



**GLASTONBURY FIRE DEPARTMENT
STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES**



SOG NUMBER: FDO-401 ISSUED DATE: 11-15-11 EFFECTIVE DATE: 11-15-11
REVISION #: 1 REVISED DATE: 01-11-16 EFFECTIVE DATE: 01-11-16
CATEGORY: EMERGENCY OPERATIONS - GENERAL
SUB-CATEGORY: RESPONSE TO ALARMS
SUBJECT: DRIVING EMERGENCY VEHICLES
RELATED GUIDELINES: TRG-002; TRG-003

Section I – Introduction

A. Objective

To establish a guideline that illustrates what is considered to be safe and appropriate behavior with respect to the operation of Fire Department apparatus and/or other department vehicles.

B. Applicability

All members shall comply with this departmental guideline for safe operation of fire apparatus and other vehicles.

C. References

Town of Manchester Fire-Rescue-EMS – General Operating Guideline

Section II – Guidelines

STANDING AND/OR PARKED APPARATUS

Wheel chocks (blocks) shall be used whenever an apparatus is standing or parked and the operator has exited the vehicle. In the case of apparatus parked on a station's apparatus floor, consideration shall be given to utilization of wheel chocks being deployed when pumps are engaged. Warning lights shall be used when the fire department vehicle is maneuvering or stopped in a location where it creates a safety hazard. Additional warning devices, such as cones, caution tape, etc., shall be utilized as responsibly required.

MOUNTING AND DISMOUNTING APPARATUS

No person(s) shall attempt to mount or dismount a moving vehicle under any circumstances. While mounting/dismounting; personnel shall strive to do so maintaining three points of contact with the apparatus and ground.

SEAT BELT USAGE

All persons driving or riding in fire department vehicles shall be seated in approved riding positions with seatbelts or safety restraints fastened at all times when the vehicle is in motion. The driver shall not begin to move the vehicle until all passengers are seated and properly secured. All passengers shall remain seated and secured as long as the vehicle is in motion. Seatbelts shall not be loosened or released while en-route to dress or don equipment. Exceptions; [1] for 5" hose loading (reloading) instances under the authority of an Officer assigned to the detail, [2] for person(s) required to ride in rear of service truck (or other vehicle) for patient removal or brush fire control purposes.

DRIVING OF APPARATUS AND/OR VEHICLES (NON-EMERGENCY)

Personnel driving apparatus and/or fire department vehicles, in a non-emergency situation, shall comply with all applicable statutes, laws and/or ordinances regarding vehicle operation including a prohibition of the use of cell-phones and video recorders and shall never display aggressive driving techniques.

DRIVING OF APPARATUS AND/OR VEHICLES (EMERGENCY)

Responding to emergency incidents does not in any manner reduce the responsibility to operate vehicles safely. The General Statutes of the State of Connecticut include specific provisions for emergency vehicles, while they are engaged in emergency response and/or operations. The Glastonbury Fire Department's policy (herein) specifies when and how these exceptions will be applied.

Warning lights and audible siren shall be used at all times when fire department vehicles are operating in an emergency response mode. Warning lights shall be used when the fire department vehicle is maneuvering or stopped in a location where it creates a safety hazard. Audible warning devices shall be used to warn other drivers and pedestrians of the approach of an emergency vehicle and request the right of way.

During emergency response the operator of any emergency vehicle may [1] stand or park such vehicle, irrespective of the provisions of statutes, laws, ordinances, [2] proceed past any red light or stop signal or stop sign of an intersection but only after slowing down and stopping to the extent necessary for the safe operation of the vehicle (note: it is the driver's responsibility to operate the vehicle defensively always being in a position to stop the vehicle even when proceeding through a green or yellow traffic light), [3] exceed the posted speed limit(s) *provided the speed is safe and prudent, based on road and weather conditions and other circumstances, including the design and capabilities of the vehicle*. The posted advisory speed for a curve shall be considered the maximum allowable speed under all conditions, regardless of response, [4] disregard statutes, laws, ordinances governing direction of movement or turning in a specific direction. In regards to direction of movement: emergency vehicles responding to an emergency incident may travel in the opposite direction of a marked one-way city street if necessary for an efficient and effective response and provided it is reasonable and safe to do so. Drivers must proceed slowly and with extreme caution in these circumstances. Drivers shall bring their apparatus to a complete stop before entering an intersection while traveling in an opposing direction.

