



General Order Number 41

January 16, 2015

To Officers and Members

Johnson Creek Fire & EMS Department

Effective January 16, 2015

General order and rule for cell phone use...

In the interest of safety, accurate information, maintaining focus on the emergency at hand and keeping a professional appearance, cell phones and phone cameras are not to be used in the field. Giving consideration to the entire policy, the following rules are to be observed:

1. To assure a greater amount of safety, cell phones should never be used by any operator, or other member, driving or working in any operator's capacity driving or operating machinery. The officer of a rig/apparatus or the non-driver of an ambulance is the only person authorized to use a cell phone while it is in motion.
2. Personnel should not use their phone, nor the camera feature of their phone, while at the scene of an incident. It is essential that all information – including images – from an incident scene be accurate and from one source authorized and verified by command or designee.
3. Patient privacy and dignity should always be maintained. No information about an EMS patient should be conveyed via cell phone or otherwise that might compromise HIPAA patient rights. Any related official communication via cell phone should fit within the HIPAA constraints.

Exceptions:

1. The IC of our department on a call or the OIC from our department, if on a mutual aid call, can make exceptions to this policy
2. If on a protracted incident an urgent need for communications on your personal cell phone arises, after informing the IC or immediate officer, a call can be made from the passenger area of one of the apparatus or otherwise out of public sight.
3. The IC, command officers, OIC, PIO (or person designated to act as PIO) are allowed unrestricted use of cell phones in the execution of the responsibilities of their position. They are strongly encouraged to use cell phones with discretion and maintain safe practices.

This order will take effect and be in force on and 0700 hours on the date indicated.

Jim Wolf, Chief
Johnson Creek Fire & EMS Department