

TITLE OPERATIONS MANUAL	STANDARD INSTRUCTION 05		DEPARTMENT FIRE-RESCUE
SUBJECT VEHICLE INCIDENT PROCEDURES AND REVIEW	SECTION 08	PAGE 1 of 11	EFFECTIVE DATE May 7, 2026

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD) personnel with procedures to follow in the event of any [Vehicle](#) or [Industrial Equipment Incident](#) while on authorized [City business](#), regardless of whether personnel are using SDFD property or a privately-owned vehicle (POV).

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to all sworn San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD) personnel.

III. AUTHORITY

The Fire Chief authorizes this policy.

IV. POLICY

All actions taken pursuant to this policy must comply with the Firefighters Procedural Bill of Rights Act (FBOR), if applicable, current Memorandums of Understanding (MOU), and any other applicable agreements with recognized employee organizations.

A. Initial Response Procedures for Vehicle/Industrial Equipment Incident

1. On Scene Requirements

- i. When involved in a Vehicle/Industrial Equipment Incident, the [Driver/Operator](#) or supervisor in charge of the Vehicle or Industrial Equipment must immediately do the following:
 - a) Assess all personnel and civilians involved in the incident for injuries and initiate care.
 - 1) If the incident involves injuries, requests should be made through Emergency Command & Data Center (ECDC) or Lifeguard Communications Center (LCC) to have an additional Advanced Life Support (ALS) unit respond to the location of the incident.
 - (i) Involved personnel should relinquish care when properly relieved.
 - (ii) Assessments should be done by ALS personnel not involved in the incident.
 - 2) Persons meeting patient criteria set forth in the San Diego County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) policies must be transported or sign out Against Medical Advice (AMA)/Release.
 - b) Fire personnel must immediately notify ECDC on 7A, and Lifeguard personnel must immediately notify the LCC, providing the following details:
 - 1) Nature of incident;
 - 2) Nature of injuries and the number of injured;
 - 3) Equipment involved;
 - 4) Location of the incident; and
 - 5) Type of assistance needed (ambulance, law enforcement, etc.).

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- c) ECDC will (for Fire personnel):
 - 1) Place the involved unit(s) Out-of-Service (OOS);
 - 2) Ensure a replacement unit(s) is added to the original response if the incident took place during a response;
 - 3) Notify the Battalion Chief (BC) of the unit involved;
 - (i) For staff vehicles, notify the direct supervisor or the closest BC;
 - 4) Notify the ambulance supervisor if an ambulance unit(s) is involved; and
 - 5) Notify the Shift Commander.
 - d) LCC will (for Lifeguard personnel):
 - 1) Initiate an incident and notify the following personnel:
 - (i) On-duty Marine Safety Lieutenant (LT);
 - (ii) Marine Safety Captain; and
 - (iii) The immediate supervisor of personnel involved in the incident.
 - e) Make no statements, verbal or written, to anyone except law enforcement assigned to investigate the incident and SDFD officials.
2. Reporting of Vehicle/Industrial Equipment Incidents
- i. All Personnel
 - a) All SDFD personnel must keep the SDFD Vehicle Incident Package (FD-8) (with CD-1551 and CD-1555) in all Department vehicles and POVs used in the performance of City Business.
 - b) Incidents involving POVs have additional instructions to follow as outlined in the [Instructions for City of San Diego Employees/Volunteers who use their POV for City Business](#) document.
 - c) The driver must follow the instructions on the FD-8.
 - d) Driver must complete Form CD-1551. If multiple personnel were involved in the operation of a City Vehicle or Industrial Equipment (i.e., backers, other crew members), each individual must complete a separate CD-1551. Any personnel who may have contributed to the incident may be held accountable, even if they were not driving or operating the Vehicle or Industrial Equipment.
 - e) Absent extenuating circumstances (e.g., serious injury), all personnel required to complete form CD-1551 must submit it to their supervisor within **72 hours** of the incident date.
 - f) If the circumstances of the incident indicate an ongoing safety risk to the employee or the public, the responding supervisor may notify the BC/LT, who may recommend to an Appointing Authority (AA) the immediate reassignment of the employee to a non-driving/operating position. This reassignment will be without loss of pay or benefits, pending the completion of the incident investigation. In these situations, the AA's decision to temporarily reassign is final and not subject to appeal.
 - g) All incident reporting forms must be typed, signed, and dated.
 - 1) The signature can be wet or electronic.

