



12.01 Driving or Traveling in CFA and ESO Vehicles Operational Procedure

Section 1 - Purpose and Objective

(1) To ensure the safety and minimise the risk to CFA members, other road users, the community and the environment by outlining the responsibilities and requirements to be followed whilst driving, travelling in and/or operating a CFA vehicle or Emergency Services Organisation (ESO) vehicle.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This procedure applies to all CFA members driving, traveling in and/or operating a CFA vehicle or Emergency Services Organisation (ESO) vehicle during CFA activities.

Section 3 - Procedure

General Requirements

(3) CFA members must comply with all relevant legislation and CFA policies and procedures relating to driving and travelling in vehicles.

(4) CFA members must complete an entry in the relevant CFA vehicle logbook at the start and completion of every trip. If this is not operationally practicable the logbook should be completed as soon as possible.

(5) Drivers should conduct a visual inspection of the vehicle prior to use, to ensure that it is in good working order and is safe and ready to operate. Where a visual inspection cannot be undertaken due to operational requirements, drivers are required to complete the inspection as soon as reasonably practicable.

(6) Drivers must:

- a. Not use a hand-held communication or navigational device whilst the vehicle is in motion, unless operationally required. Where possible, a passenger in the vehicle should use these devices in preference to the driver.
- b. Not send or acknowledge text messages or emails whilst driving.
- c. Not tow a trailer under Emergency response conditions (Code 1) conditions.
- d. Comply with any posted mass or dimension limit signs (unless exempted).
- e. Meet requirements of CFA driver endorsement.

(7) Fire Rescue Victoria personnel working at co-located fire stations are permitted to drive and/or move any CFA, Group or Brigade vehicle for the purpose of vehicle or station maintenance.

Alcohol and Drugs

(8) CFA members must not:

- a. Drive at or over the Prescribed Concentration of Alcohol (PCA) in their blood.
- b. Drive while under the influence of any drug to such an extent as to be incapable of having proper control of the vehicle.

(9) CFA members must have a zero (0.00) Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) whilst:

- a. Driving Emergency response conditions (Code 1);
- b. On a probationary licence ;
- c. Driving a bus; or
- d. Driving a heavy vehicle (a vehicle over 4.5T GVM).

Licence Requirements

(10) Drivers must hold a current and appropriate licence for the vehicle being driven and comply with any licence conditions.

(11) No vehicle may be driven by a person on a learner's permit. A Learner's permit is not a licence.

(12) When undertaking driver training in preparation for upgrading to a heavy vehicle licence clearly display 'Driver under Instruction' signs on the front and rear of the vehicle.

(13) CFA members must notify their Captain or Assistant Chief Fire Officer of any the following:

- a. Varied, suspended, cancelled or disqualified licence conditions.
- b. Medical conditions that may affect the licence holder's ability to drive and/or operate a CFA vehicle.

Probationary Drivers

(14) Probationary licence holders must not:

- a. Drive any CFA vehicle under emergency response conditions (Code 1);
- b. Tow a trailer; or
- c. Use a hands-free or hand-held mobile phone at any time driving a CFA vehicle (excluding CFA radios).

(15) Probationary licence holders must display the relevant 'P' plates whilst on a probationary licence at all times, unless they are en route to, in attendance at, or returning from an operational incident.

(16) P1 licence holders must adhere to P1 passenger restrictions as per P1 licence requirements.

Seat Belts and Helmets

(17) Helmets must not be worn whilst travelling in the cabin or rollover protection structure (if fitted).

(18) CFA members are responsible for their own seatbelt use.

(19) Drivers must ensure that:

- a. Both themselves and all passengers are properly restrained prior to driving the vehicle.
- b. All crew members outside the cabin on the crew deck are seated in the roll-over protection structure (where

fitted) and wear seatbelts while the vehicle is in motion.

(20) CFA members are permitted to operate without seatbelts if the CFA member is required to be standing in the crew deck area to undertake operational activities, or other CFA activities as approved by the Chief Officer. CFA members are required to undertake an appropriate risk assessment and be wearing helmets before applying this exemption.

(21) CFA members are required to advise the driver prior to removing seatbelts, and again once all persons have seatbelts fitted and are no longer applying the exemption.