Emergency vehicles shall not travel in the opposite direction of a marked one-way entrance or exit highway ramp unless {a} it is confirmed to the apparatus operator that a public safety agency has stopped opposing traffic from ramp use, {b} an on-board Officer has determined that it is a reasonable and safe act to commit based on immediate conditions of the ramp and proximity of the emergency or if no Officer is on-board, {c} the Incident Commander or highest ranking officer grants authorization to a specific request by the operator when the operator has determined that it is a reasonable and safe act to commit based on immediate conditions of the ramp and proximity of the emergency.

Emergency vehicle drivers shall never display aggressive driving techniques to force other drivers to yield the right of way.

TRAVELING IN OPPOSING TRAFFIC LANES

Operation of an apparatus or vehicle in opposing traffic lanes is extremely hazardous under all conditions and should only be considered in exceptional circumstances. When an emergency vehicle must travel in an opposing traffic lane, or in a center turn lane to maneuver around slow moving or stopped traffic, the vehicle shall proceed slowly and with extreme caution.

PASSING TRAFFIC

When approaching traffic that is moving in the same direction, the emergency vehicle driver shall give other drivers an opportunity to yield the right of way before overtaking such vehicles. If overtaking, drivers shall pass only on the left unless there is absolutely no other option than to pass on the right and it is judged to be safe to pass on the right.

A fire department vehicle shall not overtake another emergency vehicle that is traveling in the same direction unless the driver of the lead vehicle has indicated that the other may pass. A following vehicle may contact a leading vehicle by radio to request permission to pass.

PEDESTRIAN CROSSWALK

Emergency vehicles shall not exceed the posted speed limit when approaching a pedestrian crosswalk. If the crosswalk is occupied, the emergency vehicle shall slow down and stop if the pedestrian does not yield the right of way.

RAILROAD CROSSING

Emergency vehicles shall come to a complete stop at unguarded railroad crossings and shall slow down, stopping if necessary, at crossings where warning lights and or gates are provided but not flashing or closed. At crossings where lights are flashing but no gates are provided or down and no rail traffic is apparent, the driver shall come to a complete stop and visually confirm that no train or other rail traffic is approaching on the tracks. Complete confirmation may require that members physically dismount the vehicle to visually check the tracks.

SCHOOL BUS

Emergency vehicles shall not pass a school bus that has stopped with red lights flashing to load or discharge passengers. School bus drivers that "wave" an emergency vehicle past should shut off their flashing lights first. When a school bus driver does not shut off the flashing lights but clearly is "waving" an emergency vehicle past, the driver shall proceed only when guided by ground spotters. The driver must be prepared to stop immediately while approaching, passing and leaving the area in which the school bus is stopped.

BACKING OF APPARATUS

One or more spotters, preferably more than one if the opportunity is present, shall be employed as guides in all situations where the driver of an apparatus is backing. Visual and verbal (radio) contact shall be maintained and if a driver loses sight of a spotter, the driver will stop the apparatus until visual contact is re-established. The spotters shall be on the ground and situated at the most vulnerable spot(s) to the apparatus. During night or low light conditions, spotters shall use hand-lights. In no situation are cameras or other safety devices a substitute for a spotter.

MANUVERING APPARATUS PAST POTENTIAL OBSTACLES/HAZARDS

One or more spotters, preferably more than one if the opportunity is present, shall be employed as guides (on the ground) in all situations where obvious obstacles and/or hazards to the front, sides, topside or undercarriage interfere with the safe movement of an apparatus. This is to include maneuvering apparatus at a scene, event or detail where vehicle/pedestrian congestion is an issue. In such cases the apparatus shall be moved slowly and cautiously.

MISCELLANEOUS

Responding to emergency incidents does not in any manner reduce the responsibility to operate vehicles safely. While prompt response to emergency incidents is an organizational priority, safety is and always will be a higher priority. Unsafe operation of any emergency vehicle creates an unacceptable risk to fire department personnel, the public and to the individuals who are in need of assistance. The Administration observes zero tolerance for validated violations of any section(s) of this policy and additionally observes zero tolerance for validated failures to hold others accountable for actions contrary to the spirit of this policy.

Any motor vehicle accident involving a department apparatus/vehicle or a private vehicle conducting department business shall be reported to the Police agency in the jurisdiction in which the accident occurs. The Assistant Chief is to be notified.

Section III- Approval

Fire Chief



Date of Approval:

1/11/16