

# Safety Alert

Safety Alert No. SA-07-18

Effective Date: 10/10/2018  
Review Date: 31/01/2019  
Version: 1

## Driving and Vehicle Safety

There has been an increase in incidents involving QFES vehicles in recent weeks, including speeding infringements, road traffic crashes, vehicles impacting pedestrians and vehicles impacting QFES personnel at incidents scenes.

A number of these incidents are currently under investigation by Workplace Health and Safety Officers, Queensland Police Service and relevant QFES business units.

In the interim, all QFES workforce are reminded that driving, particularly en-route to, or at the incident scene requires the utmost care and attention. The first mission objective of Operation Synergy is the protection of life – emergency responders and the community.

Exemption for Emergency Vehicles within the *Australian Road Rules 2009* and the *Transport Operations (Road Use Management Road Rules) Regulation 2009* **do not apply** to volunteers driving QFES vehicles therefore, volunteers can drive QFES vehicles displaying a red and blue light or sounding an alarm whilst responding to an emergency but **MUST** comply with **all** relevant roads rules. In addition, any traffic infringements for speeding or from red light cameras are required to be passed on to the person identified as the driver of the vehicle.

For your ongoing safety in our workplaces, all personnel are reminded of the following QFES driving procedures:

### Safe Driving

1. When traveling to pick up an emergency vehicle or traveling to an incident in a private vehicle remember to obey all traffic rules/regulations and sign posted information.
2. QFES workforce that operate QFES vehicles or vehicles that are involved in response to any emergency will do so in a manner that will not cause harm, injury or death to themselves, other staff and volunteers or members of the public.
3. Furthermore, QFES workforce including volunteers that operate QFES vehicles or vehicles that are involved in response to any emergency will do so in a manner that will not damage the responding vehicle, other mobile property or any structure.

### Reversing of QFES Vehicles

1. Wherever possible, drivers of QFES vehicles must ensure that another person is available to guide the driver during all reversing manoeuvres.
2. If another person is not available to assist, the driver shall dismount from the vehicle and inspect the area into which it is intended to reverse the vehicle.

### Driver Fatigue

1. QFES recognises that emergency response driving can be affected by fatigue. To ensure that drivers are sufficiently alert, fatigue management is focused on the unique working environment of all QFES personnel.

In summary, several recent incidents have highlighted the critical importance of taking the utmost care when operating QFES vehicles, particularly where responding to or working at incident scenes, please obey all speed signs, slow down when go through roadworks, your driving may put others at risk.



Queensland  
Government





As with all operations, the safety of personnel is the highest priority.

Wildfires are emergency response events that have the potential to generate hazardous conditions for firefighters working on or near roadways. Firefighters involved in operations on or near roadways are at risk when:

- using the roadway as a firebreak to control the spread of fire and monitoring the fire from the roadway
- using the roadway for vehicle access to the fire; and
- working from the roadway to fight the fire by either extinguishment or back-burning operations.

The risk is derived from the smoke produced by the wildfire or from control measures, such as back burning that could impact on roads or tracks in the area.

The presence of smoke can reduce the visibility for drivers of QFES vehicles and of any other vehicles in the area which may cause:

- collisions with other vehicles
- collisions with structures or trees (standing or fallen)
- vehicles leaving the road, track or off bridges into gullies or creeks; and
- the striking of firefighters or pedestrians by vehicles.

All incidents and injuries that occur whilst working in or near traffic, driving incidents, or at emergency response events **must** be reported to the Incident Controller and entered into the departmental incident and hazard reporting system as soon as reasonably practicable.



Andrew Short

A/Deputy Commissioner

Emergency Management, Volunteerism and Community Resilience Division  
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

