



**City of Winchester
Fire & Rescue Department
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE**



Section:	Operations	SOP:	7.6
Subject:	Apparatus Driving Procedure	Executed:	January 1, 2006
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Approved:	 Scott Cullers, Fire Chief		Revised:  Allen W. Baldwin, Fire Chief

PURPOSE

The safe arrival of fire and EMS apparatus at any incident scene is a top priority for this Department. To assist in this priority, it is the purpose of this memorandum to describe and enact appropriate measures to enhance safety and minimize risk to personnel, equipment, and the public during all emergency and non-emergency vehicular traffic.

RESPONSIBILITY

All Department personnel shall be held responsible for the proper use and care of vehicles belonging to the individual stations and this department and all accessories, equipment, and tools assigned to each vehicle. Furthermore, all personnel shall adhere to the provisions of this policy and the Safety Manual of the City of Winchester.

ELIGIBILITY

All department personnel that desire to operate a department/city vehicle or their personal vehicle in the course of official business must have their DMV record checked annually. Personnel are eligible to drive a department/city vehicle or personal vehicle upon satisfactory review of their Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) based on the following eligibility requirements:

1. The following are the City's accepted driver requirements. Anyone not meeting these requirements may prevent their employment, continued employment, or promotion to a position, which includes driving responsibilities:

- a. For licensed EMS vehicles drivers must be at least 18 years of age per Virginia Office of EMS regulation 12VAC5-31-1200.
 - b. A valid driver's license with an accrued point balance between positive 5 points to negative 5 points;
 - c. No license revocations or suspensions within the past three (3) years related to operating a motor vehicle;
 - d. No record of convictions of a felony related to the operation of a motor vehicle within the past three (3) years;
 - e. No more than two (2) at-fault accidents as charged by law enforcement involving a department vehicle in the past three (3) years;
 - f. No six (6) point violations in the past three (3) years;
 - g. No DWI/DUI conviction within the last three (3) years;
 - h. No combination of violations, convictions or accidents that creates a pattern which indicates that the driver is a high risk driver due to an ongoing history of unsafe driving habits;
 - i. An overall pattern of safe vehicle operation and driving habits.
2. All personnel must immediately inform their station chief/supervisor of any change in their driving record, including:
 - a. All license suspensions, restrictions, and revocations;
 - b. Any moving violations received while operating a vehicle;
 - c. Any legal charges or convictions received while operating a vehicle.
 - d. Personnel who fail to report such offenses listed above may be subject to disciplinary action.

INITIAL TRAINING

The training component of the Driver's Eligibility SOP is designed to identify all items an interested driver will undertake, the certification process, and annual refresher training for all drivers who have been released as apparatus drivers for the Winchester Fire and Rescue Department (WFRD), Friendship Fire Company, Shawnee Fire Company, South End Fire Company, and Rouss Fire Company.

1. It will be the responsibility of the individual to express their interest to their respective fire chief or training officer to initiate the paperwork to begin driving and seek assistance for driver's training.
2. All candidates who have met the eligibility requirements to begin training will need to enroll in and successfully pass an Emergency Vehicle Operators Course (EVOC) for the class of vehicles they wish to drive/operate or have an approved EVOC from another state.
 - a. The sixteen (16) hour course will satisfy the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1002 Standard for Fire Apparatus Driver/ Operator Professional Qualifications.
 - b. In order to prepare for the course, the candidate shall be familiar with the apparatus in which he/ she will drive.
 - c. It will be the responsibility of the candidate to seek assistance for all training aspects both pre and post NFPA 1002 class.
3. The following items should be adhered to prior to NFPA 1002 Classroom:
 - a. Understand the dimensions of the apparatus

