

Fire Police Best Practices

The Oswego Town Volunteer Fire Department Fire Police are sworn Peace Officers in the Town of Oswego and the State of New York pursuant to Section 209-c of the General Municipal Law (GML) and are registered through the Central State Registry of Peace Officers.

All Fire Police are required to successfully complete the twenty-one (21) hour New York State Fire Police Training Course (or have completed the previous 9-hour state version, or have a DCJS waiver of police officer training requirement), Basic Exterior Firefighter Operations, Hazardous Materiel First Responder Operations, and FEMA Incident Command System courses ICS-100 and ICS-700. The Fire Police course must be completed within one year of appointment and all fire police are further encouraged to seek additional training to assist them in carrying out their duties.

They are unique in that they are first trained firefighters, belonging to the fire department and responsible for all the requirements and duties of a volunteer member. However, when placed on duty by the chief, or activated for an emergency or other detail, they have certain peace officer powers.

Fire Police Captain: is allowed to first respond to the scene. The Captain must use the IAR system and indicate “scene” as their response. They must also make sure they are not needed to allow an apparatus to leave the station (i.e. being the only qualified driver). The Captain should have a portable radio if first arrival on scene.

Fire Police officers may respond to the scene provided that they are not passing the Fire Station. The fire police officer must use the IAR system and indicate “scene” as their response. They must also make sure they are not needed to allow an apparatus to leave the station (i.e. being the only qualified driver).

Duties may include:

- Traffic control at fires, car crashes, mass casualty incidents (MCI), drills and other fire department operations which would include:
 - Protecting firefighters and emergency medical service (EMS) personnel
 - Protecting each other's safety while on post
 - Protecting fire department equipment
 - Assisting with police investigations
 - Routing responding emergency vehicles to their assigned locations
 - Rerouting non-emergency traffic away/around emergency operations
 - Controlling access to “hot” and “warm” zones
 - Maintaining occupancy and/or control of structures and property while investigation is on-going, about to start, or when a return to the structure or property will occur by law enforcement

Often first on scene, fire police are able to report status, suspicious cause & origin, and mark the location of the structure, driveway, apartment entrance, etc. for first due companies.

Included in this are:

- Locate and mark downed energized electric service or other hazards to first responders
- Utilize their department apparatus to distribute equipment, gear, etc. to posts
- Deploy their department apparatus utilizing lights and equipment at roadblocks
- Limit access to a “hot” or “warm” zone to those authorized by the IC
- Turn, back-in & stage ambulances, tankers, etc. when required by space limitations

In addition they may also establish and maintain:

A clear unblocked entrance and egress to & from an incident scene for use by apparatus.

Establish fire lines & outer haz-mat zones.

A fire police officer at the IC to deploy arriving fire police units & advise of incoming mutual aid or equipment so they can be directed to their assigned locations.

A fire watch for as long as required.

An unbroken chain of evidence until it can be surrendered to police.

FD control of a possible crime scene enabling an immediate police investigation.

Staging areas for apparatus, triage, Red Cross, news media, etc.

A safety watch at fire police posts beyond the immediate emergency area affording the IC with additional reliable information otherwise unobtainable.

A crowd-watch for suspicious spectators, drive-bys, etc.

A written record of personnel, witnesses, evacuees, observations, etc.

The privacy and dignity of victims and their families.

Custody of valuables and personal property, and assist with salvage, & communication with police, highway, and other support agencies.

Fire police may also conduct area evacuations & maintain in/out traffic at haz-mat decontamination centers and establish ground control and mark the landing zone (LZ) for a requested med-evac helicopter.

Close roads & mark downed trees, wires, etc. after weather emergencies.

Assist with state training courses involving the use of public thoroughfares for training purposes.

Continue to attend advanced fire police meetings, training classes and seminars.

Under the mutual aid plan, assist neighboring fire departments when requested.

In the absence of fire police, firefighters will regulate and direct traffic at a scene under the authority of the Chief or Incident Commander.

Prohibited Activities.

- Nothing in this Policy authorizes a Fire Police Officer to do any of the following:
 - Carry a weapon or firearm
 - Chase down or pursue in a vehicle, an individual suspected of a crime
 - Act out of their job capacity
 - Act while off duty in any situation