**Purpose:** *To fulfill the department’s mission in a safe and expeditious manner, selected members have been issued fire department vehicles. This procedure establishes the assignment of and use of department issued vehicles.*

**Procedure:**

1. Fire department vehicles are issued to members for emergency response or so that certain department functions can be fulfilled as expeditiously as possible. Vehicles are not issued as a fringe benefit.

2. Assignment of department vehicles is at the discretion of the fire chief.

3. When operating a department vehicle, the operator must consider him/herself as “on-call” and available for and subject to emergency response or other department assignment as described below. Otherwise, members are not permitted to use the issued department vehicle.

4. Members operating department vehicles may use department vehicles for personal use subject to the following:

A. Member shall be available for, and respond to, any Third Alarm fire within Okolona, or any Level Three Hazardous Materials Incident within Okolona. Response time shall be 30 minutes or less in normal traffic while responding with lights and siren.

B. Member shall be available for response during extreme weather emergencies. Examples of extreme weather emergencies are major flooding, tornadoes and heavy snow. (Severe thunderstorms are not considered extreme weather emergencies.)

C. Member shall be available, within sixty (60) minutes of notification, for response to any other major public safety emergencies as directed by the fire chief.

D. It is important to note that for personal use to have no tax consequences all requirements of the following paragraph 5 must be met.

5. If Okolona Fire Protection District (OFPD) provides a vehicle that is used by an employee exclusively for OFPD business purposes and the IRS substantiation requirements are met, there are no tax consequences or IRS reporting required for that use (under Internal Revenue Service Guidelines existing as of July 9, 2019).

Use of a qualified non-personal use OFPD vehicle by any OFPD member, including commuting, is excludable to OFPD employees regarding IRS taxation and reporting as a working condition fringe benefit so long as:

A. The vehicle is clearly marked as a OFPD emergency vehicle.

B. The OFPD employee is required to use the emergency vehicle for commuting.

C. Personal use (other than commuting) for travel outside of the OFPD’s jurisdiction is prohibited. For purposes of OFPD jurisdiction boundaries, the jurisdiction shall include all areas comprised within the original metes and bounds legal description establishing OFPD as well as all areas where OFPD has a valid written mutual aid agreement with those fire protection districts and fire departments surrounding OFPD.

For any vehicle use not meeting those requirements in the preceding paragraph (A through C) then that use shall be deemed as personal use and the employee shall report that use along with the number of miles traveled. At that point the employee may either reimburse OFPD for that use (in accordance with IRS Guidelines) or that use may be reported to the IRS as taxable to the employee. In any event, no OFPD vehicle shall be operated for personal use more than ten (10) road miles outside of the jurisdictional boundaries of OFPD as defined in numbered paragraph three (3) above.

6. Members may operate department issued vehicles to and from fire department sponsored or approved training and education; meetings relating to the member’s assignment; participation in technical rescue teams and to other appropriate activities as approved by the fire chief. During these events, the response times described above are not applicable. If any of the above described events occur, the member should contact the fire chief, shift chief or his/her designee for instruction on whether to respond.

7. Members shall not operate department issued vehicles within eight (8) hours of consuming alcoholic beverages regardless of alcoholic content. This time may be lengthened depending upon the quantity consumed. In no case shall a member operate a department issued vehicle when his or her judgment may be impaired.

8. Members issued department vehicles shall ensure the vehicles are kept clean (both interior and exterior). No exceptions!

9. Members issued department vehicles are responsible for ensuring scheduled maintenance is performed when due. No exceptions!

10. Members operating department issued vehicles shall be reachable ~~by fire pager or assigned~~ cell phone number.

11. Members operating department issued vehicles shall take prudent security measures, such as locking vehicles, while members are away from the vehicle.

12. Members issued department vehicles unable to respond to incidents due to vacations, out of town travel, illnesses or other reasons in excess of 72 hours shall do one of the following: Pass the vehicle on to other officer or other suitable person, or secure the vehicle at one of the fire stations. For absences of less than 72 hours, the member may leave the vehicle at his or her home.

13. Members assigned fire department vehicles shall ensure one key to their vehicle is reasonably accessible to shift chief’s at stations one, two and three. This is to ensure that the vehicle may be retrieved if it is needed for fire department purposes, or if keys are inadvertently locked in vehicle.

14. Most importantly, those issued department vehicles shall understand that personal use is a privilege and not a right, and the vehicle is for the benefit of the department and not the individual member.

15. To conserve fuel, vehicles shall not be left idling while at scenes, unless the vehicle is doing traffic control functions, parked in the roadway or during adverse weather such as high or low temperatures.

16. During summer months, or any other time when the temperatures exceed 85 degrees, vehicles that must be left idling should have the hoods partially raised. The purpose of this is to avoid excessive heat buildup, which is detrimental to electrical components, such as alternators.

17. Usually department issued vehicles will have two (2) gasoline credit cards assigned, one from Thornton’s, the other from Speedway. When fuel is needed and there is a greater than five cents ($0.05) per gallon difference, then the lower cost fuel must be purchased (unless travel to a less costly fuel station would exceed the savings).