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| ***REPLACE WITH YOUR MASTHEAD*** | | |
| **VFIS logo black JPG** | **SOG Title:** | |
| **SOG Number:** | |
| **Original Date:** | **Revision Date:** |
| **ABC Fire Department General Operating Guideline** | | |

**Intersection Navigation**

***This is a sample of a standard operating guideline (SOG) on this topic. You should review the content, modify as appropriate for your organization, have it reviewed by your leadership team and if appropriate your legal counsel. Once adopted, make sure the SOG is communicated to members, implemented and performance monitored for effective implementation.***

**Purpose**

To establish procedures and guidelines for the safe operation of all emergency service organizations (ESO) vehicles and apparatus when negotiating intersections.

**Scope:**

All personnel.

**Procedure:**

It is the responsibility of all personnel and associated parties to adhere to this policy to prevent death, injury, and property damage. The largest percentage of major accidents involving emergency vehicles happens at intersections. Even with the use of warning devices, intersections pose a serious threat to the safety of both emergency services personnel as well as the public.

**Controlled Intersections:**

Any intersection controlled by a stop sign, yield sign, or traffic light requires prudent action by the emergency vehicle driver. The following steps should be followed:

* Be a defensive driver.
* 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 driver's foot, continuing to scan in four directions (left, right, front, back).
* Change the siren cadence at least 200 feet from the intersection.
* Scan intersection for possible passing options (pass on right, left, wait, etc.) and avoid using the opposing lane of traffic if at all possible.
* If all visible traffic in all lanes cannot be accounted for, the driver should bring the vehicle to a complete stop. If the driver proceeds past a control device stop sign/red light with a negative right-of-way without coming to a complete stop, both the driver and officer should be required to complete an incident report providing an explanation of the circumstances that permitted them to do so.
* Establish eye contact with other vehicle drivers, have partner communicate all is clear, and reconfirm that all other vehicles are stopped.
* Account for one lane of traffic at a time treating each lane of traffic as a separate intersection.

**Railroad Intersections:**

Any time an emergency vehicle driver approaches an unguarded rail crossing, the driver shall bring the apparatus or vehicle to a complete stop before entering the grade crossing. In addition, the driver shall perform the following actions prior to proceeding:

* Be a defensive driver.
* Turn off all sirens and air horns
* Operate the motor at idle speed
* Tum off any other sound producing equipment or accessories
* Open the windows and listen for a train horn

**Uncontrolled Intersections:**

When approaching any intersection that does not offer a control device (stop sign, yield, or traffic signal) in the emergency vehicle's direction of travel or where a traffic control signal is green upon the approach of the emergency vehicle, all emergency vehicle drivers should do the following:

* Be a defensive driver.
* Scan the intersection for possible hazards (right turns on red, pedestrians, vehicles traveling fast, etc.)
* Observe traffic in all four directions (left, right, front, rear)
* Slow down and cover the brake pedal with the driver's foot
* Change the siren cadence not less than 200 feet from intersection
* Avoid using the opposing lane of traffic if possible

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 should not try to force the right of way, nor should he or she assume the right of way. You do not have the right of way until the other vehicle yields to you.

***This is a sample guideline furnished to you by VFIS. Your organization should review this guideline and make the necessary modifications to meet your organization’s needs. The intent of this guideline is to assist you in reducing exposure to the risk of injury, harm or damage to personnel, property and the general public. For additional information on this topic, contact your VFIS Risk Control representative.***

**References:**

NVFC "Emergency Vehicle Safe Operations for Volunteer and Small Combination Emergency Service Organizations"