



Wintergreen Fire and Rescue Standard Administrative Policy	
Subject:	Vehicle Operations
Reference Number:	OPER 01-003
Effective Date:	16-Apr-03
Last Revision Date:	23-Mar-22
Signature of Approval	Curtis Sheets, Chief

Purpose:

This guideline shall establish specific guidelines for the operations of fire/rescue apparatus by department personnel.

Policy:

When operating emergency vehicles in a non-emergency status, personnel shall obey all traffic laws and signals.

When responding to an EMS scene, emergency vehicles shall respond in accordance with the local emergency response plan.

When transporting to the hospital, the attendant-in-charge should determine based on the patient's condition whether the response should be emergency (with lights and/or siren) or non-emergency.

All loose items being hauled in the passenger compartment of a vehicle will be stored or secured in a manner to prevent them from becoming projectiles in the event of an accident or from interfering with the operation of the vehicle.

- It is the responsibility of the driver to ensure all materials (stretcher, defibrillator, backboards, etc.) are safely secured for travel.

Whenever possible, apparatus should be positioned at the scene of a roadway incident in such a manner as to create an effective safety barrier between the scene and moving traffic.

It is the responsibility of the vehicle driver to make a walk around inspection of a vehicle prior to operation to check for obvious concerns such as low tires, fluid leaks, broken lights or mirrors, etc.

It is the responsibility of the vehicle operator to report any safety or operational issues associated with a vehicle through the completion of the vehicle inspection. No vehicle should be operated with a known safety defect until appropriate repairs are completed.

When parking an emergency vehicle at a scene, the front wheels should be turned away from where personnel or patients will be located. In the event the vehicle is struck from behind, this reduces the risk of having the unit pushed into the working area.

The driver/operator of any emergency vehicle shall ensure that their vehicle's parking brake is applied before exiting the cab at the scene of any incident.

When personnel are operating emergency vehicles in an emergency status (use of warning lights and siren), they shall adhere to the following safety rules:

- The headlights of the vehicle shall be on
- Seatbelts should be utilized by all occupants whenever the vehicle is in operation. An exception is where patient care in an ambulance limits the effective use of seatbelts.
- The siren will only be used as reasonably necessary
- The vehicle operator shall not exceed the posted speed limit more than ten (10) mph.
- The vehicle operator shall abide by traffic flow directional signs (i.e. one way, do not enter), unless otherwise directed, and the flow of traffic is stopped to allow the vehicle to safely proceed.
- When approaching an intersection, the operator shall follow the traffic signals or signs as follows:
 - If the operator has the green light, he/she shall reduce the speed of the vehicle so that the vehicle can be stopped or maneuvered safely around other vehicles, which may not yield the right-of-way. Extra caution should be taken when approaching a green light when the Opticom system has been activated.
 - If the operator has a red light or yellow light, he/she shall bring the vehicle to a **complete controlled stop** before entering the intersection. The operator may then proceed through the intersection, providing all other traffic has completely stopped and given the right of way and it is safe to do so. Under no circumstances shall the vehicle operator go through an intersection against a red traffic light or stop sign without coming to a complete stop.
- When backing a vehicle, which may have an obstructed view to the rear, back slowly, watch both sides using mirrors, and if possible enlist the help of another person as a guide. If the driver is unable to see their surroundings, the vehicle should not move until a walk-around is completed or a spotter is in place.
- If the driver is unable to see their spotter they should not proceed in backing the vehicle.
- Drivers shall exercise added caution when driving through residential and school zones, overtaking children on bicycles/roller skates/skateboards, etc., and when passing playground areas.

At all times the vehicle operator will drive with "Due Regard" for the safety of other persons and property.

Any incident that results in a vehicle operator being charged with any motor vehicle violation, any property damage, or personal injury as a result of the vehicle operation while on duty must be reported to the shift supervisor immediately.

Traffic Control and Safety:

Personnel operating in or near a roadway should wear turnout gear and/or a reflective vest for increased visibility. Helmet use is highly recommended; required if working in or around wrecked vehicles.

When stopping on the road becomes necessary, appropriate warning devices shall be used including emergency lights, flares, and safety cones to provide adequate warning and is the responsibility of the driver.

Orange traffic cones should be utilized whenever possible to provide a visible safety perimeter around apparatus parked in the roadway. This procedure should include emergency incidents, training activities, and public service events.

- Depending upon traffic speed, cones should be placed at a sufficient distance and intervals from the vehicle(s) to provide approaching drivers with adequate warning and reaction time. On high-speed roads (45 mph or greater) cones ideally should be placed at least 250 feet from the first apparatus.
- Traffic cones should be placed an appropriate distance beside parked apparatus to provide a safety zone for personnel to pass through.
- Traffic cones shall be utilized to protect other vehicles or locations where personnel are working or safety hazards exist.
- The vehicle operator is responsible for timely and appropriate deployment of traffic cones.

The use of high-beam headlight at night and/or the placement of scene lighting should be considered with regard to any potential to cause temporary blindness of passing motorists.

Personnel shall make every attempt to keep at least one lane of traffic moving at all times.

Traffic shall be blocked as needed for any of the following reasons:

- Under police or VDOT request
- Hazardous scene (i.e. Hazmat, downed power lines, fire, etc.)
- MVC with increased traffic hazards or blocked road
- Positioning of apparatus at Station 1 (i.e. Backing Truck 1)
- Special request by appropriate authorized personnel

*** Failure to abide by this guideline shall result in a suspension of driving privileges.***