

# Saskatchewan Emergency Vehicle Operations (SEVO)



## Emergency Vehicle Status for Volunteer Firefighters

In November 2008, the Government of Saskatchewan announced changes in legislation that allows volunteer firefighters the use of warning lights and sirens on their personal vehicles.

The new regulations give each municipality the option to designate the personal vehicles driven by their firefighters as emergency vehicles. Firefighters' personal vehicles will have the same status as a fire truck during an emergency. Municipalities are not required to adopt this program.

There are obligations and potential liabilities that must be carefully considered. Municipal leaders should work with their fire chiefs to determine if designating firefighter personal vehicles for emergency response will have a benefit for their community that outweighs the possible safety risks. If a municipality decides not to designate personal vehicles for emergency response, volunteers will not be able to use emergency warning devices.

# Liabilities

The municipality must accept liability for the operation of firefighters' personal vehicles. There is no obligation on the part of a municipality to pass such a bylaw. If a municipality decides not to designate personal vehicles for emergency response, volunteers will not be able to use emergency warning device on their personal vehicles.

## Implementation Steps

There are four steps to follow before firefighters may use the emergency warning lights and sirens on their personal vehicle when responding directly to an incident.

### 1. Develop a Bylaw

The municipality must enact a bylaw allowing the personal vehicles of volunteer firefighters to be designated as emergency vehicles. The bylaw can be used to govern which firefighters may use lights and sirens, a process for vehicle safety inspections, and procedures for ensuring the warning devices are used appropriately within the municipality. The bylaw puts the administration of the program in the hands of the fire chief. This frees the council from having to frequently amend the bylaw when members leave or join the fire department.

### 2. Sign up for Approved SEVO Driver Training

*The Traffic Safety Act* and related regulations require firefighters to successfully complete an emergency vehicle operator's course. These courses are offered by the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency (SPSA). There is no charge for student registration. The SPSA has several trained driving instructors who will deliver the Saskatchewan Emergency Vehicle Operators (SEVO) course to these firefighters.

The SPSA will coordinate this training at centralized locations and will advertise this training and locations on the SPSA website and through the Saskatchewan Volunteer Fire Fighter Association (SVFFA) and Saskatchewan Association of Fire Chiefs (SAFC).

### 3. Institute Vehicle Safety Inspections

All emergency vehicles must be safe and well-maintained. Annual inspections completed by a qualified mechanic will ensure firefighter's personal vehicles meet the Traffic Safety Act requirements for mechanical safety.

### 4. Supply the Correct Warning Equipment

Emergency vehicles must have both lights and sirens. The red lights used on a firefighter's personal vehicle must meet the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) Standard J845 or J1318 for Class 1 warning devices.

All reputable emergency-signaling device manufacturers make lighting units that meet one or both standards. Changes to *The Vehicle Equipment Regulations, 1987* also require that the audible warning devices used meet SAE Standard 1849. There are reputable manufacturers that make siren equipment meeting this requirement.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## 1. What qualifications do firefighters need?

Changes to the Driver Licensing and Suspension Regulations require firefighters to successfully complete SEVO training. The only approved course is offered through the SPSA.

Only those drivers who successfully complete the course, and have all other requirements in place, can operate emergency warning devices as set out in their municipal bylaws and the provincial regulations.

## 2. Is SEVO training available to all Saskatchewan firefighters?

SEVO is available to any Saskatchewan firefighter that has met the requirements for this training. The requirements are as follows:

- RM must have a bylaw in place before candidates take SEVO training.
- Candidates must have and maintain a valid SK Class 5 Drivers License.
- Candidates must meet the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) Standard J845 or J1318 for Class 1 warning devices (red lights and sirens) on their personal vehicles.

## 3. Do firefighters require a special driver's license?

Firefighters may only operate their personal vehicles as emergency vehicles if they have successfully completed SEVO training and have a valid SK Class 5 Drivers License. This program is designed to provide emergency vehicle designation for cars and light trucks only.

## 4. Should my Department Consider Designation?

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the purpose of an emergency response is "to deliver personnel and apparatus to the scene of an emergency in a safe and timely manner." Volunteer firefighters who successfully complete an Emergency Vehicle Operators course will have a good understanding of the obligations and limits of using the lights and sirens placed on a driver.

Councils should work with their fire chiefs to determine if designating firefighters' personal vehicles for emergency responses will benefit their community and outweigh the safety risks. Everyone should keep in mind that almost one-quarter of all firefighter injuries and deaths occur during emergency responses.

## SEVO Training Opportunities

SEVO training will be set up by the SPSA through a call-for-candidates process.

SEVO Training: <https://www.saskpublicsafety.ca/first-responders/training-and-certification>

For more information contact: [spsatraining@gov.sk.ca](mailto:spsatraining@gov.sk.ca)