

MOSIER FIRE DISTRICT

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Section: OPERATIONS	Title: Vehicle Operations	Policy Number: 3007
Approved by: _____ Jim Appleton; _____ Darin Molesworth		Date: 9MAY13
Written by: Charles Young, Jim Appleton		Date: 5NOV12
Reviewed by: Ken Jones ; To be reviewed 2015		Date: NOV12
Revised by:		Date:

PURPOSE

The policy exists to ensure the safety of responders and the public when operating departmental vehicles, and personal vehicles when used for departmental work.

PERSONS AFFECTED

All Mosier Fire District responders and support personnel.

REFERENCES

NFPA 1002, 1451, 1500, 1720

OAR 437-002-0182 (29); OAR 437-002-0182 §1910.156 and Appendix A §1910.156

Oregon Traffic Code

Int'l Association of Fire Chiefs, "*Model Policies and Procedures for Emergency Vehicle Safety*"

DEFINITIONS

Apparatus Operator (AO): The driver of the vehicle.

Code 1: Driving without lights and sirens and obeying all the rules of the road.

Code 3: Driving with lights and sirens and obeying all the rules of the road except may exceed posted speed limits by up to ten miles per hour if it is safe to do so.

Defensive Driving: doing all that can be done to prevent a crash from occurring, including but not limited to seeing and being seen, adjusting for conditions, weather, other drivers and pedestrians, and anticipating potentially dangerous situations.

POV: Personally Owned Vehicle (ie the member's own vehicle). A POV is not an emergency vehicle and must never respond as such.

Supervision (direct): A member working as part of a team under the step-by-step instruction of, and in direct communication with, a supervisor.

Supervision (general): A member working as part of a team under broad guidance from, and in communication with, a supervisor.

Supervisor: A member who has been granted title and authority under policy and by the Fire Chief:

- to give instruction and/or orders to certain subordinates in the chain of command, and
- to be held responsible for the work and actions of other members.

Vehicle: Any motor vehicle being used on a response to an emergency call or as part of a training exercise. This definition includes includes both fire department owned vehicles and POVs.

POLICY

It is the policy of the Fire District that no one shall operate any vehicle without exercising due care and caution for the safety of the public, and adherence to the policies and procedures of the Fire District.

Members shall obey all traffic control devices and rules of the road.

- **Exception:** In accordance with the requirements of ORS 820.300-.320 when responding Code 3, AO's may:
 - Park or stand in disregard of a statute, regulation or ordinance prohibiting that parking or standing.
 - Proceed past a red signal or stop sign, having first come to a complete stop and ensured it is safe to proceed.
 - Exceed the designated speed limits by up to ten miles per hour if it is safe to do so
 - Disregard regulations governing direction of movement or turning in specified directions if it is safe to do so, and proceeding with caution.
 - Proceed past the flashing bus safety lights without violating ORS 811.155 if the driver first stops the vehicle and then proceeds only when the driver:
 - Determines that no passengers of the bus remain on the roadway; and
 - Proceeds with caution.

No member of the Fire District shall endanger life or property by the operation of a vehicle. Personnel shall not operate a vehicle at such a rate of speed or under such conditions so as to cause or allow personnel to lose control over the operation and/or direction of the vehicle. While driving, all personnel must exercise defensive driving techniques.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Apparatus Operator is responsible for the safety of the passengers and the vehicle from the moment that they are assigned to the vehicle until they are relieved or the vehicle is returned to service.

The AO is responsible for operating in a safe and prudent manner, recognizing that other drivers could be distracted, inattentive, or simply uncooperative. The AO is not permitted to employ aggressive driving techniques to force another driver to yield the right-of-way.

The AO must never assume that another vehicle will yield the right-of-way; it is always the AO's responsibility to ensure that the other driver has yielded the right-of-way.

The AO is responsible for returning the apparatus and its assigned equipment to full operational service once back in quarters

The AO is responsible for removing inoperable equipment from the apparatus and notifying the designated maintenance officer or chief officer

The AO is responsible for completing defect reports for any missing/ inoperable equipment. If an officer is not present personnel should report urgent problems to an officer via telephone.

Members shall be responsible for either wearing or carrying full wildland and structure turnout at all times when riding in or responding to apparatus.

The Fire Chief shall be responsible for a written risk management plan for fire service vehicles.

Members shall be responsible for informing the Fire Chief of changes in their driving record, especially accidents and moving violations.

Each responder is responsible for supervising him/herself under policy, in the absence of a person higher in the direct chain of command for that responder.

PROCEDURES

Qualifications and Requirements

Probationary apparatus operator:

Shall have completed the Orientation component of the Fire District Driver / AO task book (see Appendix), or received probationary approval from the Fire Chief to answer emergency calls and other alarms in a specific fire service vehicle.

Shall have attended and participated in a minimum of six Department-wide training drills during which apparatus are used.

Shall be permitted to operate a specific fire service vehicle on a fire ground only under direct supervision. The probationary driver may, at the discretion of the Fire Chief, operate a specific apparatus in training and en route to a fire ground not in the presence of a supervisor, but under clear step-by-step instruction and in immediate communication with a supervisor.

