



ANN ARBOR FIRE DEPARTMENT

Standard Operating Procedures – 2.2 Driver Safety



DRIVER SAFETY

Effective: March 16, 2018
 Scheduled Review: March 27, 2021
 Replaces: 207a Apparatus Response, 207b Apparatus Staging, 208 Backing of Apparatus
 Approved: Interim Fire Chief Mike Kennedy

I. PURPOSE

Responding to any emergency call, the fire department places a great deal of responsibility on emergency vehicle drivers. Not only must emergency vehicle drivers provide prompt conveyance of the apparatus, equipment, and personnel to provide service to those in need, but as importantly, must accomplish this task in the safest and most prudent manner possible. Emergency vehicle drivers have in their care, custody and control most of the major assets possessed by this organization, i.e., personnel, apparatus, portable equipment. Emergency vehicle drivers also have a higher standard of care to provide to the general motoring public and must make every attempt possible to provide due regard for the safety of others. Drivers must constantly monitor and reduce the amount of risk and exposure to potential losses during each and every response. Safe arrival at the emergency scene is the first priority of all emergency vehicle drivers. In order to accomplish, emergency vehicles drivers shall become familiar with, and constantly abide by the following procedure.

II. SCOPE

- A. This policy applies to the driving of City of Ann Arbor vehicles along with incidences when AAFD personnel drive vehicles owned by another agency, e.g., Huron Valley Ambulance / Emergent Health Partners, Washtenaw County Hazardous Materials Team, Washtenaw County Technical Rescue Team.
- B. There are additional requirements not specified in this policy for AAFD personnel to drive and operate apparatus weighing over 26,001 lbs.
- C. This policy is intended to align with the City of Ann Arbor, City Vehicle Fleet Safety Policy 307. If there is a conflict, the City of Ann Arbor, City Vehicle Fleet Safety Policy 307 supersedes this policy.

III. RESPONSIBILITY

All personnel who drive AAFD vehicles shall abide by State of Michigan laws which state that emergency vehicle operators have the duty to operate the vehicle with appropriate regard for the safety of all persons and the consequences of reckless disregard for the safety of others. All personnel driving AAFD vehicles and apparatus will abide by all traffic laws and this procedure.

IV. PREPARING TO DRIVE

All City of Ann Arbor employees are required to use seat belts at all times when operating a city vehicle equipped with seat belts. Anyone riding as a passenger in a city vehicle is also required to use seat belts, e.g., rescue, engine, ladder, utility, service van, staff vehicle. The company officer / driver of the vehicle will confirm that all personnel and riders are on-board, properly attired, with seat belts on, before the vehicle is permitted to move.



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AAFD prohibits the riding on tail steps, sidesteps, running boards, or any other exposed position. Headlights shall be on for non-emergency driving and emergency driving regardless of the time of day.

The emergency vehicle driver is responsible for donning appropriate turnout gear as soon as possible after arriving at the scene. Personal turnout gear is required to be on the apparatus whenever any vehicle is operating in a non-emergency situation.

All tools and equipment in the cab shall be secured to prevent injury in the event of a collision.

V. NORMAL TRAFFIC DRIVING

When driving normal traffic, the vehicle will be operated without any audible or visual warning devices and in compliance with all state motor vehicle laws that apply to civilian traffic. All drivers shall obey all traffic laws and traffic control devices when driving any fire department vehicle under ordinary travel conditions. Any driver observed breaking any traffic laws or driving any vehicle in an aggressive manner will be subject to disciplinary action.

VI. DRIVER REQUIREMENTS

Emergency vehicle drivers must have a current valid Michigan Driver's License and a driving record acceptable to the City of Ann Arbor.

Emergency vehicle drivers may not have any active disciplinary driving restrictions or any operational changes to his or her driver's license. Any such changes must be brought to the immediate attention of the fire chief.

Emergency vehicle drivers must not operate any vehicle for any department purpose, including but not limited to responses, emergency and otherwise, while under the influence of any substances that may alter their mental or physical status, specifically including, but not limited to alcohol and other controlled substances, whether or not prescribed by a physician.

Emergency vehicle drivers shall meet the following criteria prior to driving any vehicle emergency traffic:

- A. Successful completion of the Michigan Fire Fighters Training Council (MFFTC) Driver Training course - both lecture and driving range
- B. Ten (10) hours of practical driving as required following the MFFTC Driver Training Course
- C. Approval of the training officer
- D. It is the company officer's discretion to have a probationary firefighter drive an ambulance to the hospital.

VII. EMERGENCY DRIVING

Nothing in this procedure shall relieve the emergency vehicle driver of the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons, nor shall it protect the emergency vehicle driver from the consequences of reckless disregard for the safety of others.



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A. State of Michigan Law

When responding to emergency calls, all driving is to be in accordance with the Michigan Vehicle Code, Public Act 300 of 1949 as amended.

