

Fulton County Fire Department Standard Operating Procedure	
Subject: Vehicle Operations	Number: 4800
Effective Date: October 29, 1997	Revised: April 1, 2002

1.0 Statement of Policy

- 1.1. Vehicles shall be operated at all times with the following priorities in mind:
 - 1.1.1. The safety of the occupants.
 - 1.1.2. The objective of the travel (emergency, non-emergency).
- 1.2. All passengers of vehicles must be seated, utilizing safety restraint devices, prior to the vehicle being placed in motion.

2.0 Objectives

- 2.1. The objective of this SOP is to provide guidance for members operating vehicles.

3.0 Responsibility

- 3.1. Drivers of vehicles are responsible for the operation of the vehicle at all times while the vehicle is in motion.
 - 3.1.1. Members operating vehicles in a non-emergency mode are responsible for following all traffic regulations.
 - 3.1.2. Members operating vehicles in an emergency mode are responsible for proceeding with due caution at all times.

4.0 Procedures

- 4.1. Non-Emergency Operations:
 - 4.1.1. All vehicle operators shall obey all state laws, local traffic regulations, County and Departmental Standard Operating Procedures.
 - 4.1.2. The operator shall confirm that passengers are in a proper seat and safety restraints are in place before placing the vehicle in motion.

4.1.3. Riding on the tailboard of a fire apparatus is not permitted at any time.

4.1.4. Backing Apparatus:

4.1.4.1. Whenever possible, backing of Fire Department apparatus should be avoided. Where backing is unavoidable, spotters shall be used.

4.1.4.2. When an apparatus is backed, all company members (except the driver/tiller person) will dismount the apparatus and act as spotters, including the Company Officer.

4.1.4.3. Spotters:

4.1.4.3.1. Should be positioned at as many corners of the apparatus as possible with at least one spotter (primary spotter) at the left rear corner.

4.1.4.3.2. Shall be used when vehicles must negotiate forward turns with restrictive side clearances and where height clearances are uncertain.

4.1.4.3.3. Are not permitted to ride tailboard positions, as spotters, while backing fire apparatus.

4.1.4.3.4. Will discuss the backing plan with the operator before proceeding.

4.1.4.3.5. Shall be in position and communicate their approval to start movement, prior to the vehicle moving.

4.1.4.3.6. Will remain visible to the operator. Any time the driver loses sight of the primary spotter, the apparatus shall be stopped immediately until the spotter is visible and the communication to continue has been re-established.

4.1.4.4. When vehicles must be backed where other traffic exists, the vehicle's visual warning devices (if so equipped) shall be operating.

4.2. Emergency Operations:

- 4.2.1. General response guidelines:
 - 4.2.1.1. The following privileges, as set forth by Georgia law, apply to all Department vehicles responding to emergency incidents.
 - 4.2.1.2. The privileges will only apply if the vehicle is using audible and/or visual warning devices, as applicable:
 - 4.2.1.2.1. Park or stand irrespective of posted laws.
 - 4.2.1.2.2. Disregard regulations governing the direction of movement or turning in specific directions.
 - 4.2.1.3. None of the aforementioned privileges relieve the operator of an emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons.
 - 4.2.1.4. Fire Department members are authorized to exceed posted speed limits only when responding to an emergency incident under favorable conditions.
 - 4.2.1.4.1. Favorable conditions means there is light traffic, good roads, good visibility and dry pavement.
 - 4.2.1.4.2. Under these conditions, a maximum of ten (10) mph over the speed limit is authorized.
 - 4.2.1.4.3. Under less than favorable conditions, the posted speed limit is the maximum speed permissible.
- 4.2.2. When responding non-emergency:
 - 4.2.2.1. Privileges listed above do not apply.
 - 4.2.2.2. Audible and/or visual warning devices will not be used.
 - 4.2.2.3. The operator will be subject to all normal driving laws.
- 4.2.3. Intersections:
 - 4.2.3.1. When approaching and crossing an intersection with the right-of-way, under no circumstances shall operators exceed the posted speed limit.

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

4.2.4. Road Operations:

4.2.4.1. Every effort should be made to pass traffic only on the left. It is extremely dangerous to pass traffic on the right.

4.2.4.2. Whenever practical, operators will maintain a minimum of 100 feet of separation between vehicles to allow for sufficient reaction time. This distance may need to be increased to allow for adverse weather and driving conditions.

4.2.4.3. Passing another emergency vehicle responding to an emergency is not recommended. Should passing become necessary, permission must be obtained from the vehicle being passed via radio communications.

4.2.4.4. Emergency vehicles will not pass a school bus displaying its stop sign until the driver of the school bus has withdrawn the stop sign.

4.2.4.5. Safe arrival shall always have priority over unnecessary speed and reckless driving enroute to an emergency incident.

4.2.4.6. Unless designated to do so, apparatus shall not be taken "off road".

4.2.5. At incident scenes:

4.2.5.1. The first arriving unit at an incident may advise the additional units to proceed in a non-emergency response mode.

4.2.5.2. Drivers must consider the dangers of moving vehicles pose to fire ground members and spectators.

4.2.5.3. On the scene of an emergency incident, vehicles should be strategically located so as to provide maximum protection to members on the scene. Visual warning devices will be used to alert oncoming traffic.

5.0 Reference – N/A

6.0 Appendix

6.1. Apparatus Backing Signals

SIGNALS:

- Straight Back: One hand above the head with palm toward face, motioning back. Other hand at your side. (Left or right hand optional)
- Turn: Both arms pointing in the same direction with fingers extended.
- Stop: Both arms crossed with hands in fists. Yell the stop order loud enough that the operator can hear the warning.
- Night Backing: A flashlight may be carried; however, at no time will it be directed toward the mirror.