

Communiqué

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ServicesDepartmentoftheGlatfelterInsuranceGroup

Intersection Practices

Intersections are the locations where the largest percentage of major accidents involving emergency vehicles occurs. Even with the use of warning devices, intersections pose a serious threat to the safety of both emergency service personnel as well as the general public. All emergency service organizations should adopt and practice intersection operating guidelines during all emergency responses. Standard Operating Guidelines should meet the following recommended practices at a minimum.

Controlled intersections

An intersection controlled by a stop sign, yield sign, yellow traffic light, or a red traffic light requires **Prudent Action** by the emergency vehicle driver. The following steps should be taken:

- Do not rely on warning device 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, continue to scan in four directions (left, right, front, back)
- Change the siren cadence not less than 200 feet from the intersection.
- Scan intersection for possible passing options (pass on right, left, wait, etc.) avoid using the opposing lane of traffic if at all possible.
- If 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 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; reconfirm all other vehicles are stopped.
- Account for traffic on one lane at a time, treating each lane as a separate intersection.

Railroad intersections

Whenever an emergency vehicle driver approaches an unguarded rail crossing, he/she shall bring the apparatus or vehicle 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 idles speed.
- Turn off any other sound-producing equipment or accessories.
- Open the windows and listen for a train's horn.

This is a sample guideline furnished to you by VFIS. Your organization should review it and make the necessary modifications to meet the needs of your organization. The intent of this guideline is to assist you in reducing exposure to the risk of injury to personnel and the general public from injury or property damage. For additional information on this topic, you may contact your VFIS Risk Control Representative at 1-800-233-1957



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Uncontrolled intersections

Any intersection without a control device (stop sign, yield sign, or traffic signal) in the direction of travel of the emergency vehicle or where a traffic control signal is green upon the 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 four directions (left, right, front, rear).
- Slow down if any potential hazards are detected and cover the brake pedal with the driver's foot.
- Change the siren cadence not less than 200 feet from the intersection.
- Avoid using the opposing lane of traffic if at all 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 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.

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