B. Warning Devices

- i. The emergency vehicle driver will turn on all emergency lights and headlights while responding to an emergency. Flashing white lights should be shut off upon arrival at a scene to minimize their blinding effect on oncoming traffic.
- ii. The siren shall be used to give adequate warning to other drivers and pedestrians. All emergency vehicle drivers must understand 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.

C. Vehicle Control and Right-of-Way

- i. The emergency vehicle driver shall attempt to maintain control of the vehicle that they are operating in such a manner as to provide the maximum level of safety for both their passengers and the general public. Emergency vehicle drivers should be aware that the civilian vehicle operators may not react in the manner in which is expected or felt to be appropriate. An attempt should be made to have options available when passing or overtaking vehicles.
- ii. If another vehicle operator fails to yield the right of way to an emergency vehicle, the emergency vehicle driver cannot force the right of way, nor can you assume the right of way, therefore you do not have the right of way until the other vehicle yields to you.
- iii. The emergency vehicle driver shall be aware of his/her rate of closure on other vehicles and a pedestrian at all times to make sure that a safe following distance is established and maintained. All drivers shall follow the rule for safe following distance and allow 1 second of following distance for every 10 feet of vehicle length for speeds under 40 mph and add 1 additional second for each 10 mph for speeds over 40 mph.

D. Response Speeds

When responding to a true emergency only, drivers shall operate the vehicle they are driving at as close to the posted speed limit as possible, but not to exceed ten (10) miles per hour over the posted speed limit, conditions permitting. Examples of conditions requiring slower response speeds include but are not limited to:

- i. Slippery road conditions
- ii. Inclement weather
- iii. Poor visibility
- iv. Heavy or congested traffic conditions

E. Cautionary speeds shall not be exceeded. Examples include but are not limited to:

- i. Sharp curves
- ii. Steep downhill grades
- iii. Hills with limited sight distance



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F. Uncontrolled Intersections

Any intersection that does not offer a control device, e.g., stop sign, yield or traffic signal in the direction of travel of the emergency vehicle or where a traffic control signal is green upon the approach of the emergency vehicle all emergency vehicle drivers should do the following:

- i. Scan the intersection for possible hazards, e.g., right turns on red, pedestrians, vehicles traveling fast.
- ii. Observe traffic in all four directions, e.g., left, right, front, rear.
- iii. Slow down if any potential hazards are detected and cover the brake pedal with the driver's foot.
- iv. Avoid using the opposing lane of traffic if at all possible.

G. Stop Signs and Lights

The emergency vehicle driver may proceed past a red or stop signal, but only after stopping. All drivers shall stop at blind intersections before proceeding.

H. Controlled intersections

Any intersection controlled by a stop sign, yield sign, yellow traffic light or a red traffic light requires prudent action by the emergency vehicle driver. The following steps shall be taken:

- i. Do not rely on warning devices to clear traffic.
- ii. Scan the intersection for possible hazards, e.g., right turns on red, pedestrians, vehicles traveling fast.
- iii. Begin to slow down well before reaching the intersection and cover the brake pedal with the driver's foot, continue to scan in four directions, e.g., left, right, front, back.
- iv. Be prepared, during an emergency response, to bring the vehicle to a complete stop for the following:
 1. When directed by a law enforcement officer for red traffic lights
 2. For stop signs
 3. Negative right-of-way intersections
 4. When the driver cannot account for visible traffic in the lanes of traffic in an intersection
 5. When other intersection hazards are present
 6. When encountering a stopped school bus with flashing warning lights
- v. Establish eye contact with other vehicle drivers; have partner communicate all is clear; reconfirm all other vehicles are stopped.
- vi. Account for traffic one lane of traffic at a time treating each lane of traffic as a separate intersection.

I. Railroad Intersections

At anytime an emergency vehicle driver approaches an unguarded rail crossing he/she shall bring the apparatus or vehicle he/she is operating to a complete stop before entering the grade crossing. In addition, the emergency vehicle driver shall perform the following prior to proceeding:

- i. Turn off all sirens and air horns
- ii. Operator the motor at idle speed
- iii. Turn off any other sound producing equipment or accessories
- iv. Open the windows and listen for a train's horn



