

Driving Simulator Training

The North Dakota Firefighter's Association is pleased to announce that the Fire Service Emergency Driving Simulator Training Course is now available for delivery.

This course utilizes the NDFA's Fire Service Emergency Driving Simulator trailer, which was purchased last year with an Assistance to Firefighters Grant. The trailer includes two simulators that feature all types of fire service vehicles.



How the Simulators Work

One simulator includes three screens and simulates a wide variety of vehicles, including a Chief's SUV, a pickup, small grassland firefighting pickups, squad type vehicles, ambulances, pumpers and ladder trucks. The second simulator is built with four screens and gives a simulation that more closely replicates a custom fire apparatus. It includes two seats (adding one seat for the company officer). This simulator does everything the first unit does, but also features a "crew trainer" function. The "crew trainer" function puts the fire officer into the scenario with the driver to offer a broader training scenario.

Drive Multiple Scenarios in a Variety of Weather Conditions

The simulators have more than 100 scenarios that can be driven. All scenarios are driven in "Safety City," a virtual world that includes urban, suburban, and rural areas. Safety City includes interstate highways, city streets, country roads, airports, fire stations and includes rain, snow, dust, and any time of the day or night. The simulator adjusts vehicle's characteristics and physics (wheelbase, length, turning radius, weight distribution, traction, etc.) depending on the vehicle type and on the road conditions to give a more realistic experience. For example, if the snow feature is used, the roads are truly slick and driving technique has to be adjusted.

Initial Training at the Basic Response Level

Training for this initial course will be offered at the basic response level. Training will include (but will not be limited to) intersection observation, speed control, accident avoidance, vehicle handling and control, and hazards of emergency driving. These simulators will provide opportunities for progressively advanced training courses with additional (new) scenarios.



Format for Basic Driving Simulator Training Delivery

Regional Format

This initial round of the Driving Simulator course will be offered in a regional format. Course locations will be identified in strategic locations throughout the state. The simulator trailer will be scheduled for 2–4 days in each location and students will register individually for the day they wish to train. The Institute will assign individuals into time slots and notify the firefighter via email of their assigned training time. The schedules will be designed to accommodate day, evening, and weekend time slots. Visit our online registration website at www.ndfa.net for the most up-to-date listing of training locations.

Training Day—Be On Time

The training will begin with a short briefing (about 15 minutes) in the classroom, then students will move to the simulators to begin their driving experience. It is very important that students be on time! If they are more than a couple minutes late, they will forfeit their opportunity. This format will help us meet our goals of maximizing actual driving time on the simulators and training as many firefighters as possible.

Model Training Day Schedule

Due to the nature of the individual training with this simulator, we will be able to train 16 students per day. If an evening session is scheduled, we will be able to add 8 more to that total. An example of the daily schedule for the simulator is shown below:

TIME SLOTS

8–10 a.m. – 4 Students

10– Noon – 4 Students

LUNCH

1–3 p.m. – 4 Students

3–5 p.m. – 4 Students

DINNER BREAK

(Evening sessions scheduled as needed)

6–8 p.m. – 4 Students

8–10 p.m. – 4 Students

The trailer will be scheduled at a single location for 2–4 days. Simulator slots will be scheduled in sequence beginning with the first slot on the first day and progressing through the available times. The site may close prior to the fourth day if remaining time slots are unfilled. If all slots are filled for the scheduled days, the course may be extended or another delivery for that area will be scheduled as soon as possible.

Hosting This Training

If your department would like to host one of these Basic Driving Simulator courses, please contact the Institute. Hosts will not be allocated any slots. Individuals will have to schedule into the course using the stated process. We will ask training hosts to have these items available:

- A smooth and level hard-surface area to park and operate the trailer (including tow vehicle). The trailer is 36' X 8' and will be towed by a 1-ton dually pickup. The trailer is independently powered (onboard generator) and will be generally self-contained. It can also run on 110V/50A dedicated service if available.
- A small waiting area for students as they arrive for their session in the simulator.
- Parking space for students (up to 10 people at any one time).
- A reasonably secure area for overnight parking (interior parking/storage not required, but an open bay in the fire station would be nice).
- Restrooms available within a reasonable distance for students and instructors.
- A local fuel station where NDFA can purchase diesel fuel (our generator may require fuel over the span a few days).

Contact the NDFA office (701-222-2799) for more detailed information about hosting a Basic Driving Simulator course in your area.