

Stratmoor Hills Fire Protection District Policy

Number: D 3

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Subject: DRIVING

Purpose: To establish the driving policy and specific responsibilities for the safe operation of all fire district vehicles.

Procedure:

Scope:

It is the responsibility of the driver of each Stratmoor Hills Fire Protection District vehicle to drive safely and prudently at all times. Vehicles shall be operated in compliance with Colorado Revised Statutes. This code provides specific legal exceptions to regular traffic regulations which apply to Fire District vehicles only when responding to an emergency incident or when transporting a patient to a medical facility. "Code 3/Emergent" response (code 3) does not absolve the driver of any responsibility to drive with due regard for public safety. The driver of the emergency vehicle is responsible for its safe operation at all times.

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

Major Objectives:

- Section 1 Emergency response policy
- Section 2 Specific rules for "Code 3/Emergent" response
- Section 3 "On scene" driving
- Section 4 "Code 2/Routine" response and normal driving
- Section 5 Backing
- Section 6 Accidents
- Section 7 Volunteer response

Section 1. Emergency response policy

- 1.1 Stratmoor Hills Fire Protection District apparatus shall be operated in a manner that provides for the safety of all persons and property. Safe arrival shall not be compromised for safe response speed. Reckless driving en-route to an emergency incident is prohibited. No member under the age of 21 will be permitted to drive department apparatus.
- 1.2 Prompt, Safe Response Shall Be Attained By :
 - (a). Leaving the station in a standard manner:
 - i) Quickly mounting apparatus w/ protective equipment donned
 - ii) All personnel on board, seated and seat belts on
 - iii) Station doors fully open and compartment doors closed
 - iv) Driving defensively and professionally at a speed appropriate for conditions
 - v) Knowing where we are going.
 - vi) Using warning devices to move around traffic and to request the right-of-way in a safe and predictable manner.
- 1.3 Fast Response Shall Not Be Attained By:
 - (a). Leaving quarters before a crew has mounted safely; seat belts fastened and before bay doors are fully open.
 - (b). Driving too fast for conditions.
 - (c). Driving recklessly or without due regard for safety.
 - (d). Taking unnecessary chances with negative right-of -way intersections.
 - (e). Intimidating or scaring other drivers.

Section 2. Specific rules for "Code 3/Emergent" response

- 2.1 When responding "Code 3/Emergent", warning lights must be on and sirens must be sounded to warn drivers of other apparatus, as required by the Colorado Revised Statutes.
- 2.2 The use of sirens and warning lights does not automatically give the right-of-way to the emergency apparatus. These devices simply request the right-of-way from other drivers, based on their awareness of the emergency apparatus presence. Emergency vehicle drivers must make every possible effort to make their presence and intended actions known to other drivers and must drive professionally and defensively to be prepared for the unexpected inappropriate actions of others.
- 2.3 Fire department apparatus traveling over the posted speed limit incur an additional liability to the safety of others, as speed limits are designed for passenger vehicles and not heavy, slow handling fire apparatus. For this reason, speeds exceeding 10 M.P.H. over the posted speed limit are considered past the apparatus safe driving capabilities.
- 2.4 Under less favorable conditions, the posted speed limit is the absolute maximum permissible. Less favorable conditions include but are not limited to: heavy traffic, limited visibility, poor road surface (washboard, potholes, wet, icy or snow covered, etc.).
- 2.5 Intersections present the greatest potential danger to emergency vehicles. When approaching and crossing an intersection with the right-of-way, drivers shall not exceed the posted speed limit.
- 2.6 When emergency apparatus must use oncoming traffic lanes to approach controlled intersections, (traffic light or stop sign) they must account for

all traffic lanes before proceeding through the intersection at a speed allowing for subsequent stops. This includes occasions when the emergency apparatus has green traffic lights.

- 2.7 When approaching a negative right-of-way intersection (red light, stop sign) the emergency apparatus shall come to a complete stop and may proceed only when the driver can account for traffic in all lanes yielding the right-of-way.
- 2.8 "Code 3/Emergent" response is authorized only in conjunction with emergency incidents. Unnecessary emergency response shall be avoided. In order to avoid any unnecessary emergency response, the following rule shall apply.
 - (a) When the first unit reports the scene with "nothing showing" or an equivalent report, the officer in charge shall advise additional units to respond "code 2" whenever appropriate.
- 2.9 During a "Code 3/Emergent" response, fire vehicles should avoid passing other emergency vehicles. If passing is necessary, permission must be obtained through radio communications.

