

Northern Wake Fire Department

Driver / Operator Qualification Program

(Rev. October 2021)

Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to serve as the department's Driver Qualification Policy and will guide members of the department who show an interest in driving and operating fire department vehicles and the maturity to do so. This manual, in conjunction with other reference material, is designed to prepare Driver/Operator candidates (henceforth referred to as "Driver[s]") to advance their knowledge and abilities through objective assessment and examination to achieve the goal of fire department Driver.

It is encouraged that all candidates expand their knowledge outside of the department by completing the North Carolina Driver Operator Pumps and Aerials certification programs.

A note to all members:

Driving your personally owned vehicle (POV) while traveling to and from fire department related activities, emergency or not, can be considered an extension of the fire department. All members are encouraged to maintain a good driving record and to drive responsibly by adhering to all driving laws in the state of North Carolina. Notify your assigned officer of any violations.

Introduction:

Drivers are considered one of the most important members of the fire service as nothing can be successfully accomplished on any emergency scene without the driver's contributions and efforts. The driver is the individual who is required to safely transport equipment and personnel to the emergency scene and failing to perform this task effectively can cause harm to the personnel on board or to members of the community. Once on the emergency scene, the Driver must possess the knowledge of the equipment to ensure that personnel on scene have the necessary tools to manage the emergency. Once the emergency is mitigated, the driver is again responsible for the safe return of the equipment and personnel back to the fire station. Finally, it is the responsibility of the Driver to ensure that all equipment and apparatus are ready for the next response.

IMPORTANT: Administrative and Record Keeping Requirements

1. The Driver Candidate will be given a “Driver Candidate Logbook” to track all objective completions and training activities. All training activity will be entered into RMS as “New Driver” training. The candidate’s log book will be reviewed and compared to the RMS entries for accuracy.
 2. All Driver Candidates (New Drivers) will complete a minimum of 60 hours of driver training before the end of the Engine qualification (reference SOP 200-22 “Member Training Requirements”).
 3. It will be the responsibility of the Driver Candidate’s assigned Team Captain to insure accurate driver training records are submitted and maintained throughout the driver qualification process.
 4. To insure accurate recording of driver training that is “behind the wheel,” the RMS training record entry will ONLY indicate the Driver Candidate (actual driver) as participating in and receiving the on road or cone course driving time. Any other members who may be on the apparatus with them will not report their time as “driving” and should use another RMS category to record their participation (e.g. “FF Orientation and Safety”).
 5. Before any Driver Candidate advancement or promotion occurs and when notified by the candidate’s Team Captain, the Chief of Training will audit the Driver Candidate’s training records and logbook to insure accuracy and compliance. If the records are not sufficient, the candidate will not be allowed to advance to the next level of apparatus and/or to qualify as a Driver on the piece of fire apparatus they are qualifying for.
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Two Classes of Driver Candidates:

Class I Driver: A Class I driver is defined as:

- Any member of the department that is over the age of 18 and is a Firefighter.
- These candidates must maintain a good driving record and possess a minimum of a “Classified C” driver’s license recognized by the State of N.C.

Successful completion of this qualification will allow the driver to operate any department vehicle less than 15,000 lbs. GVWR and without a pump only in a non-emergency mode. These vehicles

include the departments SUVs and pickup trucks. These vehicles will be for non-emergency use by the Class 1 driver for the purposes of transporting personnel to and from fire department related activities including training classes, returning from an emergency scene, and transporting additional personnel to an emergency scene without the use of lights and sirens. Class 1 drivers may also tow a utility trailer for department purposes when trained to do so by an Officer (lawn mowers, non-emergent boat transport, equipment transport, etc.).

Class 1 Vehicle Exception: For full-time or part-time paid staff personnel and where a utility vehicle is not present at their assigned station, a Brush Unit may be used in lieu of a SUV or pickup truck for the Class 1 check-off and ONLY for utility purposes previously explained in this section.