- b. Understand the gauges and adjustments in the cab of the apparatus
 - c. Understand the difference between personal vehicle and emergency apparatus driving
 - d. Understand the maneuverability of the apparatus
 - e. Understand the thoroughfares in which he/ she will be driving
 - f. Utilize a secluded parking lot for initial drivers training
 - g. Emphasize the use of mirrors while backing
 - h. Remind the candidate that a spotter is required, when available, for backing with the exception of the NFPA 1002 practical course
4. Once the candidate has successfully passed the NFPA 1002 course, he/ she will be eligible to begin driver training at their respective stations. At a minimum, the following will be adhered to and documented using department training logs in order to complete initial driver training for each type of apparatus (excluding Class I vehicles):
- a. Five (5) hours of daylight driving
 - b. Five (5) hours of night driving
 - c. Five (5) emergency calls
 - d. Demonstrate city street competency (80% of streets)
 - e. Recommendation from the candidates training officer

ANNUAL TRAINING

All drivers will partake in a driver refresher program annually that will consist of both a classroom and a practical skills evaluation for each type of apparatus. WFRD will be responsible for the annual skills through classroom education as well as practical driving scenarios.

1. The classroom refresher will include any NFPA 1002 updates and/or a review of general curriculum.
2. The practical refresher for Class I & II will consist of a cone course or equivalent road test.
3. Documentation of the training will be entered on to the appropriate department training logs (Appendix A) in the administration office files.

APPROVE/CLEARED DRIVERS

1. Only those persons who are approved/cleared by their individual stations or by the Department in the case of career personnel, to drive that station's apparatus shall be authorized to drive similar apparatus belonging to another station or owned by the Department. For example, any person authorized by Station 1 to drive Medic 1 or Wagon 1, shall also be authorized to drive any other ambulance or pumper in the other stations.
2. Aerial apparatus owned by Station 2 is unique to that station, personnel from that station will not be approved to drive apparatus from other stations, nor will personnel from other stations be approved to drive apparatus from Station 2 unless previously trained and cleared as a driver/operator.
3. The Department's hazardous materials response vehicles shall be driven only by authorized personnel. The administrative vehicles of the Department may be driven by all department approved drivers.

SAFE EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATIONS

Headlights shall be on at all times that the apparatus is in motion.

RESPONSE

1. Determination of emergency or non-emergency response will follow the guidelines of SOP 7.1 Call Types and Responses.
2. EMS apparatus, when transporting patients, shall respond to the medical center as directed by the Attendant-in-Charge of patient care.
3. During emergency response both audible and visual emergency warning devices must be utilized.
4. During Non-emergency response or driving headlights should be utilized.
5. Emergency lights may be activated while on the scene of an incident as needed.
6. Apparatus shall not be driven in a direction opposing other traffic, such as a one-way street or in opposing traffic lanes, unless it is possible to do so with due regard for safety, and then only for the shortest distance possible.
7. Apparatus should maintain a continuous line with 500 feet separation between apparatus and not pass other emergency vehicles during emergency response.

APPARATUS SPEED LIMITS

1. At no time should the posted speed limits be exceeded when not safe to do so
2. All personnel, when driving apparatus in the non-emergency mode, shall be mindful of posted speed limits and shall obey all state and local laws.
3. The speed of apparatus in emergency mode shall follow the Code of Virginia 46.2-920.A.1, with the driver being cognizant of traffic conditions, and due regard for the safety of civilians and fire and rescue personnel at all times. Except under extraordinary circumstances, drivers should not exceed 15 miles per hour above the posted speed limit. In such extraordinary circumstances, at the conclusion of the emergency, drivers may be required to provide the Fire Chief with a written report outlining the need to travel at speeds exceeding 15 miles per hour above the posted speed limit. Drivers exceeding 15 miles per hour above the posted speed limit without proper justification and those who fail to exercise proper care for the safety of life, limb, or property, may be subject to disciplinary action.
 - a. All apparatus shall come to a complete stop when approaching a stop sign and all traffic signals that are reflecting red in their lane of traffic. The

traffic shall be checked in all directions prior to proceeding through the intersection with due caution.

