schedule a vehicle inspection
  3. Once received, all application packages remain the property of the Richland County Emergency Services Department.

### **C. VEHICLE INSPECTION**

- A. The Richland County Fire Marshal, and/or designee will schedule a vehicle inspection with the Volunteer at a designated location and time. The inspection will include adherence of the vehicle's emergency lighting and audible warning systems to sections 56-5-4700 and 56-5-4970. Only permanently mounted, and wired emergency light systems will be approved. Magnet mounted lights and/or temporary power chord systems are prohibited.

### **D. I.D. CARD - VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION STICKER**

- A. Upon successful completion of the vehicle inspection, the Volunteer will be issued a photo I.D. card, and a vehicle decal will be issued and affixed to the vehicle's windshield, on the front driver's side by the Richland County Fire Marshal and/or designee.
  - a. The I.D. card and vehicle decal are valid for one (1) calendar year (January 1<sup>st</sup> – December 31<sup>st</sup>) regardless of the date of issuance.
  - b. The Volunteer Firefighter must submit another application for each subsequent calendar year.

### **E. OPERATION**

- A. The driver of an authorized vehicle, when responding to an emergency call, may exercise the privileges set forth in section 56-5-760 of the South Carolina Code of Laws and City and County policies:

- a. Park or stand, notwithstanding any other provision of law.
  - b. Proceed past a red or stop signal or stop sign, but only after slowing down and stopping as necessary to ensure right of way.
  - c. Exceed the maximum speed limit as long as he/she does not endanger life or property, however not more than five miles above the posted speed limits.
  - d. Disregard regulations governing direction of movement or turning in specific directions, but only after ensuring that the safety of others is not jeopardized.
- B. The exemptions herein granted to an authorized emergency vehicle shall apply only when such vehicle is making use of the approved audible and visual requirements contained in this policy in conjunction with responding to a bona fide fire emergency situation.
- C. The provisions of the state law, city, and county policies, shall not relieve the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons nor shall such provisions protect the driver from the consequences of his/her reckless disregard for the safety of others.**
- D. No authorized emergency vehicle shall respond with lights and siren to any emergency outside of his/her authorized response area except when authorized to respond to a mutual aid request, or to respond to a location in Richland County only accessible by traveling through a small portion of another County or jurisdiction.
- E. No passengers, other than current fire personnel are authorized to ride in the authorized emergency vehicle during response to a bona fide fire emergency.
- F. The certification of Volunteer Firefighter and/or vehicle may be revoked at any time for any reason without grievance.

**F. DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS**

Failure to comply with any section of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or termination of Volunteer privileges, as well as other penalties allowed under local and state law.

**Agreement Statement**

**I have read the terms and conditions stated in the above policy concerning use of privately owned vehicles for the purpose of responding to fire and emergency scenes and agree to follow all laws, policies, guidelines pertaining to the registration and operation of said vehicle. I further understand that failure to comply with any section of this policy may result in disciplinary actions and revocation of volunteer privileges.**

X \_\_\_\_\_  
**PRINTED NAME**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**SIGNATURE** **Date**

X \_\_\_\_\_  
**WITNESS SIGNATURE** **Date**