Class I Driver Qualification Process:

- Any Firefighter seeking qualification as a Class 1 driver must have their non-emergent driving skills evaluated by any Officer of NWFD using a department SUV or pick-up truck.
- The NWFD Officer may check off the Firefighter as a qualified Class 1 driver when they are satisfied the candidate can safely operate the vehicle in a safe manner in non-emergency situations.
- Towing of boat trailers and/or utility trailers is allowed if a Class 1 driver candidate wishes to be qualified and the Officer is in agreement. Towing boat trailers and/or utility trailers is allowed for only non-emergent situations only.
- Class I drivers may not tow a boat and trailer in an emergency response mode.
- The record of check off will be signed by the NWFD Officer, placed into the Firefighter's Training File, and entered into RMS.

Class II Driver: A Class II driver is defined as:

- Any member of the department that is over the age of 21 and is in good standing with the department.
- Has a minimum of 1 year experience as a Firefighter.
- Is a Class 1 driver.
- Has completed the Emergency Vehicle Driver Course (EVD).
- Although a "Classified C" driver's license is allowed by the N.C. General Statutes (for volunteer firefighters), a "Classified B" or "CDL B" driver's license is preferred. "Classified B" or "CDL B" licenses are required for any employee (full-time and part-time).
- The Class II candidate will be expected to respond "emergency" on the vehicle category qualified on.

Class II Driver Qualification process:

The Class II qualification is a progressive program that involves several different categories of apparatus operated by the fire department.

What this means is in order for one to advance to the next level of apparatus/vehicle, they must successfully complete the objectives for the previous vehicle. Therefore, all driver candidates will start with Small Vehicles and progress upward. No exceptions.

Note: Candidates may decide to “stop” their progressive preparation at any time and only qualify on apparatus they are comfortable with. An example is a candidate may only wish to qualify (progressively) on Small Vehicles, Brush, Air-55, and Tankers; but not on any other apparatus.

The Class II categories include (in order):

- 1. Small Vehicles**
 - Small Vehicles w/ Trailer Tow (optional)
- 2. Brush Trucks**
 - Air Truck (optional)
- 3. Tankers/Tenders**
- 4. Rescue Trucks**
- 5. Engines**
 - Aerial/Ladder (optional)

General Overview of the Class II Driver Qualification Process:

- A candidate must request and receive permission from their Team Captain to enter the Class II driver candidate program.
- The Chief of Training will be notified of all New Drivers who begin the progressive process. A “Driver Candidate Logbook” will be provided by the Chief of Training or designee to the candidate.
- Candidates will complete the objectives for the specific apparatus category. All met objectives will be recorded in RMS and the “Driver Candidate Logbook.”
- All Driver Candidates must progressively advance through the driver program. E.g. they start with Small Vehicles, then move to Brush, then Tankers, then Rescue, then Engines, and finally the Ladder truck. Air-55 is optional.

- Candidates will be approved to operate the vehicles in each category as they successfully complete the objectives listed and are appropriately signed off on the category.
- Specific practical testing is only required and provided for the “Engine” category.
- Upon successful completion of the “Engine” practical exam, and with the approval of the Chief of Training and Fire Chief, the candidate may now hold the rank of “Fire Department Driver.”
- Once a candidate is qualified on the Engine category, they may begin work towards completing the objectives for Aerial/Ladder category.

Road Testing Requirements (all vehicles)

Regardless of vehicle qualifying for, a road based driving evaluation must be performed. The required driving time and criteria is defined in the objectives for each apparatus qualification.