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- J. Direction of Movement (travel)
The driver may disregard regulations governing direction of movement, or turning in specified directions provided the driver does not endanger life or property.
- K. Passing Vehicles
The emergency vehicle driver should always pass other vehicles on the left side of the vehicle being passed because state law instructs other vehicles to yield to the right for emergency vehicles. When conditions only allow for passing on the right, it must be done with extreme caution.
- L. Passing Emergency Vehicles
The emergency vehicle driver can only pass another emergency vehicle if the driver receives permission of the vehicle being passed. It must be accomplished cautiously. Radio communication between vehicles must be established and the intent to pass agreed upon before passing.
- M. Passing School Buses
Emergency vehicles must never pass a school bus while the bus's red flashing lights are illuminated. The emergency vehicle driver must come to a complete stop and proceed with caution only after the bus driver gives permission to do so.
- N. Following Emergency Vehicles
Extreme caution should be used when following other emergency vehicles. Distance between vehicles should be more than the driver estimates will be needed to stop safely.
- O. Crossing the Center Line
Crossing the center line or using the left turn lane is permitted when all normal lanes are blocked. Emergency vehicle drivers must be sure that all on-coming traffic lanes and turning lanes are stopped. In this case, drivers must proceed slow enough to stop to avoid vehicles turning left in front, and also on-coming vehicles making right turns into your path of travel. When emergency vehicles must travel in center or oncoming traffic lanes, the maximum permissible speed shall be 20 mph.
- P. Expressway Turn-Arounds
Drivers should only use designated median turn-arounds when it is necessary to change directions on an expressway. Medians and shoulders should be avoided because of possible debris, soft surfaces, and narrow clearances.
- Q. Off-Road Travel
It is generally ill-advised to take any vehicle more than 26,001 lbs. off road. However, there may be instances, especially with aerial apparatus, where it is appropriate to take a vehicle off road to achieve a tactical position.
- R. When vehicles are taken off the road:
- i. The company officer should evaluate the need for off road use.
 - ii. Identify potential hazards (firmness of soil, type of soil, septic tanks and other underground hazards).
 - iii. Establish best route.
 - iv. Spotter to walk route, in front of vehicle.
 - v. No exterior passengers

VIII. STERILE CAB

The idea of a sterile cockpit (cab) is adapted from the aviation world and is frequently discussed in crew resource management. Emergency vehicle drivers and passengers shall adhere to a sterile cab atmosphere when driving emergency traffic.



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- A. No crewmember may perform any duties during emergency response except those duties required for the safe operation of the apparatus.
- B. No crewmember may engage in, nor may any company officer permit, any activity during emergency driving which could distract any emergency vehicle driver from the performance of his or her duties or which could interfere in any way with the proper conduct of those duties. Activities such as eating, drinking, use of personal portable electronic devices, and engaging in nonessential conversations within the cab that are not required for the safe operation of the apparatus.
- C. All eyes out, scanning for hazards.
- D. All personnel clearly identify any potential hazards early on.
- E. Driver stops at intersections, and company officer calls clear or wait.

IX. DONNING FIRE GEAR IN-ROUTE

AAFD personnel will stay belted at all times while the apparatus is in motion. If an emergency call is received while the apparatus in a normal traffic mode, personnel will stay belted and don the necessary gear once on scene.

X. SCENE OPERATIONS

- A. On arrival, the apparatus driver must position the apparatus in a manner that allows for its efficient use, and that avoids unsafe conditions, e.g., overhead wires, Haz-Mat, unfavorable winds, and blocking of other fire apparatus and according to the orders of the company officer.
- B. When laying hose, the driver will not exceed 7 mph. (brisk walk).
- C. Apparatus drivers will utilize wheel chocks, anti-shock steps, and appropriate fire gear, and any other provided safety equipment when operating equipment at a scene.

XI. BACKING UP

- A. For all vehicles weighing over 26,001 lbs., a back-up guide is required when personnel beside the driver are available.
- B. Drivers are responsible for any apparatus movement. The driver and guide will communicate the movement plan prior to the guide taking his/her position at the driver's side rear of the vehicle. The driver must wait for a guide to be in full view on the driver's side before moving any vehicle in reverse. Drivers must stop and investigate immediately when the guide is no longer in full view.
- C. Where no personnel are available to assist, the driver shall make a complete 360-degree survey of the area around the vehicle to determine if any obstructions are present prior to backing the vehicle.
- D. Signals for Backing
 - i. Straight Back: Both hands above the head motioning back up movement.
 - ii. Turn: Both arms pointing the same direction with index fingers extended, there should be no movement of the arms. The arms should point in the direction the guide wants the rear of the vehicle to travel.
 - iii. Stop: Both arms crossed held above the guide's head.
- E. Exemptions
 - A guide is optional under the following conditions.
 - i. Apparatus moved within the station, without leaving the building.
 - ii. The company officer determines that a guide's safety will be jeopardized due to traffic concerns.



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XII. VEHICLE CRASH

All employees, who are involved in a motor vehicle crash, while driving a department vehicle are required to take the following actions:

- A. Stop immediately! Render first aid to injured parties.
- B. Notify dispatch with brief initial report.
- C. Notify immediate supervisor as soon as reasonably possible.
- D. Follow City of Ann Arbor, “City Vehicle Fleet Safety” Policy 307