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- h) The responding supervisor must complete and submit form CD-1555, along with any other supporting documentation, to their BC/LT or appropriate supervisor within seven calendar days from the incident date, unless there are extenuating circumstances. Extenuating circumstances must be communicated to SDFDVehicleAccidents@saniego.gov and supervisor prior to the deadline. The supervisor must complete a separate CD-1555 for each CD-1551 that is submitted.
- ii. Fire Personnel
 - a) The BC or appropriate supervisor must review all paperwork to ensure forms are typed, accurate, signed, and dated. Once reviewed, the BC or supervisor must email all incident reporting forms, pictures, and supporting documents to SDFDVehicleAccidents@saniego.gov within ten calendar days from when they received all incident paperwork, unless there are extenuating circumstances. Extenuating circumstances must be communicated prior to the deadline.
 - b) Hard copies of completed forms, pictures, and supporting documents must be sent to the PSU Admin Aid, MS604.
- iii. Lifeguard Personnel
 - a) The LT must review all paperwork to ensure forms are typed, accurate, signed, and dated. Once reviewed, all incident reporting forms, pictures, and supporting documents must be submitted to the Marine Safety Captain within ten calendar days of the incident date, unless there are extenuating circumstances. Extenuating circumstances must be communicated prior to the deadline.
- iv. Law enforcement should be notified if any of the following apply:
 - a) Incident resulted in injuries;
 - b) Incident did not occur on City property; or
 - c) Incident involved damage to private property.
- v. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- 3. Additional Responsibilities
 - i. Supervisor
 - a) When responding to an incident suspected to involve alcohol or drug use, the supervisor's must contact law enforcement if they have not already arrived. If law enforcement determines the situation does not warrant criminal charges, but the driver remains suspected of being under the influence, the supervisor should review the following procedures and take the appropriate actions:
 - 1) A.R. 97.00 (Substance Abuse Policy) for drug and alcohol testing; and
 - 2) If the driver is a commercial driver, refer to RM-1694 for instructions related to drug and alcohol testing requirements.
 - b) With incidents involving the rank of Battalion Chief/Marine Safety Lieutenant or above, their direct supervisor assumes these responsibilities.

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- c) Supervisors are responsible for turning in any Vehicle/Industrial Equipment to Fleet Operations Department for repairs as soon as reasonably possible or after the conclusion of the investigation
 - ii. Battalion Chief
 - a) Must ensure the Shift Commander is notified.
 - b) When notified, the BC must immediately go to the scene of all Fire Vehicle/Industrial Equipment Incidents to assist in documentation, taking pictures, and completing the Incident investigation if required.
 - 1) Pictures should include the following:
 - (i) All four sides of each vehicle/equipment involved;
 - (ii) License plate and/or apparatus numbers for all vehicle(s)/equipment;
 - (iii) All damage, whether new or existing, to all vehicle(s)/equipment;
 - (iv) Streets, intersections, and/or approach areas that are directly involved with the Incident scene;
 - (v) Any physical factors involved in the Incident scene that may relate to the cause of the Incident;
 - (vi) Any visible skid marks or tire tracks of the primary vehicle(s)/equipment involved in the Incident; and
 - (vii) Include all photographs with the Vehicle Incident Package (FD-8)
 - (viii) Anything else pertinent to the Incident.
 - c) Include all photographs with the Vehicle Incident Package (FD-8)
 - iii. Marine Safety Lieutenant Responsibilities
 - a) Respond to all Lifeguard Vehicle/Industrial Equipment Incidents in which SDFD Lifeguard personnel, Vehicles or Industrial Equipment are involved, to assist in documentation, taking pictures and completing the Incident investigation.
 - iv. Shift Commanders/Marine Safety Lieutenant Responsibilities
 - a) The on-duty Shift Commander or Marine Safety Lieutenant must respond to any incident involving serious injury(s) or significant damage to City property to assist in documentation and incident investigation.
 - v. Department Heads/Assistant Directors or Equivalent Responsibilities
 - a) Ensure personnel are trained on local, state, and federal vehicle regulations as well as safe defensive driving/operating practices to safely drive/operate City Vehicles/Industrial Equipment.
 - b) Acknowledge that required training is placed in either the employee's personnel file or their City electronic training record.
 - c) Ensure that all drivers/operators have valid certifications kept in SDFD's electronic training platform, or other City department-approved certifications.
 - d) Provide consistent enforcement of all City policies and procedures to prevent and reduce Vehicle/Industrial Equipment Incidents.