The NWFD standardized “road course” for all driver evaluations is below and is designed as a circular route that basically passes each NWFD Station. This format allows a candidate to start from any NWFD station and complete the course by returning to the starting point. For example, we will start at Station #3:

Beginning at Station 3, traveling down Highway 50 North, Right on Old Weaver Trail, Left on New Light Road, (pass Station #4), Right on Purnell Road, Right on Stony Hill Road, (Pass Station #2), Right on Highway 98 West, Left on Six Forks Road, Left on Bay Leaf Church Road (at Station #1), Right on Possum Track Road, Right on Raven Ridge Road, Right on Falls of the Neuse Road, Right on I-540, Right on Creedmoor Road, terminating back at Station 3.

Due to “in service” status of many driver trainees and the apparatus they are using, coupled with location, the standard road course may be altered but must be approved by the Chief of Training.

Regardless of situation, the standardized “road course” listed above **MUST** be driven by a candidate and evaluated by an officer at least twice for each apparatus type they are qualifying on.

Obstacle Course Testing Requirements (Brush, Tanker, Rescue, Engine, Ladder/Aerial)

For each apparatus qualification (with the exception of Small Vehicles), an obstacle course (cone course) will be set up by the driver evaluator at Station #4 (or other designated location). The driver candidate must successfully demonstrate adequate navigation of the obstacle course prior

to apparatus qualification, regardless of attempts. Sufficient completion will be determined by the evaluator and will be based upon control and maneuvering skills demonstrated by the candidate.

Specific Vehicle Qualification Objectives:

Small Vehicles: (SUV's, Pickup Trucks, Sedans)

- Obtain Team Captain's permission to enter the category.
- Candidates will learn the equipment carried on each vehicle and will become familiar with the check-off and operation of the equipment on each vehicle
- The driver candidate must be with a department approved Driver and/or Officer during all driver training.
- Any NWFD Officer that is qualified as a "Driver" may sign-off on the completion of this category.
- Objectives for completion:
 - Awareness of NWFD SOP's related to driving.
 - Understanding of N.C. Driving Laws.
 - Radio and MDT use.
 - Small vehicle equipment location and use.
 - Demonstrate ability to check vehicle fluid levels (oil, transmission, coolant, etc.) and tire pressures.
 - Road driving evaluation (minimum 30 minutes day, 30 minutes night).

(Optional) Small Vehicles w/ Trailer Tow:

- In addition to all the requirements and objectives listed in the "Small Vehicles" category above, candidates wishing to qualify on trailer towing must:
 - Be familiar with appropriate trailer connections.
 - Demonstrate ability to properly tow and back the boat/trailer.
 - Demonstrate the ability to properly unload, load, and operate the boat on the water.
 - Road driving evaluation with Trailer (minimum of 30 minutes day, 30 minutes night).
- Any NWFD Officer that is qualified as a "Driver" and "Trailer Towing" may sign-off on the completion of this category.

Brush Vehicles:

Brush 19, Brush 29, Brush 49

- Obtain Team Captain's permission to enter the category.
- The driver candidate must be with a department approved Driver and/or Officer during all driver training.
- Any NWFD Officer that is qualified as a "Driver" may sign-off on the completion of this category.
- Objectives for completion:
 - Demonstrate ability to check vehicle fluid levels (oil, transmission, coolant, etc.) and tire pressures.
 - Learn the loose equipment and tools carried on each Brush vehicle and demonstrate the proper check-off and operation of the equipment.
 - Learn hose sizes and loads on each Brush vehicle and know the friction loss for each size hose/nozzle setup.
 - Demonstrate the ability to pump from the vehicle's booster tank, hydrant, and static (draft) source. Note: Candidate must pump all NWFD Brush trucks for familiarization.
 - Demonstrate appropriate use and operation of the Brush vehicle's mounted winch.
 - Demonstrate ability to properly operate the Brush vehicle's four-wheel drive.
 - Demonstrate safe low-speed maneuvering of the Brush vehicle (cone course w/ backing included).
 - Demonstrate safe road driving techniques (1 hour day, 1 hour night)

