

Fauquier County Department of Fire Rescue

RULE & REGULATION

No. 125



Personal Communication Devices

Effective Date: January 30, 2018

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Revision Date:

Forms:

Approved By: Darren L. Stevens, Fire Rescue Chief

PURPOSE

To establish guidelines for the use of personal communication devices (PCDs). Some communication devices, known as personal communication devices (PCDs), have the potential for posing a hazard to the safety of our members and negatively impacting service delivery and job performance if used inappropriately. This policy shall define appropriate uses of PCDs.

SCOPE

This regulation pertains to all Fauquier County Department of Fire, Rescue and Emergency Management (operational and administrative) who are riding apparatus, attending drills or meetings, detailed to training classes, or are representing the department.

I. DEFINITION

A personal communication device shall be defined as a pager, wireless (cellular) telephone, text messaging device, portable computer, personal data assistant (PDA) or other media designed for communication between two or more people. This policy does not apply to public safety portable radios.

II. DEPARTMENT ISSUED COMMUNICATION DEVICES

- A. Department issued PCDs that are assigned to vehicles shall be accounted for at the beginning of each shift. The PCD and battery shall be checked to ensure that it is in proper working order and charging properly.
- B. PCDs that allow the sender's voice to be audible, as in the push to talk feature, shall be configured to disable this feature or set to the lowest volume level so that it is not disruptive.
- C. PCDs shall be configured so they do not interfere with providing service delivery or other critical work responsibilities. For example, momentary viewing of a message remains acceptable, provided it will not compromise safety, patient care, or job performance.

Desire to Serve

Ability to Perform

Courage to Act

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- D. The use of PCDs shall not interfere with the safe operation of department vehicles.
- E. PCDs installed in or assigned to fire department vehicles are intended for department related business.
- F. Two way communication PCDs should not be used or in operation in a hospital, medical facility, or other facility that specifically prohibits their use.

III. NON-DEPARTMENT ISSUED COMMUNICATION DEVICES

- A. Personnel shall set all PCDs to silent, or other unobtrusive mode. PCDs that allow the sender's voice to be audible, as in the push to talk feature, shall be configured to disable this feature.
- B. Personnel will refrain from utilizing PCDs while attending to patients, providing service delivery, participating in drills, meetings, line-up, or during the conduct of job related activities or any activity that requires the employee's immediate attention. Momentarily viewing a page or message remains acceptable, provided it will not compromise safety, patient care, or job performance.
- C. The use of personal PCDs is prohibited at all times while driving any department vehicle unless it is in use to conduct department business. Section II of this policy shall then apply.
- D. Personnel assigned to the crew position of suppression units or the crew position of an EMS transport vehicle shall not utilize a PCD while the vehicle is assigned to an event or incident, unless authorized by the unit officer in charge. If the vehicle is not currently assigned to an event, the use of PCDs is permissible, so long as its use is not a distraction to the operator of the vehicle and its use poses no safety concerns.
- E. The use of PCDs during down time shall follow reasonable time parameters as established by work location supervisors. The use of PCDs within the bunkroom after 2200 hours is prohibited to eliminate unnecessary noise.
- F. PCDs are known to interfere with some types of biomedical equipment. Their use inside of any hospital or medical facility is prohibited.