Driving CFA vehicles or Emergency Services Organisation (ESO) vehicles

(22) CFA members driving vehicles are required to drive at a speed that is both safe and reasonable for:

- a. The capability, training and physical state of the driver; and
- b. The vehicle specifications and handling characteristics; and
- c. The visibility, weather and lighting conditions (ie. smoke, low light, fog, snow and rain); and
- d. Other road users, animals and livestock, roadworks, pedestrians and the community; and the protection of the local environment.
- e. The time of day such as active school/pedestrian crossings or school zones.
- f. The road conditions (ie. damage, incline, or side slope).

Road Rules and Exemptions

(23) In accordance with Road Rule 306 drivers of emergency vehicles are exempt from provisions of [Road Safety Road Rules 2017](#) if:

- a. In the circumstances:
 - i. The driver is taking reasonable care; and
 - ii. it is reasonable the Rule should not apply; and
- b. If the vehicle is a motor vehicle that is moving—the vehicle is displaying a blue or red flashing light or sounding an alarm.

(24) This provision does not exempt drivers of emergency vehicles and emergency personnel from the offences within the [Road Safety Act 1986](#) and the [Crimes Act 1958](#). Such as (but not limited to) drug and alcohol offences, careless driving, dangerous driving, conduct endangering life or persons and culpable driving.

Train Crossings

(25) A driver of a vehicle will not proceed over any railway or tramway crossing when the warning signals at the level crossing are operating or the boom gates are down.

(26) Drivers can proceed over a railway or tramway where the warning signals are operating when an employee of the rail operating system organisation (eg. Metro or Vline) has confirmed it is safe to do so.

Reversing

(27) Use a vehicle guide (if available) when a hazard exists that the driver does not have a clear view of. This includes (but is not limited to) the following circumstances:

- a. When reversing;

- b. When driving forward and there is a need for precise wheel placement;
- c. When there are overhead hazards (ie. tree branches or low power lines); and/or
- d. When there is any other hazard around the vehicle that the driver does not have a clear view of.

Emergency Service Organisation Vehicles

(28) When requested to drive an Emergency Services Organisation (ESO) vehicle, CFA members are required to:

- a. Confirm approval is granted by the person in charge of the ESO vehicle;
- b. Drive in accordance with all requirements outlined in this procedure and any other relevant policies or procedures;
- c. Drive under Code 3 response conditions unless otherwise advised by the person in charge of the ESO vehicle;
- d. Notify the State Duty Officer (via the chain of command) as soon as possible after driving the ESO vehicle and record details in the comments section of the relevant Fire Incident Report System (FIRS) report.

(29) If regularly driving a specific ESO vehicle, seek formal written approval from the relevant ESO.

General Fatigue Management Requirements

(30) CFA members driving CFA vehicles have a responsibility to ensure they do not drive or perform work when impaired by fatigue. If CFA Members believe they are fatigued and may be unfit to drive a CFA vehicle they must notify the next in charge.

(31) CFA members driving CFA vehicles are required to use the I'M SAFER checklist to self-determine fatigue levels:

- a. Injury or Illness – Am I sick, or do I have symptoms?
- b. Medication – Have I taken medications?
- c. Stress – Am I worried about financial, health, family or job matters?
- d. Alcohol or drugs – Have I had any within 8 hours?
- e. Fatigue – Am I tired or not adequately rested?
- f. Expertise – Am I competent to do the proposed tasks?
- g. Review – Am I or my crew fit for duty?

(32) Next in Charge has a duty of care to ensure that drivers under their command and/or control do not drive if they are showing signs of and/or are impaired by fatigue and should consider appropriate workloads, taskings and rest periods for drivers undertaking CFA activities.

(33) CFA members must not drive if they have been awake for more than 24 hours.

(34) Drivers should have a rest break of at least 15 minutes after driving and/or working continuously for two hours. Where the rest break cannot be achieved due to operational requirements, drivers are required to take the break as soon as practicable.

(35) Where possible, driving duties should be rotated every two hours, when another driver is available. Where this cannot be achieved due to operational requirements, driving duties should be rotated as soon as reasonably practicable.

