



Rogers Fire Department Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Title:	Apparatus Driving and Operations		
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PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this policy to provide safety guidelines for operating fire department apparatus.

POLICY

Full attention to safety details shall be exercised at all times when operating a fire department vehicle. It is the responsibility of the driver of each fire department vehicle to drive safely and prudently at all times. Vehicles shall be operated in compliance with the Arkansas Motor Vehicle code. This code provides specific legal exceptions to regular traffic regulations, which apply to fire department vehicles only when responding to an emergency incident. Emergency response does not absolve the driver of any responsibility to drive with due caution.

Emergency Response

When responding to an emergency incident, warning lights must be on and sirens must be sounded to warn drivers of other vehicles and to request the right-of-way at traffic intersections. The use of sirens and warning lights does not automatically give the right-of-way to the emergency vehicle. Warning devices simply request the right-of-way from other drivers, based on their awareness of the emergency vehicle's presence.

Emergency vehicle drivers must make every possible effort to make their presence and intended actions known to other drivers and must drive defensively to be prepared for unexpected and inappropriate actions of others. The use of lights and siren is authorized only in conjunction with emergency incidents. Unnecessary emergency response shall be avoided.

Speed

Department vehicles are authorized to exceed posted speed limits only when responding under favorable conditions. This applies only with light traffic, good roads, good visibility, and dry pavement. Under these conditions a maximum of 10 mph over the posted speed limit is authorized. Under less than favorable conditions, the posted speed limit is the absolute maximum permissible. Drivers of fire department vehicles shall not exceed the posted speed limit in school zones. When emergency vehicles must travel in center or oncoming traffic lanes, the maximum permissible speed shall be 20 mph.

Intersections

Intersections present the greatest potential danger to emergency vehicles. When approaching and crossing an intersection with the right-of-way, drivers shall not exceed the posted speed limit. When emergency vehicles must use center or oncoming traffic lanes to approach controlled intersections (traffic light or stop sign), they must come to a complete stop before proceeding through the intersection, including occasions when the emergency vehicle has green traffic lights.

When approaching a negative right-of-way intersection (red light, stop sign), the vehicle shall come to a complete stop and may proceed only when the driver can account for all oncoming traffic in all lanes yielding the right-of-way.

Seat Belts

All Department members are required to use seat belts at all times when operating a city vehicle. Any person riding as a passenger in a city vehicle is also required to use seat belts. The officer-in-charge or Fire Equipment Operator (FEO) will confirm that all personnel and riders are on board, properly attired, and have seat belts on before the vehicle is permitted to move. All personnel shall ride only in regular seats provided with seat belts.

Backing Fire Apparatus

Drivers shall avoid backing whenever possible. Where backing is unavoidable, ground guides, or "backers" shall be used. The ground guide shall position behind the backing apparatus and signal the apparatus operator of potential problems in backing. When the apparatus has completed backing, the guide shall be relieved. If no guide is available, the driver shall dismount and walk completely around apparatus to determine if obstructions are present before backing. Appropriate warning lights and ground illumination lights must be on when backing.

Defensive Driving

During an emergency response fire vehicles should avoid passing other emergency vehicles. If passing is necessary, permission must be obtained through radio communication. The unique hazards of driving on or adjacent to the emergency incident scene requires the driver to use extreme caution and to be alert and prepared to react to the unexpected. Drivers must consider the dangers their moving vehicles pose to personnel and spectators who may be preoccupied with the emergency and may inadvertently step in front of or behind a moving vehicle.

The officer-in-charge of the vehicle is responsible for the overall safety of all vehicle operations and managing compliance of this procedure.

Driving Record

Any employee that operates a city-owned vehicle shall possess a valid driver's license from the state of employee's residency. Any employee that operates an ambulance shall additionally possess a passenger endorsement on their driver's license.

Employees shall make verbal notification to their supervisor with twenty-four (24) hours of loss of driver's license and shall make a follow up notification within three (3) calendar days of the incident. Employees shall make written notification within seven (7) calendar days of any traffic violation convictions. Written notifications shall be made via Form 51 (Notification of Change of Driving Record) which is available on the department's shared computer drive.

Equipment Stored in the Cab

All equipment stored in the cab of vehicles shall be secured and mounted in their appropriate locations when the vehicle is in motion. This includes portable radios, PPE items, and any other object that could cause injury to responders during a vehicle accident. The utilization of storage compartments to secure loose items is encouraged.

Accidents

All accidents shall be immediately reported to a supervisor and investigated by the appropriate law enforcement agency. The Fire Chief shall be responsible for notifying other city departments and insurance agencies. Employees should also reference SOP 183 (Accident Drug and Alcohol Testing).