

EMERGENCY VEHICLE RESPONSE GUIDELINES

HAZLET FIRE DISTRICT NO. 1

Of Hazlet Township, NJ

Sponsored by

Hazlet Township Board of Fire Commissioners

Fire District No. 1

Of Hazlet Township, NJ

*Hazlet Fire Company #1
North Centerville Fire Company
West Keansburg Fire Company
The Bureau of Fire Prevention*

Emergency Vehicle Response Guidelines

Emergency vehicle response is the basis for the success or failure of all other emergency functions. These expensive vehicles carry the emergency equipment in addition to personnel and patients. Having sound emergency vehicle response guidelines in place helps assist the district in providing sound direction to drivers.

The following guidelines may be used to implement, supplement or enhance the emergency vehicle response policies and provide the basis for emergency vehicle driver training for most districts. It is important to review these best practices and compare them to the district's SOGs, state statutes and applicable standards. Prior to implementation, consider having legal counsel review the SOGs.

EMERGENCY VEHICLE RESPONSE OPERATING GUIDELINES

Purpose

Responding to any emergency call. Hazlet Fire District #1 places a great deal of responsibility on our emergency vehicle drivers. Not only must you provide prompt conveyance of the vehicles, 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. As an emergency vehicle driver in our district, you have in your care, custody and control most of the major assets possessed by this district (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 destination remains the first priority of all vehicle drivers. In order to accomplish this enormous task, it's important for emergency vehicles drivers to become familiar with, and abide by the following policies and procedures.

Procedures

1. Circle of safety

Prior to entering the cab and starting the vehicle, make a circle of safety around the vehicle to see that all equipment is secured, ail compartment doors are closed securely and any physical obstructions are moved out of the way, During the circle of safety, visually inspect all four sides and the top of the vehicle before entering the cab. Also verify right side and rear clearance with the person riding in the passenger position, Do this 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 audible and visual warning devices will be operated at all times regardless of time of day and/or traffic conditions. 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 assure the right-of-way

3. Vehicle Control and right-of-way

Attempt to maintain control of the vehicle in a manner that provides the maximum level of safety for both the passengers and the general public. Be aware that civilian vehicle operators may not react in the manner that is expected or felt to be appropriate. Make an attempt 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 they assume the right-of-way, therefore, they do not have the right-of-way until the other vehicle yields to them.

Be aware of the rate of closure (comparison of time and space) on other vehicles and pedestrians to make sure an appropriate approach speed and/or safe following distance is established and maintained. Adhere to the rule for safe following distance and allow one second of following for every 10 feet of vehicle length for speeds under 40 mph and add one additional second for each 10 mph for speeds over 40 mph.

4. Response speeds

When responding to a true emergency only, operate the vehicle at as close to the posted speed limit as possible, safe operating driving speeds are at the discretion of the driver 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

Take extreme care when approaching any intersection as they are the locations responsible for a large percentage of major accidents involving emergency vehicles. Drivers are required to practice the district's intersection operating guidelines during all emergency responses.

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. Consider the following steps:

- Do not rely on warning devices to clear traffic.
- Scan the intersection for possible hazards (right turns on red, pedestrians, vehicles traveling fast, etc.) and driver options. 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 (left, right) front, back).
- When approaching a traffic signal, be aware of "stale" green lights or yellow caution lights, begin to slow and prepare to stop as these will be turning red
- Change the siren cadence not less than 200' from the intersection.
- Scan the intersection for possible passing options (pass on right, left, wait, etc.). Avoid using the opposing lane of traffic if at all possible. Consider using the lane of least resistance that is consistent with your intended direction of travel.
- Establish eye contact with other vehicle drivers, have partner communicate all is clear, and reconfirm all other vehicles are stopped.
- Account for traffic one lane at a time, treating each lane of traffic, as a separate intersection
- During emergency response, bring the vehicle to a complete stop for the following:
 - Red traffic lights
 - Stop signs
 - Negative right-of-way intersection
 - When the driver cannot account for visible traffic in the lanes of traffic in an intersection When other intersection hazards are present
 - When encountering a stopped school bus with flashing warning lights
 - When directed by a law enforcement officer.

Uncontrolled intersections

For any intersection that does not offer a control device (stop sign, yield or traffic signal) in the direction of travel of the emergency vehicle, complete the following:

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

Railroad Crossings

When approaching an unguarded rail crossing, bring the vehicle to a complete stop before entering the grade crossing. In addition, perform the following prior to proceeding.

- Turn off all sirens and air horns
- Operate the motor at idle speed
- Turn off any other sound producing equipment or accessories
- 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) operate the vehicle with no audible or visual warning devices and in compliance with all state motor vehicle laws that apply to civilian traffic. Follow motor vehicle laws for the use of emergency lighting equipment and audible warning devices.

7. Ordinary travel Procedures

Obey all traffic laws and traffic control devices when driving district vehicles 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 in vehicles to be seated in approved riding positions and secured to the vehicle by seat belts whenever the vehicle is in motion. The emergency vehicle driver and/or person riding in the officer position will verify that personnel are properly seated and in seat belts before the vehicle is moved. Standard communication signals should be formulated and utilized by all personnel.

The district prohibits the riding on tail steps, sidesteps, running boards or any other exposed position. Personnel who perform emergency medical care while the vehicle is in motion should be secured to the vehicle by a seat belt or safety harness designed for occupant restraint. Except for sanctioned ride-alongs, emergency vehicle response should not occur with non-members in the vehicle (this includes, family, friends, and children).

9. Backing

The district recognizes that backing emergency vehicles is hazardous because the driver cannot see much of where they intend to go. The district recommends to avoid backing up whenever possible. When necessary, use one of the two following measures.

- The district's first choice of backing procedures is to have a spotter in place near the rear of the vehicle before the vehicle is put into reverse and backed. It is important the spotter is positioned safely so the emergency vehicle driver can see them at all times. If at any time the emergency vehicle driver loses sight of the spotter, stop immediately until the spotter is visible again.
- If conditions exist that make use of spotters impossible, make a circle of safety before attempting to back up any fire district vehicle/apparatus to see that no person or persons are directly behind the vehicle or in its intended path of travel, all equipment is secured, all compartment doors are closed securely, and any physical obstructions are moved out of the way. Also note any potential obstructions in the intended path of travel.

10. Response in Private Vehicle

When any member responds to the station or the scene of an emergency in their private vehicle, each member must strictly adhere to all applicable motor vehicle laws. Privately owned vehicles are not provided with the same exemptions that are provided to emergency vehicles. No member of the district 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 in response to an emergency is important, it is imperative that all drivers understand that their **private vehicles are not emergency vehicles and therefore are not afforded any exemptions or special privileges under state law**. Any driver observed breaking any traffic laws or operating any vehicle aggressive or unsafe manner will be subject to disciplinary action, including suspension, loss of driving privileges, and withdrawal of courtesy light permit.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I _____ acknowledge that I have received a copy of Hazlet Fire District #1 Emergency Vehicle Response Plan and have also trained and understand the items and instructions in the policy. I also understand the importance of safe operation of the district's vehicles and will abide by all of the tactical and administrative operating guidelines contained in this document.

Signature _____ Date _____

Fire Company _____

Original- personnel file
Copy-driver/fire company

