

CLIO AREA FIRE DEPARTMENT

OPERATING GUIDELINE

TITLE: EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATION

REFERENCES:

NFPA 1500

CAFD RULES, REGULATIONS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES GUIDE

THE PRIMARY FUNCTION OF EMERGENCY VEHICLE RESPONSE IS TO GET THE REQUIRED APPARATUS, EQUIPMENT AND PERSONNEL TO THE EMERGENCY SCENE IN A TIMELY AND SAFE MANNER.

THE SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF DEPARTMENT MEMBERS IS THE PRIMARY CONCERN AT ALL INCIDENTS.

SEAT BELT USE IS MANDATORY IN ALL DEPARTMENT VEHICLES AT ALL TIMES AND IN PERSONAL VEHICLES WHEN RESPONDING TO OR RETURNING FROM AN INCIDENT.

RESPONSE IN PRIVATE OWNED VEHICLES

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 the same exemptions or special privileges under the law.

Privately owned vehicles are allowed the use of warning lights to be used while at an emergency scene so as to be better identified. The Chief of Department will give approval individually to members who are allowed the use of warning lights. No other privately owned vehicle shall have or use warning lights or audible warning device.

Only members who are specifically designated by the Chief of Department shall be allowed to drive personal vehicles directly to the incident scene.

All members responding to the scene in a personal vehicle shall obey all traffic laws and are responsible for their actions during such response. If involved in, or the cause of an accident, the member shall immediately stop and resolve the situation.

All members responding to the station in response to an alarm shall obey all traffic laws and are responsible for their actions. If involved in, or the cause of an accident, the member shall immediately stop and resolve the situation.

RESPONSE IN FIRE DEPARTMENT EMERGENCY VEHICLES

While it is recognized that timeliness in response to an emergency is important, it is imperative that all drivers understand that the safety and well being of Department personnel and the public is their primary concern.

The Driver and Officer of a vehicle shall assure that all members are secured with seat belts before the vehicle is moved.

It is also the responsibility of all employees to restrain themselves with seat belts at all times while the vehicle is in motion. Seat belts are not to be released at any time, for any reason, while the vehicle is in motion.

The Driver is under the direct supervision of the apparatus Officer. The apparatus Officer has the ultimate responsibility for safety of the entire crew and safe operation of the vehicle.

TRAINING

Annually, all members are required to satisfactorily complete a driving course while operating a fire apparatus.

Initial training and annual refresher training shall include, but not be limited too:

- Road Conditions
- Speed and control of vehicle
- Engine Brake Use
- Weather Conditions
- Apparatus Positioning

Crossing intersections

- Review of Appropriate Policies and SOG's
 - Driving Policy
 - Backing Vehicles Policy
 - Emergency Vehicle Operation SOG
 - Roadway Operations SOG

Personnel, who are designated as Drivers for Department apparatus, must successfully complete Clio Area Fire Department Driver Training (includes class room as well as driving course) satisfactorily and shall be certified by the Apparatus Officer as to their proficiency in operating the equipment before regular appointment as Driver or temporary assignment in such capacity.

Probationary Personnel, who are attending the Fire Fighter I & II training, shall receive the classroom instruction during the training. The driving instruction will consist of 8 hours of on the road driving under supervision of a Department Training Officer, their designee, or a qualified Department Driver, and shall be certified by the Department Apparatus Officer before driving the vehicle unsupervised.

Personnel, who shall drive aerial trucks, shall complete a minimum of 5 hours of on the road driving under supervision of a Department Training Officer, their designee, or a Department Driver who is qualified to drive aerial trucks. All hours driving shall be recorded, and shall be certified by the Department Apparatus Officer before driving the vehicle unsupervised.

WARNING DEVICES

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 insure the right-of-way.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

During emergency response, drivers of fire apparatus shall bring the vehicle to complete stop under any of the following circumstances:

- When directed by a law enforcement officer
- At red traffic lights
- At stop signs
- At negative right-of-way intersections
- At blind intersections
- When the driver cannot account for all lanes of traffic in an intersection
- When other intersection hazards are present
- When encountering a stopped school bus with flashing warning lights.

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 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 can not force the right-of-way therefore you do not have the right-of-way until the other vehicle yields to you.

The emergency vehicle driver shall be aware of the 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 speeds under 40 mph and add 1 additional second for each 10 mph for speeds over 40 mph.

RESPONSE SPEEDS

When responding to a true emergency (1) only, drivers shall operate the vehicle they are driving as close to the posted speed limit as possible, but not to exceed ten (10) miles per hour over the posted speed limit, 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

ENGINE BRAKE USE

Engine Brakes (may also be known as Jake Brake) are to be used only in dry weather conditions. They must be turned off during rain, snow, or icy conditions.

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.

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 or where a traffic control signal is green upon 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 foot.
- Change the siren cadence not less than 200 feet from the intersection.
- Avoid using the opposing lane of traffic if at all possible.

(1) A true emergency is defined as 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.

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 vehicle yields to you.

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;

- 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 options
- Begin to slow down well before reaching the intersection and cover the brake pedal with the drivers foot, continue to scan 4 directions (left, right, front, rear)
- Change the siren cadence not less than 200 feet 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
- Come to a complete stop

- Establish eye contact with the other vehicle drivers; have partner communicate all is clear; reconfirm all other vehicles are stopped
- Proceed one lane of traffic at a time treating each lane of traffic as a separate intersection

Railroad Intersections

Unguarded Crossings

At any time an emergency vehicle driver approaches an unguarded rail crossing he/she shall bring the apparatus 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

Guarded Crossings

Fire Department apparatus shall use caution when approaching and crossing any guarded railroad grade crossings.

- Under no circumstances are fire department apparatus to go around barricades at guarded railroad crossings.

NON-EMERGENCY RESPONSE

When responding to a call in a non-emergency response mode or normal flow of traffic the vehicle will be operated without any audible or visual warning devices and in compliance with all state motor vehicle laws that apply to civilian traffic. At no time shall any emergency vehicle be operated during response with only visual warnings.

Effective June 8, 2008 CAFD vehicles will not run lights and siren for calls such as:

- Burning complaints
- Wires Down (unless wires on house or vehicle)
- Public Assist
- Mutual Aid to stand-by in another Department Station when they are on a call
- Coordination Mutual Aid Move up
- Dumpster Fire (Unless it is close to a building)
- Wash Down

ORDINARY TRAVEL PROCEDURES

All drivers shall obey all traffic laws and traffic control devices when 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.