Code 1 - Driving under emergency response conditions

(36) CFA members driving under emergency operational conditions (Code 1) shall receive the necessary training and endorsement. Endorsements are provided in accordance with the Driving Endorsements Procedure.

Choosing the Response Code

(37) Drivers at all times have the final authority for driving Code 1. If there is doubt about the accuracy or validity of the information received relating to the incident or call drivers should consider downgrading their response.

(38) Drivers should choose the appropriate response code based on the following considerations to guide the decision-making process:

(39) Ensure there are two or more operational members in the CFA vehicle (including the driver) when driving under emergency response conditions (Code 1). Note: Where this cannot occur due to operational requirements, drivers are required to undertake a continuous dynamic risk assessment before driving under emergency response conditions (Code 1).

- a. Respond as per the initial response code displayed on pager messages as determined by Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) Operating Procedures or District pre-plans.
- b. Any advice received by the Incident Controller or Crew Leader who requests a change to the response code or cancellation of the response in accordance with the requirements or severity of the incident. This may include (but is not limited to) situations where:
 - i. CFA or FRV resource numbers are in excess of the incident requirements.
 - ii. Advice is received via Firecom that the incident is no longer deemed to require a Code 1 emergency response, however, still requires additional non-emergency assistance and resources.
 - iii. Advice is received via Firecom that the incident is not yet under control and there is a requirement for responding appliances to continue driving under emergency response conditions (Code 1).
 - iv. Advice is received that the incident no longer requires any further resources.
 - v. An escalation has triggered an increased CFA response (such as a non yet under control wordback).
- c. Determine the known number of fire-fighting appliances already responding under emergency response conditions (Code 1), and whether is it appropriate to commence or continue driving Code 1, if:
 - i. The response is as a primary brigade within CFA jurisdiction and at least two other appliances (regardless of agency) have already responded under emergency response conditions.
 - ii. The response is as a support brigade into FRV jurisdiction, and the initial CFA primary appliance has already responded under emergency response conditions.
 - iii. Drivers should proceed under normal driving conditions (Code 3), once sufficient numbers of appliances have responded under emergency response conditions (Code 1).
- d. Conduct a continuous dynamic risk assessment of the road and driving conditions and determine the safest and most practicable option to proceed under normal driving conditions (Code 3).

Speed and Speed Limits

(40) CFA vehicles with a GVM not more than 4.5 tonnes (i.e. requiring a car licence to drive) shall not be driven at a speed that exceeds 20km/h above the posted speed limit.

(41) CFA vehicles with a GVM greater than 4.5 tonnes (i.e. requiring a heavy vehicle licence to drive) shall not be driven at a speed that exceeds 20km/h above the posted speed limit. Where the posted speed limit is 100km/h or more, a maximum speed of 110km/h applies.

(42) Although considered exemptions under the [Road Safety Road Rules 2017](#) (Vic), CFA members driving CFA vehicles under Code 1 conditions should adhere to speed limits in school zones, when passing stationary trams or buses and where road work speed limits apply wherever possible. Where it is not operationally practicable to adhere to these speed zones, a continuous dynamic risk assessment should be applied.

Use of lights, sirens and supplementary devices

(43) CFA members driving CFA vehicles under emergency vehicle conditions (Code 1) are required to comply with the following requirements:

- a. Red and/or blue flashing beacons and lights must be used at all times.
- b. Sirens shall be used when there is a risk to other vehicles and/or pedestrians, and/or the driver requires another vehicle to give way.
- c. Sirens shall be used when approaching and proceeding through any intersection where the driver is facing a red traffic control light, or a stop, give way or roundabout sign shall not approach or enter such intersections unless they are able to give way and, if necessary, stop the vehicle to avoid a collision.
- d. The driver shall determine the use of the siren and flashing lights. A passenger under instruction from the driver may operate the warning devices.
- e. Sirens may be turned off when:
 - i. Other vehicles or pedestrians are unable to give way or pull over, or it could be dangerous if they did.
 - ii. The emergency vehicle is stopped in traffic behind other vehicles, and unable to proceed.
 - iii. The speed of the emergency vehicle does not warrant it.
 - iv. Whilst travelling in rural areas
 - v. When passing livestock including horse floats
 - vi. When passing hospitals, nursing homes, etc. and residential areas during quiet periods at night.
- f. The driver of an emergency vehicle may use red/blue flashing lights as a 'safety feature' when on scene at any emergency if:
 - i. The vehicle is slow moving, stopped/parked where it is likely to obstruct traffic and to alert traffic to a potentially hazardous situation (especially if visibility is low)
 - ii. It is necessary to enhance the visibility of a moving vehicle in low visibility situations while in attendance at an emergency incident.
- g. The use of supplementary warning devices such as air horns and 'rumbler' type devices are permitted providing they do not prevent road users from hearing the siren. The procurement and fitting of supplementary devices must be approved, in accordance with relevant CFA Asset Management policies and procedures.

