**PURPOSE:** To establish a uniform method of responding to a request for assistance in gaining entry to one’s property.

**SCOPE:** These Operational Guidelines apply to both structures and automobiles. Authority to deviate rests solely with the company officer on the scene who bears full responsibility for any deviation.

**POLICY:** The Pacific Fire Protection District respond to requests for assistance in gaining entry to a person’s property. This property includes, but is not limited to:

* Automobiles
* Structures

Response to such incidents will be without lights and siren. Fire District units handling such incidents will be available for response to emergency calls. When dispatched to such a request the police should be requested to assist with verification of ownership.

**PROCEDURE:**

1. Verification of ownership/occupancy. The company officer will make reasonable efforts to insure that the person requesting assistance does have a legal right to gain entry to the property. Ownership/occupancy of a property should be established by requesting identification, such as a driver’s license, from the citizen and comparing it with the address of the structure or the owner information of the automobile.
2. Entry to structures: When gaining entry to a structure every attempt to do so without force or destruction should be made first.
3. When entry by non-destructive means is not possible the company officer should so inform the owner/occupant then ask if they would like entry made by destructive/forcible means. If the owner/occupant requests entry by destructive means then the company officer must inform the owner/occupant of the exact nature of the technique which will be employed and insure the owner/occupant has a full understanding of the destructive nature of the proposed action and that the fire district is not and cannot be held liable for any damage to the property. This should be done in the witness of other crew members and preferably the police. Lock Out Waiver of Liability to be signed.
4. Once forcible/destructive entry has been made fire district personnel should clean up whatever mess was made and assist the owner/occupant in securing the damaged area, within reason.
5. Entry to automobiles: Entry to automobiles is primarily a police responsibility. However, when a request is received effort will be made to be of assistance.
6. Before any attempt is made to unlock an automobile door the driver/owner should be informed of the risk of damage to internal door parts such as electrical and mechanical systems contained in the door and that the fire department is not and cannot be held liable for any damage to the automobile. Lock Out Waiver of Liability to be signed.
7. Non-destructive entry should be attempted using the department supplied door lock tool. Other methods may then be used if the door lock tool is not successful.
8. When entry by non-destructive means is not possible the company officer should so inform the driver/owner then ask if they would like entry made by destructive/forcible means. If the driver/owner requests entry by destructive means then the company officer must inform the driver/owner of the exact nature of the technique which will be employed and insure that the driver/owner has a full understanding of the destructive nature of the proposed action and that the fire district is not and cannot be held liable for any damage to the property. This should be done in the witness of other crew members and preferably the police. Lock Out Waiver of Liability to be signed.
9. All fire district personnel engaged in forcible/destructive entry procedures must wear appropriate personal protective gear which includes, but is not limited to, eye, head, and hand coverings.
10. Incidents involving infants and small children locked inside an automobile in distress shall be removed from automobile ASAP by whatever means needed.