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- e) Ensure that work stations and facilities are built to standards that allow for safe Vehicle/Industrial Equipment operation and storage.
- f) Select and train the SDFD [Screener](#), Department Head designee or equivalent, and Assistant Director, where applicable.

B. POST-INCIDENT PROCEDURES

1. The following are procedures govern the conduct of the follow-up investigation and the administration of the [Incident Review Committee](#) (IRC).
2. Vehicle/Industrial Equipment Incident Follow-Up Investigation
 - i. Incident Category Determination
 - a) The respective AA and/or Driver Training Officer (DTO) must determine the Incident category as one of the following:
 - 1) Preventable
 - 2) Non-preventable
 - 3) No Vehicle/Industrial Equipment Incident
 - b) Extenuating circumstances considered when determining the category of and preventability of an Incident include, but are not limited to:
 - 1) Type of call
 - 2) Type of response (i.e., Code-3 vs. Non-Code-3)
 - 3) Types of responses allowed by Department procedure
 - 4) California Vehicle Code
 - 5) Actions of another driver(s)
 - 6) Actions of pedestrian(s)
 - 7) Urgency of the situation
 - 8) Immediacy of threat to life, public safety, employee(s) safety, or property
 - 9) The time available for the Driver/Operator to evaluate and determine the most appropriate or reasonable course of action
 - 10) Emergency vehicle capabilities
 - 11) Weather conditions
 - 12) Roadway limitations
 - 13) Environmental hazards
 - 14) Driver's familiarity with the area
 - 15) Availability of personnel to observe or assist with vehicle movements due to staffing or another incident
 - 16) Innate hazards of a City-provided facility
 - c) All Incidents that are screened by the respective AA or DTO and found to be 'Non-preventable' or a 'No Vehicle/Industrial Incident' must be signed by the Fire Chief or their designee and the AA and forwarded to the Professional Standards Unit (PSU) for processing.

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- 1) The AA or DTO must email the findings to the Driver/Operator, any personnel involved in the Incident who completed a CD-1551, and their supervisor(s) after the Incident screening determination.
- 2) SDFD must maintain all documentation in accordance with applicable law and retention schedule.
- d) Where the AA or DTO finds an Incident was ‘preventable,’ they must forward the Incident screening determination (including the category designation) to the Driver/Operator and any personnel involved in the Incident, including their supervisor, via a copy of the CD-1555, within seven calendar days of the Incident screening determination.
 - 1) Personnel involved in the Incident will have fourteen calendar days from receiving the Incident screening determination to reply to the AA or DTO whether they agree or disagree with the Incident screening determination.
 - 2) If the Driver/Operator agrees with the findings, the CD-1555 must be forwarded to the Fire Chief or their designee and the AA for signatures and to determine discipline.
 - (i) The CD-1555 is then forwarded to PSU for processing and issuance of discipline.
 - 3) If the Driver/Operator disagrees with the Incident screening determination, the Incident Review Committee (IRC) must meet to review the Incident.

3. Incident Review Committee (IRC)

- i. The IRC is comprised of five voting members:
 - a) [IRC Chair](#) (Health and Safety Battalion Chief);
 - b) Deputy Chief of Logistics (Fire), Marine Safety Captain (Lifeguard Services Division), or designee;
 - c) Two first-line supervisors other than the Driver/Operator’s supervisor; and
 - d) Person of equal rank or title to the Driver/Operator.
- ii. In addition to the five voting members, the following non-voting members must participate:
 - a) The Driver/Operator involved in the Incident and their designated representative, if requested; and
 - b) The Driver/Operator’s first-line supervisor.
- iii. The IRC Chair may require that any City employee or volunteer involved in an Incident, or any employee/volunteer who witnessed or contributed to the Incident, be available at the IRC hearing.

4. Incident Review Committee Hearing Process

- i. The AA or DTO must notify the IRC Chair of the Driver/Operator’s request for an IRC. The AA or DTO will provide the IRC Chair with all necessary documentation (aka “Vehicle Incident Package”) to conduct the IRC. The IRC Chair and members of the IRC will have access to, and use of, all documentation and testimony it deems appropriate. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - a) City of San Diego Administrative Regulation AR 75.12