Code 3 - Non-Urgent Response

(44) Code 3 driving is driving under normal driving conditions and obeying the [Road Safety Road Rules 2017](#). This is generally in response to a routine event or when a driver is not Code 1 endorsed.

(45) When driving Code 3 the driver may use red/blue flashing lights as a 'safety feature' when on scene at any emergency if:

- a. The vehicle is slow moving (including emergency lanes), stopped/parked where it is likely to obstruct traffic and to alert traffic to a potentially hazardous situation (especially if visibility is low).
- b. It is necessary to enhance the visibility of a moving vehicle in low-visibility situations while in attendance at an emergency incident.

Heavy Vehicle Work and Record Requirements

(46) All CFA vehicle movements, regardless of type and any other requirements, are to be recorded in the CFA Vehicle Log Book.

Time Critical Duties

(47) Drivers of Fatigue-regulated Heavy Vehicles acting for an emergency service who have time-critical duties on the way to, during or returning from an emergency may utilise an exemption in the compliance of regulated hours, rest times and National Driver Work Diary requirements of Heavy Vehicle Work (pursuant to section 265 and 356 Heavy Vehicle National Law) so long as:

- a. A CFA member returning from attending an emergency reasonably believes the non-compliance does not present an unreasonable danger to other road users.
- b. If, at the relevant time, the person complies with any guidelines regarding the management of fatigue issued by or on behalf of CFA (refer to General Fatigue Management Requirements - clauses 30-35).

Non-Time Critical Duties

(48) Drivers of 'Fatigue-regulated Heavy Vehicles' in the course of non-time critical activities are to adhere to the [Standard Hours of allowable driving limits](#) as defined by the [Heavy Vehicle National Law](#) and:

- a. Comply with all requirements outlined in clause 30-35; and
- b. Comply with all relevant requirements of the Heavy Vehicle National Law (Victoria), including (but not limited to) work times, rest times requirements.

Exemption From National Driver Work Diaries

(49) When undertaking emergency management activities CFA members are not required to complete a National Driver Work Diary as long as the driver completes a CFA Log Book and complies with other [Heavy Vehicle National Law](#) requirements including (but not limited to) work and rest times.

(50) Emergency management activity in this context means an activity performed in preparation for, in response to, or in recovery from, an emergency. This includes activities such as training, maintenance, step-ups, pre-positioning, and planned burns. It does not include fundraising.

(51) CFA members driving Fatigue-regulated Heavy Vehicles for Non-emergency management activities for less than 100km (local work) are not required to complete a National Driver Work Diary.

Requirements for National Work Diaries

(52) CFA members driving Fatigue-regulated Heavy Vehicles for non-emergency management activities over 100km are required to maintain their individual allocated National Driver Work Diary and work diary requirements. When this occurs, the driver is required to submit a duplicate copy of their work diary to their Captain or Manager per the timeframes stipulated in the work diary. If the driver doesn't have an individual allocated National Driver Work Diary they are to consider alternative arrangements (use of non Fatigued related vehicle, different driver etc.) in consultation with their District ACFO to maintain compliance with the HVNL.

(53) CFA members who drive fatigue-regulated heavy vehicle(s) outside of CFA and normally operate under [Standard Hours](#), Basic Fatigue Management (BFM) accreditation or Advanced Fatigue Management (AFM) accreditation, shall apply all hours driving or working in or on CFA vehicles as part of their normal working hours.

