



Division 13 **Public Affairs**

Chapter 07 – Observer Program for Fireboat 858

March 2009

POLICY

A uniformed procedure will be followed to establish a standard operational procedure when dealing with dignitary's, delegations and special VIP's to the County and the National Harbor Project.

It is imperative that the crews assigned to Fireboat 858 recognize the importance of these groups and strive to forge a professional working relationship to promote a positive public image.

This procedure is in place to ensure the safety and well being of all personnel, as well as all guests that will visit and those that are provided an operational tour on the Fireboat. It is a shared responsibility of all involved to see to the adherence of this procedure.

DEFINITIONS

Observers – persons who are not members of the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department; this definition specifically includes members of other fire/rescue departments outside of Prince George's County and dignitaries who represent special interest to the County and the National Harbor Project.

Minimum staffing – three persons (Boat Crew) trained and certified to operate in Emergency Operations dealing with Water Related Emergencies and Water Rescue Operations.

Underway – A nautical term describing the state of a vessel or boat. A vessel is said to be underway if it meets the following criteria:

- It is not aground
- It is not at anchor
- It has not been made fast to a dock, the shore, or other stationary object.

PROCEDURES

1. General Provisions

Observers shall be at least 18 years of age. This shall be confirmed with a review of a driver's license and or picture identification card.

Observers shall sign the release form prior to boarding any Fire/EMS Department marine vessel. Signature shall be witnessed by the appropriate Battalion Chief or highest ranking officer. No one may sign for the officers.

Observers shall review the rules governing this procedure, which will be acknowledged on the release form.

Unless the request is given through the appropriate command, it shall be the responsibility of the officer in charge to determine if the individual or group warrants a ride on the boat. Crews are to provide an informative interactive presentation of the fireboat and its operations.

2. Operational Guidelines

At no time are there to be more than 5 guests allowed to ride on the boat. Operations of the boat are to be performed in a slow and extremely safe manner. At no time, while there are passengers on the vessel, shall the operator perform any high speed maneuvers to include High Speed Stops or



High Speed Turns unless it is necessary to avoid a collision or to ensure the safety of the crew, personnel on board and the vessel.

3. Guidelines for all passengers

No guest will be allowed to operate or engage in any emergency operation while on the boat. Prior to getting underway all guest will be fitted for a Personal Flotation Device and instructed on the proper use of said device. The Personal Flotation Device shall be worn for the duration of the presentation. All guests will be encouraged to sit in the cabin or stand while holding the handrail when the boat is underway for their safety.

Conditions acceptable to get underway:

- The Boat must be fully staffed with a minimum of 3 personnel.
- Prior to getting underway with a guest aboard, the crew shall check the marine weather channel 30 minutes prior to departure and ensure that none of the following conditions exist.
 - Small craft advisory prior to departure and for the duration of the ride.
 - Gail warnings
 - Thunder storm warnings for the immediate area.
 - Wind conditions in excess of 15 knots
 - Waves in excess of 1 to 2 feet
 - Flash flood warnings
 - Any condition that exist that would place guest in immediate danger

If any of the preceding conditions exist the vessel will not go underway.

It is preferable that all presentations are scheduled when the weather is clear and the wind is calm. If there is inclement weather or

winds are in excess of 20 knots all rides will be postponed and rescheduled to a mutually agreeable time.

4. Documentation

A list will be maintained and forwarded to the Major of the Special Operations Division weekly.

REFERENCES

N/A

FORMS/ATTACHMENTS

Ride-Along Guest Observer Program Release Form