



Quaker Springs Fire District #1
107 Blodgett Road
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Vehicle Use Policy:

The Board of Fire Commissioners of the Quaker Springs Fire District # 1 ("District") defines the following policy on vehicle use. The Board's authority to manage the District fleet and to define policy concerning non-district-owned vehicles is derived under New York State Town Law, Article 11, Section 176.

PURPOSE: This policy provides guidance for the use of District-owned vehicles, the use of non-district-owned vehicles, insurance considerations for the use of non-district-owned vehicles, the use of Command vehicles, driver eligibility and procedures, the use of the New York State License Event Notification Service (LENS) program, procedures concerning accidents/incidents and policy responsibility/adherence.

DISTRICT-OWNED VEHICLES:

District-owned vehicles shall be used for emergency purposes when dispatched by Saratoga County Fire Communications or a Chief(s) and for non-emergency use as needed for QSFD functions, activities or events.

Persons who operate, supervise, or are permitted to use a District-owned vehicle shall ensure that the vehicle presents a clean, professional appearance at all times as practical, and that all of its equipment and supplies are properly cleaned, maintained, adjusted, stowed, secured and ready for use at any time.

Persons other than fire company members may ride in District-owned vehicles with the permission of the officer in charge of the apparatus with concurrence of the operator of the vehicle.

Persons other than fire company members may operate District-owned vehicles for the purpose of repairing the apparatus, or to conduct or receive training with the permission of a Chief(s).

Operators and passengers of all District-owned vehicles or apparatus shall wear seat belts at all times during the operation of the vehicle. No smoking is permitted in or on a District-owned vehicle at any time.

The Chief(s) may authorize the use of District-owned vehicles for training, testing, or Special Events including in pursuit of a Commercial Driver's License ("CDL").

NON-DISTRICT-OWNED VEHICLES:

The Board may authorize one or more of its Chief(s) or Officer(s) to designate their personal vehicle as an emergency response vehicle. In this case, the District may provide the necessary lights, radios, and sirens, including installation and removal, upon presentation of an estimate of cost and approval by the Board.

Chief(s) or Officer(s) using their personal vehicle as an authorized emergency response vehicle shall be provided with up to 80 gallons of fuel per month. Persons who receive a fuel allowance for their personal vehicles are responsible for any applicable taxes resulting from this benefit.

Other individual members who use their personal vehicles for District activities do so at their own expense and should be aware of the INSURANCE CONSIDERATIONS detailed below.

INSURANCE CONSIDERATIONS FOR USE OF NON-DISTRICT-OWNED VEHICLES: Based on available information and our understanding:

- The department member's own insurance coverage is primary for all coverages (liability, collision, comprehensive, personal injury, etc.) if the member has a loss when using their personal vehicle on District or Department business.
- The District's policy provides excess liability coverage, if the department member's own policy limits are exhausted, up to the limit of the District liability limits.
- If the department member has collision or comprehensive coverage (whichever applies to the loss), the District policy will reimburse the member for their deductible up to \$1,000 – but the member must submit a claim to their own carrier to collect this.
- If the department member does not have collision or comprehensive coverage (whichever applies to the loss), the District policy will pay for repairs to their vehicle, up to the actual cash value of the vehicle.
- New York State law mandates that a firefighter's personal insurance cannot be cancelled or surcharged (no increase in premiums) if an accident occurs while using a personal vehicle responding to a public emergency.
- New York State law mandates that the Supplemental Uninsured/Underinsured Motorist coverage on the District's policy applies to the department member's personal auto while they are acting within the scope of official District duties.

COMMAND VEHICLES:

The District may, at its option, make one or more Command Vehicles available to its Chief, Assistant Chief(s) or other appropriate personnel for District related business. In addition, these vehicles can be driven for personal use during non-emergency times subject to the following guidelines.

- Uses may include commuting to and from work, for errands or other tasks from which the operator of the vehicle can be available to respond to a District alarm within one hour.
- In situations where the officer for whom a Command Vehicle has been provided will not be available for response for more than 72 hours, the Chief or the Board Chairman may designate an alternate officer to have use of the vehicle, until such time as the regularly-assigned officer becomes available again.

