

## *Old Dominion Historical Fire Society*

### **General Safety Rules and Regulations**

#### **Part I General Rig Safety Checkpoints**

- 1. Brakes: visual inspection of all braking components to include:** master cylinder, brake linkage, brake lines, cotter keys at connections, drum inspection for leakage, rods, emergency brake operation, fluid check, vacuum booster lank, air pump. When you apply pressure to the brake pedal or pull the emergency brake the rig should stop and stay in a stopped position until the pedal or lever is released.
- 2. Fuel System:** proper fitting cap on all fuel tanks, check fuel line from tank to carburetor, or injectors for leaks or seepage, carburetor seepage, in line fuel line shut off valves. All rigs should carry at least one 2-1/2 lb., dry chemical, halon or 5 lb carbon dioxide U/L listed or equivalent fire extinguisher.
- 3. Electrical1:** visual inspection of fuse box, fuses, make certain all running lights, turn signals, horn, brake lights are fully operational. Frayed wires, and loose connections should be repaired properly. (Electrical tape is recommended for temporary repairs only)
- 4. Tires/Rims:** maintain recommended proper air pressure in all tires. Tire treadware should be checked regularly. Spot check front end alignment, correct as needed. Cast rims should be checked on both sides especially the spokes for cracks. Split Ring rims require special attention. If you have a flat or need to change a tire with split ring rims call someone who knows how to work on them. Accidents from split ring rim failures range from fatal, to limb dismemberment.
- 5. Mounted Rig Equipment:** each time prior to traveling the open road check all mounted equipment (i.e. ladders, hoses, nozzles, fire extinguishers, axes, pike poles, ropes, pry bars, etc.) to make sure all equipment is properly mounted and all mounting brackets are functioning properly.
- 6. Open Cab Operation:** members who drive open cab rigs should be especially careful when operating. Some of the older open cab rigs have no doors, windshields, or safety seat belts. A pot hole bumpy road, or strong head wind could knock a passenger out of the seat. Especially watch out for low hanging limbs or low clearance door garage door openings. Driving a rig without a windshield in a rainstorm should be avoided at all times due to poor visibility. Hand signals should be used by all operators of rigs without turnsignals.

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**7. Pump/Water System:** know your water system, and plumbing. If you leave your water tank or booster tank full make certain that your piping/hoses/shut off valves work properly. Nobody wants to dump a couple of hundred gallons of water on the garage floor at night or while you are out of town. A little drip can be the start of something big. Always drain your pumps before the winter cold weather settles in.

**8. Driving Operations: a spotter should be used to maneuver into tight spaces, or backing up.** Know the limitations of your rig in regards to braking distance, and acceleration to pass slower traffic. If you are not going to travel the posted speed limit on a multi lane highway, stay in the right lane so traffic can safely pass around you. I also recommend posting a regulation slow moving vehicle triangle on the rear bumper. Be courteous to the drivers and pedestrians around you. It is not recommended to let people ride the tailboard, or running boards in every day traffic The exception to the rule of course is during, riding in a parade. Make sure while your passengers are riding in a parade that at least one hand always remains on the grab bar. However. I would check with your insurance policy as some insurers only cover people who are riding in approved seats on the vehicle only and not hanging on a grab bar.

**9. Misc. Operation:** door latches should be checked to make sure the door stays shut when closed, windshield wipers should be fully functional whether air or electrically operated. Seats should be firmly bolted to the floor and equipped with seat belts if possible. (wooden crates, and pillows do not constitute a regulation seat) side glass, and windshields should be clean for full visibility. External side mirrors should be clean and free of cracks for maximum visibility. Sirens and bells should not be used to pull people over or cut through heavy traffic. Running redlights or stop signs can be dangerous. Be aware of the roads you travel and watch for posted weight limits on bridges. Also remember that heavy objects do not travel fast or well on soft ground. All it takes is one front tire off the hard pavement to start trouble. While parading make certain your displays, passengers, and or accessories do not interfere with low hanging overhead wire. (i.e. one of your passengers riding on top of the hose bed decides to stand up or stand up with a flag in hand)

**10. Engine compartment:** Cleanliness in the engine is of utmost importance. Accumulated oil, and grease buildups are an invitation for a fire and restrict proper engine cooling. Engine compartment fires can be stubborn to extinguish Annually check your hoses for soft spots, or cracks. Also check the condition of the fan belts, look for cracking and check the belt tension.

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**11. Batteries:** batteries should be removed from the rig during long dormant storage periods. It is also a good idea to install a main cut off switch on the battery. When charging a battery, or jump starting another rig please make sure that the jumper cables are substantial to carry the electric current. It is not recommended to jump start a 6 volt system with a 12 volt system. Some of the newer diesel rigs have multiple batteries which is even trickier to jump start. Always refer to the owners manual or a mechanic familiar with a multiple battery set up before you start attaching jumper cables. Always remember that a battery is like a mini hydrogen bomb and the hydrogen gas could explode when in contact with a spark, match, or cigarette.

**12. Towing/Hauling:** towing a rig can be more dangerous than driving one. Not only is it important that your rig is adequately tied down, the condition of the tow vehicle, and trailer are equally important. Hitch connections should be double checked, and safety chains are a must. It is an eery feeling when your trailer breaks loose and passes you on the road. I have seen this happen on three different occasions. An adequate number of tie downs should always be used and secured properly. Trailer lighting should also be checked thoroughly. Lights, and lenses should be covered to prevent breakage from flying rocks. Just because your rig is sitting on trailer does not mean that the road debris will miss it. Double check your accessories, and the mounting brackets. On long distance towing it is a good idea to remove as many accessories as possible, especially ladders.