

3.4 Emergency Response



City of Oak Point Department of Public Safety Fire Department

TITLE: Emergency Apparatus Response

SECTION/TOPIC: General Operations

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These SOPs/SOGs are based on FEMA guidelines FA-197

1.0 PURPOSE

PURPOSE:

Vehicle response to and from emergency incidents as well as emergency operations on roadways present a high level of risk to fire fighter safety. This procedure identifies requirements for the implementation of a safe emergency vehicle operations program. This procedure shall be enforced for all vehicle operations. The officer and the driver of the vehicle are responsible for the safety of all vehicle operations and compliance of this standard operating procedure.

2.0 SCOPE

This SOP/SOG pertains to all personnel and city owned vehicles.

3.0 POLICY/GUIDELINES & INFORMATION

POLICY:

Emergency vehicles shall be operated in either emergency mode utilizing vehicle emergency lights and sirens (e.g. Code 3, Priority 1) or a non-emergency mode (e.g. Code 1 Priority 3). Regardless of the vehicle operation mode, it is the responsibility of the driver of each emergency vehicle to drive safely and prudently. It is the responsibility of the firefighter to ensure that the emergency vehicle is being driven in a safe and prudent manner. All employees are required to use seat belts at all times when operating an emergency vehicle. All personnel shall ride only in regular seats provided with seat belts. Riding on tailboards or other exposed positions is not permitted on any vehicle at any time. The driver of the vehicle shall confirm that all personnel and riders are on-board, properly attired, with seat belts on, before the vehicle is permitted to move. This confirmation shall require a positive response from each rider, as in "ready." Vehicles shall be operated in compliance with the Federal and State Motor Vehicle Code. This code provides specific legal exceptions to regular traffic regulations that apply to emergency vehicles only when responding to an emergency incident. Emergency response does not absolve the driver of any responsibility to drive with due caution. The driver of

the emergency vehicle is responsible for its safe operation at all times. When responding in the emergency mode, warning lights must be on and sirens must be sounded to warn drivers of other vehicles, as required by the Motor Vehicle Code. When responding or returning in a non-emergency mode, warning lights and sirens shall not be used. The use of sirens and warning lights does not automatically give the right-of-way to the emergency vehicle. These emergency devices simply request the right-of-way from other drivers, based on their awareness of the emergency vehicle presence. Emergency vehicle drivers must make every possible effort to make their presence and intended actions known to other drivers, and must drive defensively to be prepared for the unexpected or inappropriate actions of others.

TURNOUT TIME OBJECTIVE:

Turnout time is defined as the time beginning when the station tones begin until the apparatus begins to move.

The Department's turnout objective is 90 seconds or less for responses requiring the donning of bunker gear and 60 seconds or less for other code 3 responses. The turnout time objective should be achieved not less than 90 percent of the time.

SAFETY:

The prompt response to emergencies is an important factor. However, it is not as important as a safe response and arrival at the scene. All safety procedures and state laws shall be followed. **ABSOUTELY DO NOT SACRIFICE SAFETY FOR SPEED.**

Code Three Response:

The Emergency vehicle shall not exceed more than 10 mph over the posted speed limit on a highway and while traveling in residential neighborhoods, posted speed limits or less shall be followed at all times. Driving requirements are set with the indication that traveling is done with Ideal Driving Conditions. At any time less than ideal conditions exist, these circumstances must be accounted for. Excessive speed, relative to prevailing weather and road conditions shall not be permitted.

Intersections:

When approaching a negative right-of-way intersection (red light, stop sign, and yield sign) the vehicle shall come to a complete stop and shall proceed only when the driver can account for all oncoming traffic in all lanes yielding the right-of-way. When emergency vehicles must use center or oncoming traffic lanes to approach controlled intersections, (traffic light or stop sign) they must come to a complete stop before proceeding through the intersection, including occasions when the emergency vehicle has a green light. When approaching and crossing an intersection with the right of- way, drivers shall not exceed the posted speed limit.

Passing another Emergency Unit:

During an emergency response, emergency vehicles shall avoid passing other emergency vehicles. If passing is necessary, the vehicle being passed must be contacted by radio and shall, when possible, move to the right lane.

School Zones:

When entering an active school zone in a code three response, the Emergency Vehicle must reduce its speed to the posted school zone speed and maintain extra caution for public in cross walk areas. Under no circumstances will any emergency vehicle pass a stopped school bus when its lights are active and the stop sign is out.

Funeral Processions:

Emergency Vehicles should continue their response to the 911 call. Care and caution should be used when passing the procession. An increased sense of awareness is also needed for any Escort or Police officers that may be leading, blocking or directing the procession.

General Driving:

No Emergency vehicle shall use parking areas, side or residential streets as a short cut or to avoid lights or traffic control devices.

Backing:

Drivers shall avoid backing whenever possible. Where backing is unavoidable, at least one spotter shall be used. If no spotter is available, the driver shall dismount and walk completely around apparatus to determine if obstructions are present before backing. Members shall not be permitted to ride on tailboard or running board while backing the vehicle.

Electronic Devices:

Radios, cellular phones, mobile data terminals, mobile computer terminals or other communication devices shall not be used by the vehicle operator while the emergency vehicle is in motion. The only provision to this policy is in the event the driver must communicate vital information to the Dispatch Operator or Incident Command.

Multiple Unit Response:

Units traveling from the same location shall use one route of travel together unless the lead vehicle has knowingly gone the wrong direction. In this case the lead vehicle shall be notified that the other vehicles will be taking an alternate route. Vehicles shall travel with a minimum of a 500 feet distance between each emergency vehicle. Emergency response is authorized only in conjunction with emergency incidents. Unnecessary emergency response shall not be permitted. When the first unit reports on the scene and establishes and confirms that there is no emergency, the incident commander will advise Dispatch/Communications and all additional responding units shall be alerted by Dispatch/Communications and shall continue to the scene in the nonemergency mode.

Vehicle Response Code Practices

- All apparatus responses with the exception of; a “Fire Alarm” where no fire is confirmed or Non-Life Threatening Medical Calls, are to be made using all emergency lights, siren.
- In the case of a “Fire Alarm” where no confirmed fire exist or Non-Life Threatening Medical Calls, response shall be made using normal driving procedures without the use of emergency lighting or siren unless weather conditions exist where such measures are necessary for the safety of the general public or occupants. Electronic siren operation may include alternating use of slow (wail) or rapid (yelp) siren functions: the use of the Hi-Lo siren mode is reserved for an evacuation signal. Other signal equipment, such as air horns or bells, may be used as needed.