

<p style="text-align: center;">DAVIE COUNTY, NC FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES</p>	REVISION DATE 6/4/2018
<p style="text-align: center;">SUB DOCUMENT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">EMERGENCY VEHICLE RESPONSE</p>	ADMIN PAGE 1 OF 6
<p style="text-align: right;">DCFM #</p>	300-001

1. PURPOSE:

1.1. Responding to any emergency call, Davie County places a great deal of responsibility on the driver 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 (apparatus, 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 vehicle drivers shall become familiar and constantly abide by the following guidelines.

2. GUIDELINES

2.1. **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 4 sides and the top of the vehicle entering the cab. When applicable 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.

2.2. **Warning devices and emergencies:** When responding to an emergency, all audible and visual warning devices will be operated at all times regardless of time of day and/or traffic conditions. 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 ensure the right-of-way.

2.3. **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

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<p style="text-align: center;">SUB DOCUMENT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">EMERGENCY VEHICLE RESPONSE</p>	ADMIN PAGE 2 OF 6
<p style="text-align: right;">DCFM #</p>	300-001

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. 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.

2.4. 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 speed under 40 mph and add 1 additional second for speeds over 40 mph.

2.5. **Response speeds:** When responding to a true emergency only, (The definition of a true emergency is a situation in which there is a high probability of death or serious injury to an individual or significant property loss, and actions by an emergency vehicle driver may reduce the seriousness of the situation) 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 an hour over the posted speed limit, conditions permitting. Examples of conditions requiring slower response speeds include but are not limited;

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

2.6. **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.

2.6.1. **Uncontrolled intersections:** Any intersection that does not offer a control device (stop sign, yield or traffic signal) in the direction of travel of the emergency vehicle

<p style="text-align: center;">DAVIE COUNTY, NC FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES</p>	REVISION DATE 6/4/2018
<p style="text-align: center;">SUB DOCUMENT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">EMERGENCY VEHICLE RESPONSE</p>	ADMIN PAGE 3 OF 6
<p style="text-align: right;">DCFM #</p>	300-001

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.
- 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 vehicles yields to you.

2.6.2. **Controlled intersections:** 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 fast, etc.) as well as driver operations.
- Begin to slow down well before reaching the intersection and cover the brake pedal with drivers foot, continue to scan in 4 directions (left, right, front, rear).
- Change the siren cadence not less than 200' from 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; if applicable have partner communicate all is clear; reconfirm all other vehicles are stopped.
- Precede one lane of traffic at a time treating each lane of traffic as a separate intersection.

DAVIE COUNTY, NC FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES	REVISION DATE 6/4/2018
SUB DOCUMENT EMERGENCY VEHICLE RESPONSE	ADMIN PAGE 4 OF 6
DCFM #	300-001

2.6.3. **Railroad intersections:** At any time an emergency vehicle driver approaches an unguarded railroad 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;

- 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.

2.6.4. **Non-emergency response:** When responding to a call in a non-emergency response mode or normal flow of traffic (when not responding to a true emergency) the vehicle will be operated without audible or visual warning devices and in compliance with all state motor vehicle laws that apply to civilian traffic. At no time should any emergency vehicle be operated during response with only visual warning devices.

2.6.5. **Ordinary travel procedures:** 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 including, suspension of driving privileges.

2.6.6. **Passengers:** The Davie County Fire Marshal's Office requires all persons riding on apparatus to be seated in approved riding positions and be secured to the vehicle by seat belts whenever the vehicle is in motion. 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. Standard communication signals should be formulated and utilized by all personnel.

2.6.7. The DCFMO 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 secure to the vehicle by seat belt or safety harness designed for occupant restraint.

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<p style="text-align: center;">SUB DOCUMENT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">EMERGENCY VEHICLE RESPONSE</p>	ADMIN PAGE 5 OF 6
<p style="text-align: right;">DCFM #</p>	300-001

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

- The first choice of backing procedures 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 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 themselves visible again.
- If conditions exist that make use of spotters impossible, all drivers attempting to back up any vehicle, shall/will 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. Once the emergency vehicle driver is back inside the cab he/she shall sound the horn and back up slowly. The emergency vehicle driver should also note potential obstructions in the path of travel.

2.6.9. **RESPONSE IN PRIVATE OWNED VEHICLES:** When any member responds to the station or to the scene of an emergency in his/her 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 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 timelines in response to an emergency is important, it is imperative that all drivers understand that their private vehicles are not emergency

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<p style="text-align: right;">DCFM #</p>	300-001

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 in an aggressive or unsafe manner will be subject to disciplinary action including, suspension, loss of driving privileges.

2.6.10. Davie County Fire Marshal apparatus/vehicles shall not be used for unofficial business. In the event you feel you must use county apparatus/vehicles for unofficial business you must have approval from the Fire Marshal or the Director of Emergency Management.