

Bethel Township Fire Department

GENERAL ORDER: 406	SECTION: Appartus
SUBJECT: Emergency Vehicle Operations	AFFECTS: All Personnel
ADOPTED: 05/01/2016	SUPERSEDES: None
REVISED: 09/20/2020	

PURPOSE:

Accidents involving emergency vehicles is the second leading cause of death in the fire service. The Bethel Township Fire Department is committed to preventing accidents, injuries and/or death to fire department personnel and/or civilians due to accidents involving emergency vehicles.

GENERAL ORDER:

It is the responsibility of the driver of each fire department vehicle to drive safely and prudently at all times. Vehicles shall be operated in compliance with the Ohio Revised Code and City Personnel Policies. The O.R.C. provides specific legal exceptions to regular traffic regulations, which apply to fire 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 regard and caution. The driver of the emergency vehicle is responsible for its safe operation at all times.

When responding emergency, headlights and warning lights must be on and sirens must be sounded to warn drivers of other vehicles, as required by the Ohio Revised Code.

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

Fire department vehicles are authorized to exceed posted speed limits only when responding emergency under favorable conditions. This applies only to light traffic, good roads, good visibility and dry pavement.

Under less than favorable conditions, the posted speed limit is the absolute maximum permissible. If weather and/or road conditions do not support an emergency response, crews shall respond non-emergency.

When emergency vehicles must travel in oncoming traffic lanes greater than 250 feet away from intersections and protected by a median, maximum speed is the posted limit. Within 250 feet of intersections or whenever no median is present maximum speed is 20 mph and the apparatus shall approach the intersection slow and cautiously.

Intersections present the greatest potential danger to emergency vehicles. When approaching and crossing an intersection with the right-of-way in your lane (green light, no stop sign) drivers shall slow and proceed through the intersection cautiously.

When emergency vehicles must use center or oncoming traffic lanes to approach controlled intersections, (traffic light or stop sign) they must come to a complete stop before proceeding through the intersection, including occasions when the emergency vehicle has a green light.

When approaching a negative right-of-way intersection (red light, stop sign) the vehicle shall come to a complete stop and may proceed **only** when the driver can account for all oncoming traffic in all lanes yielding the right-of-way.

Emergency response is authorized only in conjunction with emergency incidents. Unnecessary emergency response shall be avoided. The first arriving unit will advise additional units to respond non-emergency whenever appropriate

During an emergency response, fire vehicles should avoid passing other emergency vehicles.

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.

The driver of the vehicle is responsible for the safety of all vehicle operations and managing compliance of this procedure.

Fire 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 enroute to an emergency incident.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE CRITERIA

1. Traveling in center lane maximum speed shall not exceed the posted speed limit. Center lanes within 250 feet of intersections maximum speed permissible 20 mph
2. Traveling in oncoming traffic lanes greater than 250 feet away from intersections and protected by a median maximum speed is the posted limit. Within 250 feet of intersections or whenever no median is present maximum speed is 20 mph
3. Slow and cautious when entering intersections with green light
4. Complete stop at all negative devices
5. Respond non-emergency when bad weather/road conditions exist

RESTRAINTS

All people are required to use seat belts at all times when operating or riding in a township vehicle equipped with seat belts. The apparatus officer and the driver/operator of the vehicle will confirm that all personnel and riders are on-board with seat belts on, before the vehicle is permitted to move.

All personnel shall ride only in regular seats provided with seat belts. Riding on tailboards or other exposed positions is not permitted on any vehicle at any time. Medic crews shall use a seatbelt in the patient care area when not actively involved in patient care.

Wheel Chocks

When fire apparatus is parked outside of the bay and the driver is not in the driver seat, wheel chocks shall be utilized. This includes equipment on the "ramp" of the station.