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- b) Operations Manual Vehicle Incident Review Policy
 - c) CD-1551 Employee Vehicle/Industrial Incident Damage Report
 - d) CD-1555 Supervisor Vehicle/Industrial Incident Investigation Report
 - e) Incident photos
 - f) Police report, if applicable
 - g) Vehicle maintenance records, if needed
 - h) All other reports, material, or testimony deemed appropriate or requested by the IRC chair
- ii. The IRC Chair is responsible for scheduling the IRC hearing. Upon receipt of the documentation, the IRC Chair must:
- a) Notify all voting and non-voting members participating in the IRC of the date/time/place to appear for the meeting; and
 - b) Verify that all IRC participating members have received and accepted the notification of the IRC date/time/place of the hearing.
- iii. All documentation regarding the Incident must be provided at least seven calendar days prior to the IRC hearing to the Driver/Operator and their designated representative, if identified.
- iv. If Fire or Lifeguard personnel involved in the IRC are working in field operations, they will be placed 'out of service' (OOS) and unavailable for responses unless there are extenuating circumstances, as deemed appropriate by the IRC Chair.
- v. During the Hearing:
- a) All voting IRC members will receive copies of the Incident packet/reports to review and discuss;
 - b) All non-voting members of the IRC then join the meeting;
 - c) The IRC Chair outlines how the IRC proceeds;
 - d) The Driver/Operator will discuss the Incident circumstances with the IRC;
 - e) Questions and discussion take place as needed;
 - f) Prior to excusing all non-voting members, the IRC Chair will explain Ballots 1, 2, and 3;
 - g) All non-voting members of the IRC and the Driver/Operator are then excused from the meeting;
 - h) No further discussion can take place outside the presence of the Driver/Operator;
 - i) The IRC Chair passes out ballots to all voting members of the IRC:
 - 1) Ballot 1 is to determine if it is a 'vehicle incident', 'industrial incident', 'no vehicle/industrial incident non-preventable', or 'no vehicle/industrial incident preventable';
 - 2) Ballot 2 is to determine whether the vehicle or industrial incident was 'preventable' or 'non-preventable';

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- 3) Ballot 3 takes place if the second ballot vote determines the incident to be 'preventable' to decide if the 'preventable incident' is a Category 1A, 1B, 2, 3 or 4. All 5 voting members must vote on all ballots that are necessary to determine an outcome;
 - j) The IRC Chair counts the ballot votes and determines the outcome;
 - k) The Driver/Operator and their designated representative (if applicable) enter the meeting and discuss the results of the vote with the IRC Chair; and
 - l) The IRC Chair must fill out the IRC section on page 2 of the CD-1555 and return all ballots and documentation to the AA or DTO for signatures.
 - vi. If the Driver/Operator or any personnel involved in the Incident present new evidence to the AA or designee within 14 calendar days of the issuance of discipline, the employee may be given a new hearing before the IRC.
 - vii. The AA, designee or DTO must forward the CD-1555 with IRC findings to PSU for final processing.
 - viii. The above outlined investigation and IRC process, including signatures, must be completed within 125 calendar days of the incident date. Failure to meet this timeline - excluding a delay for receipt of paperwork from law enforcement, or any other documented extenuating circumstances, examples of which include but are not limited to: an approved vacation, injury/illness, industrial leave, requests for a rehearing or appeal - will result in a 'No Incident Ruling' (NIR), effectively ending all investigation and discipline. The Fire Chief or their designee will make the final determination of discipline.
 - ix. All Drivers/Operators required to complete the Vehicle/Industrial Equipment Incident prevention classes and mandatory behind-the-wheel testing as part of their discipline must complete these requirements within **six months** from the date the final report or appeal process concludes.
 - a) Training classes can be scheduled through the Compliance Department (CD).
 - b) Mandatory retesting can be scheduled through the Training and Education Division or the City Equipment Trainer (CET).
 - x. If the CD believes that SDFD failed to comply with any provision of AR 75.12, CD will contact the DTO or Lifeguard Marine Safety Lieutenant for clarity.
 - xi. If the matter needs further resolution, the CD will contact the Training and Education Division Chief or the Lifeguard Chief.
 - xii. If CD believes the Department did not properly address the Incident, it will send a memorandum outlining the issues to the Fire Chief.
 - xiii. The Fire Chief will have final authority on all vehicle/industrial incident-related matters
- 5. Disciplinary Guidelines
 - i. Refer to City of San Diego Administrative Regulation 75.12 Vehicle and Industrial Review, Reporting, and Discipline Program.
 - a) Preventable Vehicle/Industrial Equipment Incidents are grounds for disciplinary action. Reference AR 75.12, Section 4.6.5.