- b. The maximum speed through any traffic-controlled intersection in which the apparatus has the right-of-way (i.e. green light) shall be the speed limit of the street involved. This shall also apply to school zones when denoted by flashing lights.
 - 1) When approaching an intersection displaying a flashing yellow light or a yield sign, apparatus shall slow to a speed at which it can safely stop. The traffic shall be checked in all directions prior to proceeding through the intersection with due caution.
- c. During emergency response in areas of heavy congestion, caused by people, vehicles, and/or other items (i.e., tree limbs, building construction materials, etc.) speeds shall be reduced accordingly. .
 - 1) These instances may necessitate the posting of personnel in front of the apparatus to serve as spotters and clear the route for safe response.
 - 2) If spotters are not available to ensure safe passage of apparatus, it may be necessary for the driver to stage the apparatus as close as safely possible and then proceed on foot to evaluate the situation. ECC and additional responding apparatus and personnel shall be advised of this by radio.

PRE-EMPTION

The 3M Opticom system installed within the City at various traffic intersections provides an additional resource to safely maneuver our apparatus during emergency incidents. At no time does this system relieve us of our responsibilities for due regard to safety. Apparatus drivers should be aware of the functionality of this system and of its limitations:

At no time does this system relieve us of our responsibilities for due regard to safety or replace any current policies or laws pertaining to emergency driving.

1. A list of intersections and the number of receivers is attached to this memo. A map is available in the Fire administration office showing which intersections are pre-empted.
2. When approaching a designated pre-empted intersection with flashing emergency lights on; a flood light (white) will flash alerting the apparatus driver that the intersection is transitioning to a preemptive state. The flood light will hold solid when the green ball and left turn arrow on the apparatus' approach are lit allowing traffic to proceed thus clearing the intersection. All other opposing directions of travel will receive red traffic signals.

3. When approaching a designated pre-empted intersection with other directional pre-emption, the first apparatus with flashing emergency lights to approach the intersection will be given the green traffic signal while the other approaching apparatus will be given the red traffic signal. After the initial apparatus passes through the intersection, the second apparatus will receive a flashing signal via the flood light indicating the traffic signal will not turn green for at least 20 seconds. In this case, we shall fall back to current procedures and approach the intersection with caution and make a complete stop prior to proceeding through the intersection while maintaining due regard to safety.
4. The Intersection of Braddock St. and Boscawen St. have had special programming for Rouss apparatus. This pre-emption is to aid in the apparatus movement in and out of Rouss fire station. All other apparatus will function similar to other pre-empted intersections.
5. Each apparatus with a 3M emitter installed has a unique identifier programmed to allow the traffic division to monitor and maintain the system. Statistics will be generated and modifications to the system programming may be made to best utilize the system while maintaining proper traffic flows. Apparatus outside of Winchester Fire & Rescue will not operate on this system unless specifically requested to be added.
6. Problems and suggestions with apparatus emitters or functions at intersections shall be reported to the Fire & Rescue office. This information will be forwarded to the proper personnel in the traffic division for investigation and maintenance.

SCHOOL BUS ENCOUNTERS

A vehicle that is responding in an emergency mode and encounters a school bus with flashing red lights shall come to a complete stop, unless it is responding in the opposite direction of the bus on a divided highway. The vehicle may proceed once the bus driver has cleared the roadway of children, turned off the flashing lights, and waved the vehicle through.

RAILROAD CROSSINGS

1. Apparatus responding in an emergency mode that encounters an unguarded or unmarked railroad crossing shall slow down and be prepared to safely come to a complete stop short of the crossing. The driver shall ensure that it is safe to proceed before crossing the railroad tracks.
2. Drivers shall also use caution when approaching and crossing any guarded or marked railroad crossing. Under no circumstances shall any Fire and Rescue Department vehicle proceed around gates that are closed at a railroad crossing.