(OPTIONAL) Air Truck: Air 55

- Obtain Team Captain's permission to enter the category.
- The driver candidate must be qualified on the Small Vehicles and Brush categories.
- The driver candidate must be with a department approved Driver and/or Officer (who is also qualified on Air 55) during all driver training.
- Any NWFD Officer that is qualified as a "Driver" may sign-off on the completion of this category.
- Objectives for completion:
 - Demonstrate ability to check vehicle fluid levels (oil, transmission, coolant, etc.) and tire pressures.
 - Learn the loose equipment and tools carried on the vehicle and demonstrate the proper check-off and operation of the equipment.
 - Demonstrate the proper actuation of the air compressor system (PTO).
 - Demonstrate the proper refill of:

- SCBA cylinders (SCOTT and MSA)
- SCUBA (dive) cylinders
- A stand-alone cascade system
- An aerial device air supply cylinder
- Demonstrate the proper operation of the light tower.
- Demonstrate proper operation of on-board generator and light systems.
- Demonstrate safe low-speed maneuvering of the vehicle (cone course w/ backing included).
- Demonstrate safe road driving techniques (2 hours day, 2 hours night)

Tankers: Tanker 18, Tanker 28, Tanker 38, Tanker 48

- Obtain Team Captain's permission to enter the category.
- The driver candidate must be with a department approved Driver and/or Officer during all driver training.
- Any NWFD Officer that is qualified as a "Driver" may sign-off on the completion of this category.
- Objectives for completion:
 - The driver candidate must qualify and check off on each Tanker operated by NWFD.
 - Demonstrate ability to check vehicle fluid levels (oil, transmission, coolant, etc.) and tire pressures.
 - Learn the loose equipment and tools carried on a Tanker vehicle and demonstrate the proper check-off and operation of the equipment.
 - Learn hose sizes and loads on each vehicle and know the friction loss for each size hose/nozzle setup.
 - Demonstrate the ability to pump from the vehicle's booster tank, hydrant, and static (draft) source. Note: Candidates must pump all NWFD Tankers for familiarization.
 - Demonstrate the ability to properly pump any small hand lines attached to the Tanker (1.5" 1.75" and/or 2.5" as equipped)
 - Demonstrate the proper "nurse feeding" procedure from a Tanker using 3" hose.
 - Demonstrate the appropriate quick dump procedure on each NWFD Tanker.
 - Demonstrate the appropriate filling procedure for each NWFD Tanker.
 - Demonstrate safe low-speed maneuvering of the vehicle (cone course w/ backing included).
 - Demonstrate safe road driving techniques (3 hours day, 3 hours night)

Rescue Truck:

Rescue 25

- Obtain Team Captain's permission to enter the category.
- The driver candidate will learn the equipment carried on the vehicle and will become familiar with check off and operation of the equipment assigned to the vehicle.
- The driver candidate must be with a department approved Driver and/or Officer during all driver training.
- Any NWFD Officer that is qualified as a "Driver" may sign-off on the completion of this category.
- Objectives for completion:
 - Demonstrate ability to check vehicle fluid levels (oil, transmission, coolant, etc.) and tire pressures.
 - Demonstrate how to use the vehicle's on board systems for power supply, equipment controls, and hydraulic pump.
 - Demonstrate how to properly operate specialty equipment on the apparatus and understand their limitations:
 - Stabilization equipment
 - Electrical cord reels
 - Winch and accessories
 - Hydraulic tool connection and deployment
 - Power tools
 - Fans
 - Any other onboard rescue equipment
 - Demonstrate safe low-speed maneuvering of the vehicle (cone course w/ backing included).
 - Demonstrate safe road driving techniques (3 hours day, 3 hours night)

Engines:

- Obtain Team Captain's permission to enter the category.
- Candidates will learn the equipment carried on each vehicle and will become familiar with check off and operate the equipment on each vehicle.