Section 3 "On scene" driving

- 3.1 The unique hazard of driving on or adjacent to the fire/rescue ground requires the driver to use extreme caution and to be alert and prepared to react to the unexpected.
- 3.2 Drivers must consider the dangers their moving apparatus 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 apparatus.
- 3.3 When stopped at the scene of an incident, apparatus should be placed to protect personnel who may be working in the street and warning lights shall be used to make approaching traffic aware of the incident. At night, apparatus mounted floodlights and any other lighting available shall be used to illuminate the scene. Headlights of apparatus positioned against traffic shall be turned off to avoid "blinding" on coming drivers. Utilize spotlights on traffic cones to direct traffic around the scene.
- 3.4 If it is not necessary to park apparatus in or near traffic lanes, the apparatus should be pulled off the road to parking lots, curbs, etc., whenever possible.

Section 4. "Code 2" response and normal driving

- 4.1 All Stratmoor Hills Fire Protection District members are required to use seat belts at all times when operating a District apparatus equipped with seat belts. Anyone riding as a passenger in a District apparatus is also required to use seat belts. The Driver will confirm that all personnel and riders are on-board, properly attired, with seat belts on, before the apparatus is permitted to move.
- 4.2 All personnel shall ride only in regular seats provided with seat belts. Riding on tailboards or other exposed positions is not permitted on any apparatus. The tailboard may be used as a traveling work platform while loading five inch hose. Drivers of apparatus used for this procedure must maintain visual contact with the work crew and not exceed idle speed.

- 4.3 All personnel are encouraged to reduce the chances for damage and/or injury by establishing safe driving/operating habits. These habits include but are not limited to:
- a) All personnel shall advise driver/operator anytime equipment is to be removed from apparatus.
 - b) Designated drivers will be the only personnel authorized to move the apparatus
 - c) Perform "360 degree walk around check" of apparatus prior to moving vehicle; items to check include closed compartments, securely mounted equipment, obstructions blocking vehicle movement, etc.
 - d) Maintain adequate traffic cushion while en-route to ensure readiness at all times; 20-30 feet cushion when stopped in traffic, avenue of exit when in traffic, etc.

Section 5. Backing

- 5.1 Drivers shall avoid backing whenever possible. Where backing is unavoidable, a guide shall be used. If no guide is available, the driver shall dismount and walk completely around apparatus to determine if obstructions are present before backing; then back to the visible side (left side). Apparatus with unobstructed clear vision through the rear window (staff cars, pickup trucks, etc.) may back utilizing the mirrors and rear window.
- 5.2 All drivers shall stop when backing into the station so the ground guide can safely attach the plymovent system to the exhaust pipe.

Section 6. Accidents

- 6.1 Anytime a fire department apparatus is involved in an accident the driver or officer shall:
- (a) Notify Dispatch of response status; out of service, assigned to subsequent accident and your location. Dispatch will notify responsible Police agency.
 - (b) Notify Dispatch of accident and any requirements to treat and/or transport patients.
 - (c) Request response of a chief officer and/or safety officer. Responding officer shall complete accident report and notify insurance company as soon as possible.

Section 7. Volunteer response

- 7.1 Private owner vehicles (POV) used by volunteer personnel to respond "Code 3/Emergent" to incident locations or the fire station shall comply with the Colorado Revised Statutes. This requires compliance with this SOP. All POVs used for Department functions shall comply with the Colorado Revised Statutes, including mandatory insurance coverage.
- 7.2 Any POV responding direct to a scene must request permission from the Command Authority
- 7.3 Additionally POVs shall:
 - (a) Never exceed the posted speed limit under favorable conditions. Less favorable conditions require an appropriately lower speed. Less favorable conditions include but are not limited to: heavy traffic, limited visibility, poor road surface (washboard, potholes, wet, icy or snow covered, etc.)
 - (b) Use of seat belts by all occupants is required for all Fire District related uses of POVs.
 - (c) Code 3/Emergent" response is prohibited when POVs contain passengers other than Stratmoor Hills Fire Protection District members.
 - (d) In the event of an accident, Dispatch will immediately notify the proper Police agency. Dispatch will send an officer to gather information and complete the Stratmoor Hills Fire Protection District accident report.
 - (e) Response to the fire station is required unless the Dispatch requested a member to respond directly to the scene.
- 7.4 Personnel responding to the "scene of an emergency" in POV must comply with the following guidelines.
 - (a) POVs shall be kept to one side of the road and should be parked in an orderly manner not to impede operations or traffic
 - (b) Park away from the incident area; this distance will vary depending on the nature and location of operations.