

Yamhill Fire Protection District

District Policies, Procedures, & SOG's

MISSION

*Yamhill Fire Protection District is dedicated to
serve and protect our community*

District Guideline

OPERATIONS

OPS-GEN – 403.2

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Emergency Vehicle Response Guidelines

Issued: September 9, 2014

Purpose:

Responding to any emergency call, the Yamhill Fire Protection District places a great deal of responsibility on the drivers of our emergency vehicles. 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 (the vehicle, portable equipment, personnel). 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 shall be, and must always remain, the first priority of all emergency vehicle drivers. In order to accomplish this enormous task all emergency vehicles drivers shall become familiar with, and constantly abide by the following guideline.

Guidelines:

- 1. Circle of Safety:**

Prior to entering the cab and starting the vehicle, the emergency vehicle driver shall make a circle of safety around the vehicle to see that all equipment is secured, that all compartment doors are securely closed and any physical obstructions moved out of the way. During the circle of safety the emergency vehicle driver shall encircle the vehicle and visually inspect all four sides and the top of the vehicle before entering the cab. He/she should also verify right side and rear clearance with the person riding in the officer position. This shall be conducted prior to moving the vehicle regardless of whether or not the vehicle is about to leave on an emergency or non-emergency.
- 2. Warning devices and true emergencies:**

When responding to a true emergency, visual warning devices will be operated at all times regardless of time of day and/or traffic conditions. Audible devices will be operated as needed, especially when approaching on intersection or during heavy traffic. 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.

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3. **Vehicle control and right-of-way:**

All drivers 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 operator 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. 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.

The emergency vehicle driver shall be aware of his/her rate of closure on other vehicles and pedestrians 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.

4. **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;

- Slippery road conditions
- Inclement weather
- Poor visibility
- Heavy or congested traffic conditions
- Sharp curves.

5. **Intersection Practices:**

Extreme care should be taken when approaching any intersection, as intersections are the locations responsible for a large percentage of major accidents involving emergency vehicles. Drivers are required to practice the organizations intersection operating guidelines during all emergency responses.

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Uncontrolled intersection:

Any intersection that does not offer a control device (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:

- Scan the intersection for possible hazards (right turns on red, pedestrians, vehicles traveling fast, etc.). Observe traffic in all 4 directions (left, right, front, rear).
- Slow down if any potential hazards are detected and cover the brake pedal with the driver's foot.
- Activate or change the siren cadence not less than 200' from the intersection.
- Avoid using the opposing lane of traffic if at all possible.

Emergency vehicle drivers should always be prepared to stop. 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.

Controlled intersection:

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. In addition to bringing the vehicle to a complete stop these additional steps must be followed as well;

- Do not rely on warning devices to clear traffic
- Scan the intersection for possible hazards (right turns on red, pedestrians, vehicles traveling to fast, etc.). Observe traffic in all 4 directions (left, right, front, rear).
- Begin to slow down well before reaching the intersection and cover the brake pedal with the driver's foot, continue to scan in 4 directions (left, right, front, and back).
- Activate or change the siren cadence not less than 200' from the intersection.
- Scan intersection for possible passing options (pass on the right, left, wait, etc.) avoid using the opposing lane of traffic if at all possible.
- Come to a complete stop.
- Establish eye contact with other vehicle drivers; have partner communicate all is clear; reconfirm all other vehicles are stopped.
- Proceed one lane of traffic at a time, each lane of traffic as a separate intersection.

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Railroad intersections:

At any time 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 if they cannot see clearly 500 feet down the track in either direction:

- Turn off all sirens and air horns.
- Operate the motor at an idle.
- Open the windows and listen for a train's horn.

6. **Non-emergency response:**

When responding to a call in a non-emergency response mode or normal flow of traffic (non-code 3 or when not responding to a true emergency) 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.

7. **Ordinary travel procedures:**

All drivers shall obey all traffic laws and traffic control devices when driving any fire district 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 including, suspension of driving privileges.

8. **Riding policy:**

The district requires all persons riding on fire apparatus to be seated in approved riding positions and be secured to the vehicle by seat belts whenever the vehicle is in motion except when directly performing patient care in the back of the Rescue. The emergency vehicle driver and/or the person riding in the officer position shall verify that all personnel are properly seated and in seat belts before the vehicle is moved:

9. **Backing:**

The district recognizes that backing emergency vehicle is made hazardous by the fact that the driver cannot see much of where he/she intends to go. The district recommends that whenever possible drivers should avoid backing, as the safest way to back up a vehicle is not to back up at all. When it is necessary to back-up and district vehicle all drivers shall follow one of the two following measures.

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- The district's first choice of backing is that before any vehicle is put into reverse and backed that a spotter be put in place near the rear of the vehicle. The spotter should be safely positioned on the driver's side of the vehicle so that the emergency vehicle driver can see them at all times. If at any time the emergency vehicle driver loses sight of the spotter, he/she shall stop immediately until the spotter makes him/her self visible again.
- If conditions exist that make use of spotters impossible, all drivers before attempting to back up any fire district vehicle, shall make a circle of safety to see that; no person or persons are directly behind the vehicle or in its intended path of travel; all equipment is secured and that all compartment doors are securely closed; any physical obstructions are moved out of the way. The emergency vehicle driver should also note all potential obstructions in the intended path of travel. When returning to quarters and there is no spotter available the driver shall complete the circle of safety once the vehicle has been backed out of the street and on to the apron prior to proceeding into the station.

10. **Response in private owned vehicles:**

When any member responds to the station or that responds to the scene of an emergency in his/her private vehicle, shall strictly adhere to all applicable motor vehicle laws. Privately owned vehicle are not provided with the same exemptions that are provided to emergency vehicle. No member of the organization will be permitted to violate any motor vehicle laws, including but not limited to;

- Speed limits
- Going through traffic control devices
- Passing in an unsafe manner

While it is recognized that timeliness response to an emergency is important, it is imperative that all drivers understand that their **private vehicles are not emergency vehicle and therefore are not afforded any exemptions or special privileges under state law.** Any driver observed breaking any traffic laws or operating any vehicle in an aggressive or unsafe manner will be subject to disciplinary action including suspension, loss of driving privileges and or termination.