VEHICLE BACKING PROCEDURE

1. Whenever possible, apparatus drivers should think ahead and position apparatus so backing is not necessary.

2. No person shall be in the bed portion or on the rear of any vehicle at any time it is backing. The only exception would be when re-packing of supply hose, for which a spotter must be used.
3. Spotter(s) shall be used with any vehicle that has obscured rear vision, such as pumpers, aerial apparatus, and ambulances; or in any instance when traffic or the surrounding area warrants the use. The spotter(s) shall direct the driver in a manner that will avoid obstructions in the path of travel. The shared responsibility for proper backing procedures lies with both the driver and the spotter(s).
4. When only one spotter is available, he or she shall stand in such a position to be seen by the driver in the driver side mirror. (There may be locations when it would be safer for the spotter to be on the right side of the vehicle. If so the driver is to be made aware and eye contact is to be maintained between the driver and spotter in the mirror.)
 - a. Communications between the driver and spotter(s) shall be by use of hand signals. The spotter shall use one hand to motion the driver to begin backing and the other hand to show/point the direction for the driver to turn. Use two upright closed fists for the signal to stop.
 - b. Spotters shall allow a safe distance between themselves and the backing apparatus.
5. If available, two spotters may be utilized. The second person shall be positioned at a strategic location for that vehicle and in view of the driver/operator. For instance, it may be advantageous for a second spotter to be positioned in front of the apparatus to ensure the unit is free of obstructions.
6. Other personnel on the apparatus shall exit the vehicle before the vehicle starts backing and stay a safe distance away from the vehicle. These personnel should also stay out of the traffic lane, unless being utilized to stop traffic.
7. Whenever a spotter is not available, the driver has the responsibility to ensure that the area is clear to back the apparatus. If there is any doubt regarding backing safely, the driver is not to back the apparatus, and is to ask for assistance.
8. The driver must be responsible for sounding a back-up alert. If there is no back-up alarm on the vehicle, this shall be done by sounding three short blasts of the air horn.

OTHER SAFETY RULES

1. All personnel, while operating or riding in the cab/passenger compartment of a vehicle, shall wear seat belts, when the vehicle is so equipped.
 - a. An exception to this rule may be when EMS personnel are performing patient care duties in the patient compartment of an ambulance.

However, any personnel not actively involved in patient care shall be seated and wear seat belts whenever possible. Any infraction of this causing injury or property damage will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis for determination of variation from policy.

2. During response on fire, hazardous materials, or rescue (i.e., motor vehicle collisions, elevator rescues, industrial accidents, etc.) incidents, all personnel except those manning EMS transport vehicles, administrative vehicles, and SERV/utility vehicles shall be in full turn-out gear and ready to don SCBA before getting on the apparatus. Turn-out gear shall be defined as bunker pants and boots, turn-out coat, helmet, and nomex hood, with gloves ready for donning.
 - a. The apparatus driver has the option of wearing bunker pants and boots while driving, and will don all other PPE upon arrival on the scene.
 - b. Apparatus that is on the street and is being maneuvered at the time the incident is dispatched shall immediately respond. All personnel shall remain seated with seat belts affixed in the secured position. Upon arrival at the scene, personnel shall don protective equipment.

Alternative option is:

- o Apparatus may pull to a safe stopping point, where personnel may don gear and proceed with response to the incident.

3. No use of tobacco products shall be allowed on or in the apparatus.
4. The use of any emergency warning device is restricted to those vehicles recognized by the Chief of Fire and Rescue as official Fire and Rescue Department vehicles.