Apparatus operator:

Shall be currently certified as a Fire Apparatus Diver/Operator.

Shall be currently certified at minimum as Fire Fighter I.

Shall complete the Fire District Driver / AO task book at least once every two years for each apparatus s/he intends to drive, including successful completion of NFPA Competency Course (see Appendix, below).

Shall be permitted to operate specific fire service vehicles under general supervision.

Start-up and safety check

Before moving the vehicle, the AO should do a walk around the apparatus checking for open compartments, loose items and inadequate tire pressures.

The AO should also check all gauges paying particular attention to warning lights.

A vehicle shall be considered unsafe and placed out of service if deficiencies are detected in one or more of the following areas:

- Brake system
- Steering

- Suspension
- Wheels or tires
- Throttle
- Transmission or driveline
- Cab and/or body mounting
- Door latches
- Seat belts
- Windshield, windshield wipers or defroster

Vehicle Movement

The AO will verify verbally and visually that all passengers including the operator are correctly seated and have properly fastened their seat belts before moving the apparatus.

- **Exception:** During hose-loading operations at less than 5 mph in forward direction with a safety observer in visual and voice contact with the AO, members shall be permitted in the hose bed but shall not be permitted to stand.

The AO shall always use defensive driving techniques.

Reversing

AO's shall avoid using reverse whenever possible.

Before reversing, the AO shall ensure that the intended path is clear of hazards or obstructions.

Whenever possible a spotter will be used. Note that the AO retains the responsibility for the safe operation of the vehicle.

The spotter shall be on the ground, generally to the rear of the vehicle, and shall remain visible to the driver at all times. If the driver loses sight of the spotter at any time, the driver shall immediately stop the vehicle.

If a spotter is not available, the AO will get out and physically scout the area into which the vehicle will be reversing.

Emergency warning lights shall be used at all times when the vehicle is in reverse.

Incident Vehicle Placement

Maintain a safe operational distance from the incident.

Be uphill, upwind and upstream.

Be conscious of overhead obstructions that may interfere with safe operations or become hazardous should conditions change.

Consideration must be given for ingress and egress of personnel, equipment and other responding apparatus.

When possible spot the apparatus in a position that will not interfere with traffic (I.E. – in a driveway).

If necessary to spot apparatus on the freeway, always place the apparatus on the same side of the road as the incident and in a fend-off position with all emergency lighting activated.

Consider safe zones and orient the apparatus so that the safe zone is forward.

Chock your wheels!

Railroad Crossing

The vehicle shall come to a full stop at unguarded railway grade crossings.

Caution shall be exercised at grade crossings where warning lights and/or gates are provided. AO's must reduce speed to a maximum of 20 MPH before entering the crossing.

Warning devices and crossing gates are generally reliable, but they can fail due to the harsh conditions to which they are exposed—these devices are designed to fail in the “safe” mode.

Members who encounter a crossing with suspected failure of gates in closed position, and who also have reason to believe the vehicle can safely navigate around the lowered gates, may request a commanding officer to contact the railroad and ensure that the tracks are indeed safe to cross. Under no circumstances shall apparatus cross tracks through closed gates unless and until the IC confirms that it is safe to cross.

Complete confirmation may require that members dismount the vehicle to visually check the tracks.

Note that vehicles other than trains sometimes use railway lines.

Off-Road Driving

Improved roads are defined as graded, rocked or paved, and passable OR maintained for year-round travel. "Off-road" consists of any condition other than an improved road in passable condition. No member shall operate a motor vehicle off-road on an emergency call or as part of a training exercise, unless

- the member is current in the Department task book and/or sign-offs for that vehicle, and
- the situation allows for and/or calls for off-road driving by policy and instruction.

Members must obtain instruction or authorization from a supervisor prior to initiating off-road driving.

AO's must exercise due care to minimize special hazards in the off-road environment, including but not limited to dry grass in contact with catalytic converter, lack of turning space or clearance, running out of fuel, etc. At all times, but especially when in the wildland environment, think L.C.E.S.! (Lookouts, Communications, Escape routes, Safety zones)

When operating with other vehicles off-road, make contact by radio and clear movements prior to using shared routes. "B82 on Tac Two, going down Indian Hill Road. B82 out".

Go slow. Plan ahead for your transmission and 4WD shifts, especially when down-shifting.

Know your vehicle's requirements, capabilities, and limits, and stay within them.

Emergency Response Driving: General

The officer-in-charge of a company or unit that is en route to an incident will determine the need for a code 3 response unless otherwise directed by the IC.

Responding to emergency incidents does not in any manner reduce the responsibility to operate vehicles safely. While prompt response to emergency incidents is an organizational priority, safety is always a higher priority. The responding units must arrive safely at the location where they are needed before they can deliver the required services. Unsafe operation of a vehicle creates an unacceptable risk to fire department members, to the public, and to the individuals who are in need of assistance.

Code 3 response should be used only when there is a reasonable belief that the benefits to protecting life, property or the environment outweighs the additional risk of responding using emergency driving techniques.

