

Under the *Traffic Safety Act*, all registered owners and operators of commercial vehicles, including firefighting vehicles registered with a gross vehicle weight of 11,794 kilograms or more must meet certain regulatory requirements regarding vehicle maintenance, driver safety and record keeping. The nature of firefighting services in Alberta is associated with low annual accumulation of vehicle kilometers, staffing by volunteers, limited budgets and few administrative resources. Given this, Alberta Transportation, in consultation with the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association (AFCA), has developed the Municipal Firefighting Vehicle Permit.

In an effort to maximize the productivity for the operation of regulated Firefighting Vehicles while still ensuring a high level of safe operations on the highway, a permit is available allowing Registered Owners of municipal firefighting vehicles to apply for exemptions from any or all of the following three regulatory requirements:

- a) Annual vehicle inspections under the Commercial Vehicle Inspection Program (CVIP) as required by Section 19 (1) of the *Vehicle Inspection Regulation* (AR211/2006);
- b) Retention of specified records at an approved location(s), other than at the principal place of business of the Registered Owner, as required by Section 43(1) of the *Commercial Vehicle Certificate and Insurance Regulation* (AR314/2002) and by Sections 8 and 9 of the *Commercial Vehicle Safety Regulation* (AR 121/2009).
- c) Retention of copies of annual drivers' abstracts as required by Section 41(1)(c) of the *Commercial Vehicle Certificate and Insurance Regulation* (AR314/2002).

## a) Annual Vehicle Inspections

According to Section 19(1) of the *Vehicle Inspection Regulation* (AR211/2006) annual vehicle inspections under the Commercial Vehicle Inspection Program (CVIP) must be conducted. The CVIP is a comprehensive mechanical inspection that must be conducted at a certified facility with specialized equipment and staffed by certified technicians. Recognized issues for Fire Departments include the cost associated with these inspections, the low mileage traveled by many firefighting vehicles and the difficulties associated with removing a firefighting vehicle from service to complete this inspection. The permit allows CVIP inspections to be conducted once every three years or 5,000 kilometers, rather than annually, provided the specified requirements are satisfied.

## b) Location of Records

Section 43(1) of the *Commercial Vehicle Certificate and Insurance Regulation* (AR314/2002) requires that all driver records must be retained at the principal place of business of the vehicle's registered owner. Recognizing that firefighting vehicles may be loaned to other persons/organizations by the municipal owner in exchange for firefighting services, the permit allows the primary user of the firefighting vehicle to maintain the driver records. Also recognizing that many communities may want to retain their records at locations other than their principal place of business, the permit allows specified records to be retained at specified locations. Note that although another person/organization may maintain the required records, the Registered Owner remains responsible for the compliance of these records.

To qualify for this exemption, the Registered Owner of the firefighting vehicle and the municipality keeping the records must sign a Responsibility Agreement. A sample of such an Agreement may be found in the sample Safety and Maintenance Program (Appendix B of the Sample Permit) and attached to the Memorandum of Agreement.

### **c) Annual Drivers' Abstracts**

According to Section 41(1)(c) of the *Commercial Vehicle Certificate and Insurance Regulation* (AR314/2002), when a driver/firefighter initially joins the fire department, the municipality (as Registered Owner) must obtain and retain a Driver's Abstract dated within 30 days of joining. Subsequent driver's abstracts are required annually. The allowed exemption will reduce the cost and administrative requirements to municipalities and their fire services as drivers' abstracts will only be required when the driver is initially hired. Provided that each driver maintains an acceptable driving record, and signs a document annually confirming this, then no annual abstracts will be necessary.

#### **NOTE:**

One or more of the above areas may be specified in the permit application. If the application is approved, the permit will be issued for a maximum of a 3-year period. There is no fee for this application.

### **Regulatory Compliance**

There are a number of aspects that firefighting vehicles registered for 11,794 kilograms or more must comply with. To assist in gaining compliance, a sample Safety and Maintenance Program has been developed which outlines the minimum acceptable policies and procedures for a fire service (see Appendix B of the Sample Conditions). Note that this is a sample only and that your fire service may already have written policies and procedures which meet or exceed what is required by the regulations. This sample was developed for fire services to adopt if they do not already have a safety and maintenance program in place that satisfies the regulatory requirements. If adopted, this sample must be customized where required. Additional policies and procedures may be added or substituted, provided the minimum transportation regulatory requirements are still met.

Alberta Transportation will monitor the on-road and general administrative compliance of permit holders. If it is identified that the permit holder has failed to meet all the specified permit conditions, or has otherwise incurred an unacceptable level of violations, the permit will be subject to review and could be cancelled. An audit may be done at any time by Alberta Transportation staff or a contracted consultant to measure compliance and to help identify the primary areas that need to be improved.

### **For more information contact:**

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