DRIVING RECORDS CHECK/STATUS

1. The City of Winchester will utilize the Virginia Division of Motor Vehicle MVR system to obtain employee's driving records that reside in Virginia on an annual basis, for-cause basis or periodic review basis.
2. Employees residing in Maryland, West Virginia or Pennsylvania shall obtain a copy of their driving record at their own expense and provide a copy prior to their annual Evaluation or upon request from their Department Head or Director of Administration.
3. All employees must immediately inform their supervisor of any change in their driving record, including:
 - a. All license suspensions, restrictions, and revocations;
 - b. Any legal charges or convictions received while operating a vehicle.
 - c. Employees who fail to report such offenses listed above may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination

INCLEMENT WEATHER DRIVING

1. Fog, rain, snow, ice, and other inclement conditions necessitate extra caution and special driving skills. The apparatus operator is responsible to ensure that proper visibility is maintained during these conditions, through the checking of windshield wipers for proper operation, cleaning of apparatus windows as needed, and daily inspection of lights.
2. It may become necessary, due to accumulation of snow and/or ice, for chains to be utilized to ensure traction for driving. All drivers of apparatus shall be fully trained in the use and operation of the Drop Chains or On-Spot Chains on apparatus on which they are installed and in the installation of cable chains and tire chains on all apparatus.
3. Vehicles shall not travel in excess of 25 miles per hour while chains are in use and shall adjust their travel speeds accordingly during all inclement weather conditions.
4. Station policy shall be followed wherever applicable in the determination of the utilization and installation of cable chains and tire chains.
5. After each response or outing of a vehicle utilizing chains, personnel shall walk around the vehicle to check for possible tire and body damage. An inspection of the chains shall also be performed at that time to ensure they are properly installed and tightened.

ABANDONED APPARATUS

When apparatus is abandoned for any reason, it is the responsibility of the career battalion officer to see that the apparatus is returned to the station in a timely manner. The battalion officer should secure a driver for the apparatus or the battalion vehicle and retrieve the abandoned apparatus. A station shall not be put out of service to retrieve abandoned apparatus.

VEHICLE COLLISIONS

1. The driver of any station or department-owned vehicle that is involved in a motor vehicle collision shall immediately, by the quickest means of communications, give notice of the accident to the Battalion Officer and the local law enforcement body having jurisdiction over the area of the accident (City or State Police).
2. Unless a life-threatening situation exists, the driver shall not move the vehicle from the point of impact until the investigating law enforcement officer and battalion officer arrive on the scene.
3. The career battalion officer will review the circumstances of the collision and prepare a written narrative of the information he obtained from his investigation.
 - a. The initial report shall be submitted within 24 hours as per instructions on WFRD Form #116- VEHICULAR ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION FORM.

- b. If necessary, a complete and final report shall be forwarded to Fire and Rescue Department Headquarters within 7 days of the collision.
4. A urine drug screen and breath alcohol test are required for the apparatus driver with an accident involving any of the following:
 - a. The driver of the vehicle is charged by Police;
 - b. A fatality has occurred as a result of the accident;
 - c. Any person receives immediate medical attention away from the scene of the accident;
 - d. Any vehicle must be towed; or
 - e. The investigating department officer suspects the driver to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
5. Reports of all motor vehicle collisions involving Fire and Rescue Department vehicles shall be forwarded to the City's Risk Manager for review by the Accident Review Board.

The task of getting emergency vehicles to their destinations is becoming more difficult and hazardous. This is true because traffic and driver distractions continue to grow. This policy is intended as an effort to reduce the risks of emergency response for responders and members of the public.

All members of this department are reminded to do their part to make the workplace safer.

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

Personnel that are found to be at fault by the City's accident review board may have corrective actions imposed on them. Severity of corrective action should be based on ruling levels assigned by the accident review board. Corrective actions for volunteer personnel will be handled by the volunteer station Chief. Corrective action for career personnel will be in accordance with the City's Comprehensive Employee Management System.

CLICK ON THE APPROPRIATE LINK TO ACCESS NEEDED FORMS

[Ambulance Check Off](#)
[Ambulance Driver Training Log](#)
[Pump Operator Skills Evaluation](#)
[Pump Driver Check Off](#)
[Apparatus Driver Training Log](#)