

STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE - 4.6.4

TOPIC - SAFETY: EMERGENCY RESPONSE DRIVING

PURPOSE:

To promote the highest degree of safety possible during emergency response driving.

GENERAL:

Emergency response (Code-3) driving presents a higher degree of risk than any other single activity associated with the emergency services provided by the District. While responding, the driver is expected to be acutely aware of the surrounding environment, including other vehicles and pedestrians, to be able to anticipate the actions of others and respond appropriately to road conditions, and to maintain a high level of courtesy. The primary objective is to be able to transport equipment and personnel to the scene of an emergency safely and in a timely manner.

GUIDELINE:

Prior to moving the emergency vehicle:

- The driver will perform a walk around of the vehicle.
- During this procedure the driver will assure that all equipment is secured, that all compartment doors are closed and secured, and that all obstructions are moved out of the way.
- The driver must contact all passengers to insure that they are seated and belted.

Code-3 Driving in General:

- This driving condition is best described as driving with audible and visual warning devices activated while in response to a true emergency.
- A true emergency is a situation where there is a high probability of death or serious injury to an individual or significant property loss, and actions by response personnel may reduce the seriousness of that situation.
- It must be understood that warning devices are not always effective in making other vehicle operators aware of your presence.
- Warning devices only request the right-of-way, they do not insure the right-of-way. The emergency vehicle driver must wait for the other vehicles to yield the right-of-way.
- Maintain surveillance of traffic in all four directions, front, rear, right and left.
- Stay well back of other vehicles so that they may have an opportunity to respond to your warning devices.
- Avoid driving in the opposing lanes of traffic whenever possible.
- Exercise a maximum degree of caution whenever it is necessary to pass or overtake another vehicle.

School Bus:

- Whenever a driver, driving Code-3, comes upon a stopped school bus which is in the process of loading or unloading passengers, displaying its red lights, or if the school bus is in the initial phase displaying flashing yellow lights, the emergency driver shall stop until such time that the school bus driver gives clearance to proceed by turning off the warning system of the school bus.
- The emergency vehicle driver should turn off the audible warning system while stopped under this condition, leaving the warning lights on.

Speed:

- The recommended maximum response speed is not to exceed 10 MPH over the posted speed limit.
- Maximum response speed will be reduced whenever road, traffic or weather conditions dictate.
- During periods of inclement weather, the maximum response speed shall not exceed the posted speed limit.
- The maximum speed when proceeding through an uncontrolled intersection or green light should be no greater than the posted speed limit.

Uncontrolled Intersections :

- Uncontrolled means that there is no stop or yield sign, or traffic signal in the direction of travel for the emergency vehicle.
- The driver should take his/her foot off of the accelerator to assure speeds no greater than the posted speed limit.
- Scan the intersection for potential hazards, looking to the left first then to the right. Be prepared to stop the vehicle.
- Maintain surveillance of traffic in all four directions, front, rear, right and left.
- Change the siren cadence not less than 200' from the intersection whenever possible.
- Avoid using the opposing lane of traffic whenever possible.

Controlled Intersections:

- Any intersection controlled by a stop sign, yield sign, yellow traffic light or a red traffic light requires a complete stop by the emergency vehicle driver.
- Establish eye contact with other vehicle drivers; verify that all other vehicles have stopped prior to proceeding.
- Scan the intersection for hazards, looking to the left first then to the right.
- Proceed one lane at a time; checking for clearance prior to proceeding through the next lane. Be prepared to stop at each lane of traffic.

- Have the passenger who is sitting in the front seat assist you in spotting hazards.
- Do not rely on warning devices to clear traffic.
- Maintain surveillance of traffic in all four directions, front, rear, right and left.

- If you are stopped at a red traffic light and cannot proceed because traffic is exceedingly heavy, and there is not a clear path for travel until the traffic light changes to green, turn off the audible warning device while leaving the warning lights on.
- Avoid using the opposing lane of traffic whenever possible.
- If the traffic control light is green in your direction of travel, follow the guidelines for uncontrolled intersections.

Railroad Intersections:

- Whenever an emergency vehicle driver approaches an unguarded rail crossing he/she shall bring the vehicle to a complete stop.
- While stopped turn off all audible warning systems and other sound producing systems.
- Roll down a window and listen for a train's horn.
- Look both ways before proceeding.