



NORFOLK VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT, INC



119 YEARS OF SERVICE

JULY 1902 - JULY 2021

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Distracted Driving and use of Wireless Communications Policy

The purpose of this Distracted Driving Prevention Policy is to establish policy and procedures for members of the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department regarding the use of wireless voice/data communications devices (department or privately-owned) when operating department vehicles. It is essential to eliminate unnecessary risks behind the wheel and members will adhere to this policy.

Policy Statement:

The safety of the public and our members is of paramount importance to the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department. The primary responsibility of members operating department-owned vehicles is to operate the apparatus safely in all driving conditions and circumstances. This policy prohibits the use of wireless voice/text/data communication devices while driving any department vehicle.

Violators of this Distracted Driving Prevention Policy shall be subject to the NVFD Discipline policy.

Nothing contained herein prevents passengers from utilizing department owned or personally owned devices as long as such usage doesn't distract the driver from safely operating the vehicle.

Definitions

Distracted Driving: For the purpose of this policy, distracted driving means any activity a member engages in while operating a motor vehicle where such activities have the potential to distract the member from the primary task of driving the apparatus and increase the risk of crashing and injury to self, others, and agency property and vehicles. Distracted driving comes in 3 different forms:

- Cognitive distraction (When the driver isn't focused on driving and thinking of other things)
- Visual distraction (When the driver looks at anything other than the road. Cell Phone, MDT, Passengers)
- Manual distraction (When the driver takes one of both hands off the wheel for any reason)

Wireless Voice/Data Communication Device: A wireless voice/text/data communication device is any device capable of transmitting and receiving voice, text, or data communications without plugging into a wired land based phone network. Examples not limited to:

- Pagers
- PDAs (Personal Digital Assistants)
- Cellular telephones
- Certain real-time navigational systems
- Smartphones and devices for voice and/or data, such as Blackberry or iPhone
- Mobile Data Terminals/ Computers (MDT/Cs)
- Wireless air cards

Text Messaging/ Texting: The term “text messaging” or “texting” means reading from or manually entering or transmitting data into any handheld or other electronic device, including, but not limited to, sending Short Message Service (SMS) text messages or Multimedia Message Service (MMS) text messages. Text messaging/texting also includes sending or receiving E-mail, instant messages, obtaining visually assisted navigational information, or engaging in any other form of electronic data retrieval or electronic data communication.

Use: The term “Use” means talking on or listening to a wireless telephone, or engaging the wireless device for text messaging/texting, email or other similar forms of manual data entry or transmission. “Use” also includes taking photographs, accessing the Internet, reading messages or data files, and any other utilization of the device.

Responsibilities:

It is the responsibility of each member of the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department to be familiar with and adhere to this policy and any state law that deals with computers, cell phones, other wireless/voice data devices, and distractions while driving.

Procedures:

Unless otherwise noted and /or exceptions are permitted by policy, the following procedures and requirements shall apply to both personal and department owned devices during vehicle operations.