

## **NORTH BERRIEN FIRE RESCUE DEPARTMENT**

**Category: Apparatus & Driving**

**Issued: 2010, 01 Updated:**

**Title: Responding to and From Incidents**

## **OPERATIONAL POLICIES**

**Policy: 09-204**

**Issued By: F/C Spiegel**

### **PURPOSE**

Responding to calls for service- emergency and non-emergency requires the driver and the officer in charge to assure that the vehicle is operating in a safe manner.

### **SAFETY CONCERN**

Anytime North Berrien Fire Rescue Department vehicles are being operated, there is a concern for safe driving. It is everyone's responsibility to assure the vehicle is ready for a safe response and operating in such a manner.

### **GUIDELINE**

Everyone is **REQUIRED** to wear their seatbelt at all times. The North Berrien Fire Rescue Department expects that members will remain seated throughout the response. No one should be putting on their turnout gear while a vehicle is in motion.

### **Prior to Response:**

Before a unit responds to an incident, it is the Driver and the Officer in Charge responsibility to assure that **ALL** members of the crew are seated and wearing their seatbelt. The driver accepts the responsibility of a safe and ready to respond vehicle. All vehicle doors, loose equipment and other items carried on the apparatus are to be properly stowed, secured or closed to insure safe transport to and from the emergency scene.

The driver should know where he/she is responding to and utilize the most efficient route to the incident. They should be familiar with detours, traffic patterns, and other conditions that may affect the response. Responding apparatus out of the fire station (where equipped), the driver shall make sure the diesel exhaust removal system has disengaged from the vehicle when exiting the bays. Cautious driving speed while exiting the apparatus bays and using the vehicle mirrors to assure that the hose is clear of the unit is a recommended practice.

### **Emergency Responses**

The emergency lights and siren shall be activated when leaving the fire station and while en route until arrival on the scene of the emergency. During periods of extremely light traffic, late night responses, the use of the siren in the residential neighborhoods may be exercised with due regard to the public. Keep in mind the constant need for other drivers and pedestrians to hear and see the responding apparatus. If responding emergency in what might be a typical non-emergency response, the crew should announce to Dispatch they are responding "Priority One" and it should be documented accordingly.

### **Non-Emergency Responses**

The emergency lights and siren should not be used when responding to non-emergency calls. Units should follow the normal flow of traffic and obey all applicable traffic laws accordingly. If responding non-emergency in what might be a typical emergency response, the crew should announce to Dispatch they are responding "Priority Two" and it should be documented accordingly.

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The driver should use extreme caution while responding to the emergency. Civilian traffic should pull over to the right and allow the emergency responding apparatus to pass on the left. Caution should be exercised when crossing intersections, passing vehicles, and drivers should always obey traffic laws. Refer to other applicable policies - Maximum Speed, Intersection Crossing, and General Driving etc. for more guidelines related to safely driving the North Berrien Fire Rescue Department vehicles. Using warning devices only requests the right-of-way be given it does not insure/guarantee the right-of-way has been granted.

### **Drivers Responsibilities**

- Driver of emergency vehicles shall be directly responsible for the safe and prudent operation of the vehicle under all conditions.
- Driver's first priority shall be for the safe arrival of the emergency vehicle at the emergency scene.
- Driver shall not move emergency vehicles until all personnel on the vehicle are seated and secured with seat belts and in approved riding positions.
- During emergency response, drivers of emergency vehicle shall bring the vehicle to a complete stop for any of the following:
  - o When directed by a law enforcement officer
  - o Red traffic lights and Stop signs
  - o Negative right-of-way intersection
  - o Blind intersections
  - o When the driver cannot account for all lanes of traffic in an intersection
  - o When other intersection hazards are present
  - o When encountering a stopped school bus with flashing warning lights
- During non-emergency travel, drivers of emergency vehicles shall obey all traffic control signals and signs and all laws and rules set forth by state or local jurisdiction.
- During emergency response or non-emergency travel, drivers of emergency vehicle shall come to a complete stop at all railroad grade crossing.
- The driver shall be aware of his/her rate of closure on other vehicles and pedestrians.
- A safe following distance is to be established and maintained allowing 1 second of following distance for every 10 feet of vehicle length for speeds under 40 mph (add 1 additional second for every 10 mph for speeds over 40 mph).

### **Officer Responsibilities**

The individual riding in the front passenger seat of an emergency vehicle takes on the role of co-driver. While not in physical control of the operation of the vehicle the officer provides an additional set of eyes and ears for the driver and should also be responsible for making certain that the driver operates the vehicle in a safe manner. If the driver is negligent in the operation of the vehicle and causes injury and/or property damage, the officer may also be found to be jointly negligent.

- Officer shall ensure that all personnel on the vehicle are seated and secured with seat belts and in approved riding positions prior to movement of the emergency vehicle.
- Officer shall ensure driver is operating the vehicle in a safe and prudent manner during response in accordance with departmental policy and state statutes.
- Officer shall issue warnings about road and physical hazards to the driver.

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- Officer shall direct the driver to cease any unsafe driving, such as excess speed or unsafe intersection practices.
- Officer shall be responsible to operate the radio and communications equipment during response.
- Officer shall operate the audio and visual warning devices.
- Officer shall check map book, GPS and run cards to assist the driver in determining the safest and most direct route to the emergency scene.
- Officer shall assist the driver in intersection crossing and backing according to specific responsibilities outlined in the intersection and backing policies.

### **Backing into the fire station**

Apparatus should not be backed into the fire station without the use of a spotter. When backing vehicles into the fire station, follow Policy 08-207 for proper backing operations and hand signals that should be used. The diesel exhaust removal system must be placed on the vehicle while it is stopped. All personnel that are working around the vehicle must be accounted for by the driver before proceeding to back up the vehicle.