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- b) In any given four-year period, the following guidelines apply, unless the AA determines that there are extenuating circumstances.
 - 1) Suspensions for Non-Compliance with A.R. 75.12.
 - (i) The following infractions will result in an eight-hour suspension unless the AA or equivalent finds extenuating circumstances:
 - (a) Driver/Operator or personnel involved if they fail to:
 - (1) Properly report an Incident as defined in this policy;
 - (2) Appear before the IRC once the meeting has been set, without an approved justification;
 - (3) Complete any required training or testing within the timeframe indicated in the Discipline Chart and within the designated timeframe in accordance with A.R. 75.12.
 - (4) Fire captains/lifeguard sergeants/chief officers if they fail to:
 - (5) Complete and file the CD-1555 within the required timeframe and to the appropriate parties as defined in this policy;
 - (6) Appear before the IRC when required without an approved justification; or
 - (7) Investigate and take appropriate action on a reported unsafe Vehicle or Vehicle/Industrial Equipment Incident.
 - (b) City witness(es) if they fail to:
 - (1) Properly report an Incident;
 - (2) Appear before the IRC and provide testimony when required by the IRC without an approved justification; or
 - (3) Provide a statement to the investigating officer or supervisor investigating the Incident.

C. Note: Complete failure to report an Incident or reporting a set of circumstances proven to be false may result in more severe discipline, up to and including termination.

1. Responsibilities

- i. IRC is responsible for reviewing collision-related documentation and providing comments on the Incident's preventability and classification to the Fire Chief or designee.
- ii. CD is responsible for capturing all the vehicle/industrial incident data and ensuring discipline is addressed.
- iii. Screeners are responsible for conducting the screening of incidents and ensure processing timelines are followed.

V. DEFINITIONS

A. City Business: City Business means a purpose or function related to the duties or activities of employment. [\(RETURN\)](#)

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- B. Driver/Operator: The term Driver/Operator includes any driver, operator, employee, or authorized volunteer who is responsible for the operation of any Vehicle or Industrial Equipment that is owned, leased, rented, or borrowed for use by City employees and personally-owned vehicles (POV) utilized to conduct City business. Consistent with AR 75.12, the last known driver or operator will, by default, be designated as the driver of a parked or unoccupied vehicle/industrial equipment and will be listed as such in the incident processing. The term Driver/Operator is used throughout this document to represent anyone who meets the above criteria. [\(RETURN\)](#)
- C. Incident(s) – Incidents include any of the following that results in actual or alleged property damage, and injury or death associated with the operation or placement of any Vehicle/Industrial Equipment:
1. Vehicle collisions
 2. Incidents involving moving and stationary Industrial Equipment
 3. Incidents involving stationary Vehicles
 4. All criminal acts including but not limited to Vandalism 594 CA Penal Code, and Arson 451 CA Penal Code (application of City and/or Department approved bumper stickers is not considered vandalism)
 5. Intentional acts
 6. Equipment malfunctions
 7. Unintentional acts, such as trees falling or acts of nature [\(RETURN\)](#)
- D. Incident Review Committee (IRC): An independent, department-level committee comprised of five voting members who review all incident-related documentation:
1. IRC Chair
 2. Deputy Chief of Logistics (Fire), Marine Safety Captain (Lifeguard), or designee
 3. Two first-line supervisors other than the Driver/Operator's immediate supervisor
 4. One person of equal rank or title [\(RETURN\)](#)
- E. Incident Review Committee Chair (IRC Chair): Coordinates the departmental IRC review and presents the final comments to the Department head designee. This position is filled by the Health and Safety Officer Battalion Chief. [\(RETURN\)](#)
- F. Industrial Equipment – Any equipment owned, leased, rented, or borrowed by the City, wheeled and/or tracked, that is driven/operated. This includes specially designed equipment having aspects of both Vehicle and Industrial Equipment. [\(RETURN\)](#)
- G. Screener: Driver Training Officer (DTO) or Lifeguard Marine Safety Lieutenant who conducts the initial screening of incidents and ensures processing timelines are being followed. The Screener does not vote in the IRC review. [\(RETURN\)](#)

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- H. Vehicle(s) – Any type of motorized equipment, including any apparatus or trailer towed by a Vehicle, which is generally licensed to operate on the public right-of-way by the State of California and owned, leased, rented, or borrowed by the City and POV’s utilized to conduct City Business. This definition includes any licensed Vehicle having aspects of both Vehicle and Industrial Equipment while it is being used solely as a Vehicle (i.e., moving from place to place) at the time of the Incident. [\(RETURN\)](#)