

# SEVO EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATOR PROGRAM

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## Emergency Vehicle Status for Volunteer Fire Fighters

In November 2008 the Saskatchewan Government announced changes in legislation that would allow volunteer fire fighters to use warning lights and sirens on their personal vehicles. The changes came into effect on April 1st, 2009.

The new regulations give each municipality the option to designate the personal vehicles driven by their fire fighters as emergency vehicles. In essence, the fire fighter's personal vehicle, during an emergency, will have the same status as a fire truck. But, there is a strict procedure to be followed before volunteers can flip on the red lights and siren.

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## SEVO Training - A Guide for the Fire Service

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### What's the First Step?

Each municipality that wants to designate their fire fighter's personal vehicles for emergency response must pass a bylaw pursuant to *The Traffic Safety Act*. The bylaw should have procedures for selecting which volunteers will be allowed to use lights and sirens, where in the municipality the warning devices can be used and a program of regular vehicle safety inspections. The municipality must also accept liability for the operation of fire fighter's personal vehicles while they are being used as an emergency vehicle. 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 devices.

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### What Qualifications do Fire Fighters Need?

Changes to *The Driver Licensing and Suspension Regulations* require a fire fighter to successfully complete a Saskatchewan Emergency Vehicle Operators (SEVO) course. The only approved course will be offered through Emergency Management and Fire Safety (EMFS). Only those drivers who successfully complete the course can operate emergency warning devices as set out in their municipal bylaw and in the provincial regulations.

**SEVO training is available to all Saskatchewan fire fighters.** It doesn't matter if your Municipality decides to authorize the use of emergency warning devices or not. There is no cost for Class registration fees. Emergency Management and Fire Safety is paying the \$180 registration cost for each fire fighter. Fire Departments will be responsible for other expenses, such as classroom rental fees or driving course preparation costs.

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### Will Fire Fighters Need a Special Drivers License?

Fire fighters may only operate their personal vehicles as emergency vehicles if they have both successfully completed a SEVO course and have a valid Class 5 Driver's License. The program is designed to provide emergency vehicle designation for cars and light trucks only.

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## What are the Class Requirements?

Students must provide their own vehicle for training. You must have a valid Saskatchewan drivers licenses and you must own the vehicle you'll be using. And your vehicle must be registered as a Light Vehicle - this classification used to be known as PV Private Vehicle.

**A Light Vehicle Mechanical Safety Inspection done by an SGI authorized mechanic is required.** Any vehicle used for a SEVO class must be mechanically safe. The inspection must have been done sometime in the 12 months before the class. The fire department, Association or training group sponsoring the class will have you fill out both Participant and Vehicle Registration forms. Return both forms, along with a copy of the Mechanical Safety Inspection report, to the sponsor no later than one month before the Class.

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## Classes are open to all Saskatchewan fire fighters

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### What Happens at a Class?

The class is made up of 8 hours of classroom instruction and 8 hours of low speed/high stress driving course training. EMFS has a group of qualified Instructors to teach the classes. Only SEVO classes given by these instructors will be recognized as meeting the requirements for training contained in the *Traffic Safety Act*. The maximum number of students in a class is 24. Classes run on weekends are staggered. One group of 12 students starts on Friday evening, ending Sunday at noon. The second group starts on Saturday morning and ends Sunday at 5 pm. For safety the driving course must be clean and dry. Classes may be delayed or even rescheduled if weather makes the course unsafe to use. The minimum number of student for a class is 18. Students who register must commit to attending the class on the scheduled dates. If last minute withdrawals or no-shows bring the class number below 18 the class will be cancelled. Sponsors should have a "stand-by" list of fire fighters who can fill empty spots - ensuring at least 18 students will participate.

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### How are SEVO Classes Arranged?

Fire departments, fire service Associations or regional training groups agree to sponsor a SEVO class. The sponsor arranges for a suitable driving course, takes care of registering students and works with EMFS to schedule the class. All Fire Chiefs will receive an information package with instructions on setting up a class as well as the necessary forms. Sponsors should submit course requests at least six weeks in advance of their desired class dates.

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### For more information contact:

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