POVs and Tenders do not respond Code 3.

All of the following factors must be true when considering a response using Code 3:

- That the call has been dispatched as an emergency call
- Weather conditions allow for the increased risk
- The vehicle is allowed to respond Code 3
- Driver has approval to drive the vehicle Code 3

The following incident types are candidates for a code 3 response:

- Smoke or fire in a building
- Outside fire with exposures
- Gas leak inside a building
- Hazardous materials release with persons in distress
- Critical medical incident

The following incident types should not require a code 3 response:

- Automatic fire alarm system activation – no human report of smoke or fire
- Residential smoke alarm sounding – no indication of smoke or fire
- Carbon monoxide alarm – no indication of person(s) in distress
- Outside fire without exposures
- Smoke in the area – no indication of source
- Outside gas leak
- Electrical wires arcing
- Hazardous materials release – no indication of person(s) in distress
- Water leak
- Unknown odor – no symptoms or persons in distress
- Relieve units at the scene of an incident that is under control

Emergency Response Driving: Intersections

When passing through an intersection where the vehicle has the right-of-way, by virtue of a green light in the direction of travel and/or a stop signal (stop sign) for cross-traffic, the vehicle shall not exceed the posted speed limit. AOs should not assume that oncoming/opposing traffic has stopped, even when facing a green signal or “clear” route; AOs must visually confirm that oncoming/opposing traffic is stopped while approaching any intersection, and be prepared to stop immediately, if necessary.

The vehicle shall come to a full stop before entering a negative right-of-way intersection (red light, flashing red light, or stop sign), blind intersection, or any intersection where hazards are present and/or the driver cannot account for all oncoming traffic lanes.

Note that an AO may only enter a negative right-of-way intersection if they are responding Code 3.

The vehicle shall not enter the intersection until all approaching traffic has yielded the right-of-way and it is safe to proceed. The AO shall ensure that all approaching vehicles in all lanes have yielded the right-of-way before advancing.

If necessary, due to traffic conditions or visual obstructions, the AO shall cross the intersection in stages, treating each lane as a separate intersection. The driver shall stop the vehicle, as necessary, to ensure that each lane may be crossed safely.

Emergency Response Driving: Opposing Traffic Lanes

Operating vehicles in opposing traffic lanes is extremely hazardous under all conditions and should only be considered under exceptional circumstances (i.e., if there is no alternate route of travel).

The AO shall use lights and sirens whenever using an opposing traffic lane.

If the vehicle must travel in an opposing traffic lane, the breakdown lane, or in a center turn lane to maneuver around slow moving or stopped traffic, the vehicle shall not exceed 20 miles-per-hour, at a maximum. If there is a median separating the emergency vehicle from the slow or stopped traffic, the emergency vehicle shall not exceed a maximum of 30 miles-per- hour.

Emergency Response Driving: School Bus

The AO shall not pass a school bus that has stopped with red lights flashing to load or discharge passengers, unless the bus driver clearly signals that it is safe to pass.

When clearly signaled by the bus driver that it is safe to pass a stopped school bus, the AO shall proceed slowly and with extreme caution past the school bus; all members must be vigilant for children while approaching and passing the bus. The AO must be prepared to stop immediately while approaching, passing, and leaving the area in which the school bus is stopped.

Emergency Response Driving: Weather

AO's must adjust their speed and driving style to suit the weather conditions. This includes appropriate adjustments to increases in stopping distances, lack of traction on grades and reduction in visibility.

During responses in icy or potentially icy weather, the vehicle may be fitted with traction tires or devices (chains).

When responding with chains fitted, the maximum speed for the vehicle will be posted in the cab. In the absence of a posted maximum speed, the maximum speed is 35 MPH.

In vehicles fitted with four wheel drive, 4WD should be engaged in icy conditions.

Emergency Response Driving: Multiple apparatus response

When multiple apparatus are responding in emergency mode, each operator shall make every effort to ensure communication with incident command, and to maintain awareness of other apparatus.

The first officer arriving at the scene and assuming command of the incident shall determine if it is appropriate to downgrade the response of any units that are still enroute. The additional units shall be directed to continue "at reduced speed" or non-emergency when the situation does not urgently require their presence at the scene.

When approaching the scene the AO should coordinate with the IC to determine if the vehicle should stage or proceed into the incident.

APPENDIX

Driver / AO Task Book:

For each vehicle driven by an Apparatus Operator, the AO shall demonstrate knowledge and/or skills according to the following outline.

<u>Section</u>	<u>REQUIREMENT</u>	<u>Instructor</u>	<u>Initials / Date</u>	<u>Student signature</u>
- Orientation	safety features special precautions mission of vehicle capabilities			
- Qualification	legal and fit safety check County Yard driving* Mosier Creek Road course* Digger loop* Mosier Bluffs / Tanawashee course Rowena loop (or equivalent) cone course off road course (or equivalent)**			
- Operation	procedures per Policy 3007			
- On going	cleaning and rig check resetting after use			

* County Yard, Mosier Creek, and Digger loop may be omitted after initial task book

** Off road course only for E84, B80, B81, B82, B84, and B86