

Hurricane Fire & Rescue

Hurricane, WV

Operational Guidelines

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Driver Safety
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5

Purpose: It is the intent of Hurricane Fire & Rescue to foster in its driver/operators a safe attitude.

Scope: All personnel who drive or operate a department vehicle.

Responsibility: It is the responsibility of all drivers to operate department vehicles in a safe operating manner.

Driver's Responsibility

- A. It is the responsibility of the driver of every department vehicle to drive safely and prudently at all times. Vehicles shall be operated in compliance with the West Virginia Motor Vehicle Law. This code provides specific legal exceptions to regular traffic regulations, which apply to department vehicles only when responding to an emergency incident or when transporting a patient to a medical facility. Emergency response does not absolve the driver of any responsibility to drive with due caution. The driver of the emergency vehicle is responsible for its safe operation at all times. The officer in charge of a vehicle has responsibility for the safety of all operations.
- B. When responding, emergency, warning lights and headlights must be on and sirens must be sounded to warn drivers of other vehicles as necessary, as noted in the WV Motor Vehicle Law.

The use of sirens and warning lights does not give the right-of-way to the emergency vehicle. Warning devices request the right-of-way from other drivers, based on their awareness of the emergency vehicle. 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 the unexpected inappropriate actions of others.

Department vehicles are authorized to exceed posted speed limits only when it does not endanger life or property.

- C. 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 and proceed through with due caution.

When approaching a negative right-of-way intersection (**red light, stop sign or yield**), the vehicle shall come to a complete stop. The emergency vehicle may proceed only when the driver can account for all on-coming traffic in all lanes yielding the right-of-way. If there is any doubt, the emergency vehicle shall wait until the intersection can be crossed safely.

- D. Emergency response is authorized only in conjunction with emergency incidents. Unnecessary emergency response shall be avoided. In order to avoid unnecessary emergency response, the following rules shall apply.

1. When the first unit reports on the scene with "**nothing showing**" or an equivalent report, any additional units shall respond in a non-emergency response.
2. The first arriving unit will advise additional units to continue non-emergency whenever appropriate.

- E. Anyone operating or riding as a passenger in a department vehicle is required to use seat belts.

All personnel shall ride only in regular seats provided. Riding on tailboards or other exposed positions is not permitted on any vehicle with the following exception. Personnel may stand on tailboard and/or kneel/sit on hosebed when reloading hose. The apparatus should move at a safe and slow manner when reloading hose and proceed with due caution.

- F. During an emergency response, fire vehicles should avoid passing other emergency vehicles. If passing is necessary, arrangements should be conducted through radio communications.

- G. The foregoing authorizations shall not relieve the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons and shall not be construed to permit the driver of an unauthorized vehicle to pass one or more school buses which have stopped and displayed signal lights or visual signs

indicating the loading or unloading of individuals. In such cases, the operation of the emergency vehicle shall proceed only after a traffic control officer, police officer, or the operator of the bus or buses gives a proper signal.

- H. Unpaved roads shall be avoided if at all possible. While on an unpaved road the speed is to be minimized to avoid possible damage to the vehicle or shifting of the water in the tank.
- I. Upon returning from an incident, apparatus shall be cleaned and fully restored (water, fuel, hose reloaded, etc.) to ensure readiness for the next incident.
- J. The unique hazards of driving on or adjacent to the fire ground require the driver to use extreme caution and to be alert and prepared to react to the unexpected.

When driving apparatus on the fire ground, drivers must resist the tendency to drive hastily or imprudently, due to the urgent nature of fire ground operations.

- K. Drivers must consider the dangers their moving vehicle poses to fire ground personnel and spectators who may be preoccupied with the emergency, and may inadvertently step in front of or behind a moving vehicle.

Drivers must also be aware of the potential that exists for vehicle accidents on or near the fire ground due to the distractions caused by the emergency.

- L. When stopped at the scene of an incident, vehicles should be placed to protect personnel who may be working in the street and warning lights shall be used to make approaching traffic aware of the incident. At night, vehicle mounted floodlights and any other lighting available should be used to illuminate the scene.
- M. Should a vehicle be blocking access to fire or emergency, egress or hydrant access, be located in designated fire lane and effect vehicle placement at fire ground or generally hamper operations; it shall be at the discretion of the officer to push, tow or ram vehicles to make necessary FD connections, etc.

Emergency Response Policy

Department vehicles shall be operated in a manner that provides for the safety of all persons and property. Safe arrival shall always have priority over unnecessary speed and reckless driving en route to an incident.

A. Prompt, Safe Response Shall Be Attained By:

1. Leaving the station in a **standard manner by the following.**
 - a. All compartment doors are confirmed closed by completing a 360-degree vehicle check
 - b. Quickly mounting apparatus
 - c. All personnel on board, seated and seatbelts secured
 - d. Station doors fully open
2. Driving defensively and professionally at reasonable speeds.
3. Knowing the location and route of travel prior to going en route to incident.
4. Using warning devices to move around traffic and to request the right-of-way in a safe and predictable manner.

B. Fast Response Shall Not Be Attained By:

1. Leaving quarters before crew has mounted safely and before bay doors are fully open.
2. Driving too fast for conditions.
3. Driving recklessly or without regard for safety.
4. Taking unnecessary chances with negative right-of-way intersections.
5. Intimidating or scaring other drivers.

Backing Apparatus

- A. Anytime an apparatus must be backed, a back-up person is required to direct the driver. Another firefighter/crew member should monitor traffic. If a back-up person is not available, the driver shall dismount and walk completely around apparatus before backing.

B. SIGNALS

1. **STRAIGHT BACK:** One hand above the shoulder with palm toward face, waving back. Other hand at your side. **(Left or right-hand optional).**
2. **TURN:** Both arms pointing the same direction with index fingers extended. **(Driver has option as to which way she/he turns apparatus and back-up person then assists the driver in backing apparatus.)**
3. **STOP:** Closed fist above shoulder.

C. NIGHT BACKING

Signals will be the same. The back-up person will assure that the spotlights on rear of apparatus are turned on before she/he allows apparatus to be backed. A flashlight may be carried, but at no time will it be directed toward any mirror.

D. SAFETY

All back-up persons in traffic will wear PPE. When possible, the back-up person needs to give directions from the driver's side of the apparatus.

- E. Remember, once the driver has determined the direction of the turn, the back-up person has complete control of the movement of the apparatus. If there is ever any doubt as to the safety of either back-up person or apparatus, stop the maneuver until proper adjustments are made.
- F. While acting as a back-up person, the back-up person will be responsible for the safe backing of the apparatus.