

NORTH BERRIEN FIRE RESCUE DEPARTMENT

Category: Apparatus & Driving

Issued: 2010, 01 Updated:

Title: Intersection Crossing

OPERATIONAL POLICIES

Policy: 09-206

Issued By: F/C Spiegel

PURPOSE

One of the most dangerous parts of emergency operations is driving to and from the scene. When crossing through intersections, the emergency vehicle is at great risk and must use extreme caution. Accidents in intersections have a high frequency and can be severe when they occur.

SAFETY CONCERNS

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.

GUIDELINE

When apparatus are responding through intersections, they should use discretion due to the restricted visibility and unknown assumptions of other drivers. The North Berrien Fire Rescue Department does not have pre-emption traffic signaling devices to assist in emergency driving operations.

When responding to incidents, as required by law, the siren should be activated. Alternating siren patterns, emergency warning lights including wig/wag headlights, and turn signals will alert motorists of our existence and intentions. Avoid passing on the right or using oncoming traffic lanes unless last resort when responding to emergencies.

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 can not 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.

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 devices 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 before reaching the intersection and cover the brake pedal with the driver's foot, continue to scan in four directions (left, right, front and 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 can not be accounted for, the driver will bring the vehicle to a complete stop and allow traffic to clear before proceeding.
- Have partner communicate all is clear when appropriate; reconfirm all other vehicles are stopped.
- Account for traffic one lane at a time; treating each lane as a separate intersection.

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Uncontrolled Intersections

Any intersection without a control device (stop sign, yield, 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 and 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.