- The driver candidate must be with a department approved Driver and/or Officer during all driver training.
- Any NWFD Officer that is qualified as a “Driver” may sign-off on the completion of this categories objectives, however final practical testing will be conducted by selected personnel.
- Objectives for completion:
 - Demonstrate ability to check vehicle fluid levels (oil, transmission, coolant, etc.) and tire pressures.
 - Learn the loose equipment and tools carried on an Engine and demonstrate the proper check-off and operation of the equipment.
 - Learn hose sizes and loads on an Engine and learn the friction loss for each size hose/nozzle setup.
 - Demonstrate the ability to successfully pump from the vehicle’s booster tank, hydrant, and a static (draft) source.
 - Demonstrate the ability to properly pump any single hand lines attached to the Engine (1.5” 1.75” and/or 2.5” as equipped)
 - Demonstrate the ability to properly pump multiple hand lines attached to the Engine (mixture of 1.5” 1.75” and/or 2.5” as equipped)
 - Demonstrate the ability to properly pump multiple hand lines from a courtyard lay attached to the Engine (mixture of 1.5” 1.75” and/or 2.5” as equipped).
 - Demonstrate the ability to properly pump to a portable setup Master Stream Device (Apollo Monitor and Blitz Nozzle devices).
 - Demonstrate how to relay water to another Engine using 5” supply hose.
 - Demonstrate the proper “nurse feeding” procedure to a Tanker using 3” hose.
 - Demonstrate safe low-speed maneuvering of the vehicle (cone course w/ backing included).
 - Demonstrate safe road driving techniques (3 hours day, 3 hours night)
 - Complete a Practical Exam that includes:
 - Drafting pumping practical
 - Hydrant pumping practical
 - Progressive pumping practical

Aerial/Ladder Truck:

Ladder 35

- Obtain Team Captain’s permission to enter the category.
- Candidates will learn the equipment carried on the Ladder and will become familiar with check off and operate the equipment on board.

- The driver candidate must be with a department approved Ladder qualified Driver and/or Officer during all driver training.
- Any NWFD Officer that is qualified as a Ladder “Driver” may sign-off on the completion of this category.
- Objectives for completion:
 - Demonstrate ability to check vehicle fluid levels (oil, transmission, coolant, etc.) and tire pressures.
 - Learn the loose equipment and tools carried on the Ladder Truck and demonstrate the proper check-off and operation of the equipment.
 - Learn hose sizes and loads on the Ladder Truck.
 - Demonstrate the ability to successfully pump from the vehicle’s booster tank, hydrant, and a static (draft) source.
 - Demonstrate the ability to properly pump any single hand lines attached to the Ladder Truck (1.5” 1.75” and/or 2.5” as equipped)
 - Demonstrate the ability to properly pump multiple hand lines attached to the Ladder Truck (mixture of 1.5” 1.75” and/or 2.5” as equipped)
 - Demonstrate pumping through the aerial waterway from a water source that feeds into the pump (hydrant or draft).
 - Demonstrate proper operation of the Aerial device feature to include but not be limited to:
 - Stabilizer operation
 - Short jacking
 - Aerial device elevation, rotation, extension, and retraction/bedding.
 - Aerial emergency power operation/use
 - Demonstrate safe low-speed maneuvering of the vehicle (cone course w/ backing included).
 - Demonstrate safe road driving techniques (3 hours day, 3 hours night)

Promotion to the rank of Engineer:

The fire department Engineer should have knowledge of all apparatus in the department as they may be called upon at any time to drive and operate any of the apparatus at any of the stations in the Northern Wake Fire Department.

These advanced operators should possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to work independently on the fire ground to maintain water flow to the fire attack crews. These persons should be able to quickly discover, diagnose, and make quick adjustments or repairs to the vehicle to prevent damage to the equipment or hinder the safety of others.

These individuals should be dedicated to responsibility of being an apparatus operator and are required to possess:

- Class 2 Driver status on all NWFD apparatus
- North Carolina Driver Operator Pumps Certification
- North Carolina Driver Operator Aerial Certification