

DRIVER SAFETY

Goal:

The goal is for the safest response possible and for all responders to have the safest arrival possible. Research has shown that disregarding safe driving procedures does not significantly improve the arrival time; however, the increased risk has been documented to coincide with increases in property damage, personal injury and loss of life.

Responsibility:

The driver of each vehicle shall be primarily responsible for its safe operation at all times.

Authorized emergency vehicles are given latitude to state and local traffic laws when responding to an emergency. However, nothing absolves the driver from the responsibility of driving with due regard for the safety of its members and the public. Authority to deviate from this procedure rests solely with the Company Officer or Acting in Charge Officer, who bears full responsibility for the results of any deviation.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHALL ANY ASPECT OF SAFETY BE SACRIFICED IN ORDER TO INCREASE THE SPEED OF THE RESPONSE.

General Safety:

It is the joint responsibility of the Driver and Company Officer or Acting in Charge Officer to ensure all riders are properly clothed, seated, and with seatbelt appropriately positioned before an apparatus is moved.

It is the responsibility of the riding firefighters to be properly clothed, seated, and with their seatbelt appropriately positioned for their safety.

Protective clothing (when not worn) and equipment shall be secured in suitable locations to protect against loss, damage or injury.

When a vehicle is in motion, drivers may not use a cell phone or any other devices that may cause distraction while controlling the vehicle. In addition, drivers should not operate radios, lights, sirens, or other equipment, unless the vehicle is designed to do so (ex. foot pedals for the siren and horn button on steering wheel). If the driver is the sole occupant or it is a command or staff vehicles, the driver is exempt from this guideline. They shall exercise due caution when it is necessary to operate such equipment.

All traffic laws shall be obeyed when driving without audible and visual warning devices.

Headlights should be on anytime an apparatus is being driven.

Emergency Responses

Before boarding the apparatus, all personnel (excluding the driver) should don all feasible personnel protective clothing anticipated to be needed.

When personnel are already boarded, attempts to don protective clothing should not occur unless it can be done without removing the seatbelt or compromising safety.

The driver shall always maintain a speed consistent with safe operation of the vehicle under any prevailing weather or traffic conditions so as not to endanger life or property.

Lane Position During Emergency Responses:

Vehicles should travel in the lane with traffic flow, and should pass others on the left as necessary.

Sometimes, it may be necessary to deviate from this rule by driving in a turn lane, passing between two lanes, passing on the right, or driving in an opposing lane. It is emphasized that driving in these conditions is extremely dangerous and the utmost regard for safety of the apparatus members and public shall be exercised.

Intersections:

When an emergency vehicle approaches any intersection, the driver should consider all prevailing conditions and enter the intersection at a reduced rate of speed or after bringing the vehicle to a full stop.

Proceeding through a red light, stop signal, or stop sign is permitted, but only after slowing down to the point that a full stop, if necessary so as not to endanger life or property.

Passing Emergency Vehicles:

Passing other moving emergency vehicles on an emergency response is dangerous and discouraged. If passing is necessary, it shall be done only with the knowledge and permission of the driver of the vehicle being passed.

Non-Emergency Response:

Before boarding the apparatus, all personnel (excluding the driver) should don all feasible personnel protective clothing anticipated to be needed.

When personnel are already boarded, attempts to don protective clothing should not occur unless it can be done without removing the seatbelt or compromising safety.

All traffic laws shall be obeyed when driving without audible and visual warning devices. The driver shall always maintain a speed consistent with safe operation of the vehicle under the prevailing conditions so as not to endanger life or property.

Warning Devices:

Appropriate audible and visual warning devices should be activated when making an emergency response. If the decision to discontinue the use of warning devices is warranted, all traffic laws shall be obeyed.

Upon arrival, if the apparatus is on a public right of way; visual warning devices shall be activated for the duration that the apparatus is on the scene.

Backing or Congested Areas:

Backing an apparatus should be avoided if possible. At a minimum, the rear emergency lights shall be used when backing apparatus, if the apparatus is in the right of way. Where backing is unavoidable, ground guide(s) shall be used. If ground guide(s) are unavailable, the driver shall ensure that the area around the apparatus is completely clear before backing.

Ground guide(s) shall be responsible for all backing accidents that may occur, unless the driver disregards the guide's directions.

When an apparatus is driven or maneuvered in congested areas, not including public roadways, ground guides should be utilized to prevent accidents. This may require both front and/or rear ground guides.