The District will pay for the fuel, maintenance and operations cost of this vehicle. Persons who have use of a District owned Command vehicle are responsible for any applicable taxes resulting from this benefit.

DRIVER ELIGIBILITY AND PROCEDURES:

Authorization and Mastery: The Chief(s) (or designee, as needed to prevent conflicts of interest) and/or Training Officer hold the responsibility for granting authorization of vehicle use to train drivers/pump operators for exhibiting mastery of critical attributes. These attributes encompass maturity, experience, training, safety consciousness, mechanical proficiency, familiarity with the local geography, efficient water resource

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management, effective teamwork, adaptability, and the ability to maintain composure under pressure. The Chief must only authorize individuals that he/she feels can be entrusted with the significant responsibility of safely operating and maintaining the apparatus, with an unwavering commitment to community safety across all aspects of their duties.

TRAINING - Quaker Springs Fire District #1 shall permit all operators to be trained to drive District owned vehicles upon reaching 18 years of age with the following guidelines/restrictions:

- Operator is registered in the NYS LENS program
- Chief(s) or Training Officer approval

FLEET GUIDELINES FOR INDEPENDENT NON-TRAINING OPERATION OF PICKUPS / UTILITY VEHICLES:

- successful completion of Department training on the specific apparatus
- minimum of 6 months as an active QSFD member
- an 'acceptably' clean driving record per LENS report
- minimum of 18 years of age
- successful completion of EVOC course for emergency response
- minimum of 21 years of age for emergency operation
- minimum of 2 years normal driving experience for emergency response
- on Chief authorized driver list

FLEET GUIDELINES FOR INDEPENDENT NON-TRAINING OPERATION OF HEAVY FIRE APPARATUS (491, 492, 493, 496, 497):

- successful completion of Department training on the specific apparatus
- a minimum of 12 months as an active QSFD member
- an 'acceptably' clean driving record per LENS report
- minimum of 21 years of age for any independent or emergency operation
- successful completion of EVOC course for emergency response
- minimum of 2 years normal driving experience for emergency response
- on Chief authorized driver list

All drivers of district-owned vehicles must possess a valid New York State driver's license, and be registered with the New York State LENS program.

Qualification Oversight: The Chiefs and line officers are tasked with the enforcement of the driver qualification process as outlined in the Department's Standard Operating Guidelines and this policy. The Chief(s) and Training Officer maintain the authority to revoke a member's driver status at any time. The final decision regarding who can drive a District-owned vehicle and participate in an emergency response ultimately rests with the Chief (or designee, as necessary to prevent conflicts of interest).

Ongoing Evaluation: The Chief(s) will regularly assess each driver's eligibility based on personal observations, experiences, and information obtained from the New York State LENS program.

License Changes: In the event of a driver's license revocation or suspension, the driver is required to promptly report this to the Chiefs.

NYS LENS PROGRAM:

The New York State License Event Notification Service (LENS) program automatically notifies the District of driver license events as they post to driver's records. Events include suspension, revocation, restoration, expiration and renewal of driver licenses, changes to license class and privilege, traffic convictions, reportable accidents, defensive driver training, changes to HazMat endorsements and changes to MedCert status.

Drivers are required to complete a "*General Consent for Release of Personal Information*" so the District may receive this information.

A LENS administrator will be appointed annually by the District. This person will monitor the LENS reporting alerts and provide this information directly to the Chiefs.

ACCIDENTS / INCIDENTS:

The Chiefs shall be immediately informed of any motor vehicle accident with any degree of damage involving a District owned vehicle or personal vehicle involved in an accident or incident while responding to a fire service-related function as soon as practical after the occurrence of the event.

The Chief is responsible for following the steps detailed in the *Insurance Claim Reporting* policy.

POLICY RESPONSIBILITY / ENFORCEMENT:

District Personnel are responsible for complying with this policy. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action by the Chief and/or Board of Fire Commissioners.