Heavy Vehicle Work Scenarios

(54) The following table provides some examples of when to apply [Heavy Vehicle National Law](#) exemptions and diary-keeping requirements. This list is not exhaustive and CFA members should always consider their individual circumstances and seek clarification from the next in charge if unsure.

Scenario	Complete CFA Logbook	Complete National Heavy Vehicle Driver Work Diary	Time Critical Duties	Non-Time Critical Duties	Must comply with CFA fatigue requirements	Must comply with HVNL stop/work/rest times
Training (including locations over 100km away)	•			•	•	•
Campaign Fire	•		•		•	
Pre-deployment in response to a fire e.g. strike team	•		•		•	
Planned burn activities (including locations over 100km away)	•			•	•	•
Interstate deployment in response to an emergency	•		•		•	
Fund Raising Activity under 100km	•			•	•	•
Fundraising activity over 100km away	•	•		•	•	•
Drive an HVNL vehicle for work (privately) and drive a CFA vehicle	•	•	N/A	N/A	•	•

Safety Notes

- (55) CFA members need to ensure that the protection and preservation of life is maintained at all times.
- (56) Drivers are required to be mindful of traffic, visibility and weather conditions whilst driving.
- (57) Drivers are required to drive within their own limits and the limitations of the vehicle.
- (58) Drivers and crew members are required to monitor fatigue levels.
- (59) Vehicle handling characteristics can change over time, especially due to vehicle loading and/or road conditions.
- (60) Drivers are to maintain good situational awareness, undertake regular dynamic risk assessments and adapt driving behaviours accordingly.
- (61) Drivers are required to consider the weight, balance and loading of vehicles, and adapt driving behaviour(s) to mitigate the risk of vehicle rollover.

Section 4 - Definitions

- (62) Commonly defined terms are located in the CFA [Centralised Glossary](#).

Section 5 - Related Documents

- Driver Endorsement Operational Procedure
- Collisions involving CFA vehicles Operational Procedure
- Safely recover disabled CFA vehicles Operational Procedure
- Non-CFA members in CFA vehicles Operational Procedure
- CFA members driving private vehicles when involved in operational activities Operational Procedure

Status and Details

Status	Not Yet Approved
Effective Date	To Be Advised
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Approval Authority	
Approval Date	To Be Advised
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Accountable Officer	Garry Cook Deputy Chief Officer Operational Response & Coordination
Responsible Officer	Tim Connor Manager Operational Doctrine
Author	Tracey Parkhill
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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"CFA member" - Refers to all CFA volunteers, volunteer auxiliary workers, officers, employees and secondees.

"CFA vehicle" - All vehicles owned or operated by CFA or any Group or Brigade. This includes FRV vehicles being driven by an FRV Secondee.

"Emergency Services Organisation (ESO) vehicle" - An emergency vehicle operated by an Emergency Service Organisation (ESO) other than CFA.

"Next in Charge" - Next in Charge - the supervisor or manager directly in charge of a CFA member or Labour Hire Contractor e.g. for a volunteer this would be a Lieutenant, Captain, Deputy Group Officer, Group Officer or Commander; for an employee / labour hire contractor this would be their direct manager.

"Operational activities" - CFA approved, coordinated or pre-planned action, or series of actions, in response to and in support of a potential or existing emergency incident, including training and exercises.

"Code 3" - Driving under normal driving conditions obeying the Road Safety Road Rules 2017. This is generally in response to a routine event.

"Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC)" - The amount of alcohol present in the bloodstream.

"Vehicle Guide" - A person outside the vehicle either provides the driver clear and agreed signals to direct the driver in manoeuvring the vehicle around any obstacles and hazards (Guide) OR, provides the driver with advice only in regard to the vehicle's separation from obstacles and hazards (Spotter).

"Crew Leader" - Crew Leader is the person designated to have responsibility for the management of the crew.

"Firecom" - The callsign for day to day / normal radio communications to CFA vehicles and aircraft.

"Code 1" - Code 1 refers to driving under emergency response conditions (lights and/or siren) which may require utilising the exemption for drivers of emergency vehicles under the Road Safety Rules 2017.