

**Standard Operating Procedure #300
Fire Apparatus Driving Operations**

Revised August 2011

#301 Purpose

301.1 When responding to a call there is a great deal of responsibility on the drivers of our fire apparatus. Not only must drivers provide prompt conveyance of the apparatus, equipment, and personnel to provide service to those in need, but as importantly, must accomplish this task in the safest and most prudent manner possible. Fire apparatus drivers have in their care, custody and control most of the major assets posed by this district. Fire apparatus drivers must provide a higher standard of care to the general motoring public, and must make every attempt possible to provide due regard for the safety of others. Drivers must constantly monitor and reduce the amount of risk and exposure to the potential losses during each and every response. Safe arrival at the emergency scene shall be, and must remain, the first priority of all fire apparatus drivers. In order to accomplish this enormous task all fire apparatus drivers shall become familiar with, and constantly abide by the following guidelines.

#302 Driver Qualifications

302.1 Drivers must be at least 18 years of age.

302.2 Drivers must possess a valid Missouri driver's license.

302.3 Drivers must be checked off by their station officer as follows:

302.3.1 A complete knowledge of the apparatus operations and familiarity with equipment operations and locations.

302.3.2 Have a general knowledge of the response area and water supply locations.

302.3.3 Have a minimum of 45 miles of driving experience, with a qualified driver present, and this shall include varied driving situations. This must be done for each apparatus in the station.

302.3.4 Have a driving record completed and signed by a qualified driver. Then a station officer will evaluate and sign the form.

302.4 Drivers will then be evaluated and qualified, by a Battalion Chief. The evaluation form will be placed in their personnel file.

#303 Driver and Non-Driver Responsibility

303.1 Driver Responsibility

303.1.1 Drivers of fire apparatus shall be directly responsible for the safe and prudent operation of the apparatus under all conditions

303.1.2 Drivers first priority shall be for the safe arrival of the fire apparatus at the emergency scene.

303.1.3 Driver shall not move the apparatus until all personnel on the apparatus are seated and secured with seat belts and in approved riding positions.

303.1.4 During an emergency response, drivers of fire apparatus shall bring their apparatus to a complete stop for any of the following:

1. when directed by a law enforcement officer

2. red traffic lights – when traffic is present
3. stop signs – when traffic is present
4. negative right-of-way intersection
5. blind intersections
6. when the driver cannot account for all lanes of traffic in a intersection
7. when other intersection hazards are present
8. when encountering a stopped school bus with flashing warning lights

303.1.4 During non-emergency travel, drivers shall obey all traffic control signals and signs and all laws and rules set forth by state or local jurisdictions.

303.1.5 During emergency or non-emergency response, drivers shall come to a complete stop at all blind railroad grade crossings.

303.1.6 Any time district apparatus is driven, headlights shall be on.

303.2 Non-Driver Responsibility (passenger)

303.2.1 Shall ensure that all personnel on the apparatus are seated with seat belts, and in approved riding positions, then advise driver prior to movement of the apparatus.

303.2.2 Shall operate the audio and visual warning devices.

303.2.3 Shall be responsible for operating radio and communications equipment during the response.

303.2.4 Shall assist the driver in intersection crossings and backing according to the specific guidelines. (see #305 and 306)

#304 Response Speeds

304.1 When responding to a true emergency only, drivers shall operate the apparatus they are driving at speeds that shall not exceed 10 mph over the posted speed or faster than road and traffic conditions permit, and shall not endanger any life or property at any time.

304.2 Examples of conditions requiring slower response speeds include but are not limited to:

1. slippery roads
2. inclement weather
3. poor visibility
4. heavy or congested traffic conditions
5. sharp curves
6. residential areas (children playing)

#305 Intersection Crossing Operations

305.1 General Concerns

a.) Intersections provide a location for high frequency and severity of accidents due to:

1. restricted visibility
2. assumption of other drivers actions
3. confused drivers
4. apparatus density

305.2 Intersection Guidelines

a.) Crossing

1. crossing on green
 - slow down
 - take foot off accelerator
 - cover brake
 - look in all directions
 - be aware of oncoming vehicles turning in front of your apparatus
 - proceed with caution
 - one lane at a time
2. crossing on red
 - come to a complete stop
 - wait for non-driver to communicate it is all clear
 - proceed with caution
 - one lane at a time
3. making right or left turns across stopped vehicles
 - come to complete stop next to vehicle
 - watch vehicle via your non-driver or yourself to ensure it remains stopped and does not hinder your passage
 - wait for non-driver to tell you it is clear if vehicle is on right side of the apparatus
 - be aware of vehicles approaching from behind
 - proceed with caution

b.) Special precautions

1. Slow down prior to reaching the intersection in order to:
 - get a good view of the situation
 - avoid startling unaware motorists
2. Use siren
 - use wail mode, when approaching an intersection change the mode to get other drivers attention
 - use headlights flashing between hi-lo beams
 - be patient, keep signaling
3. Avoid passing on the right unless it is the last resort.
4. Avoid traveling in opposing traffic unless you are certain traffic is clear. If you must proceed, do so with extreme caution and stay to your far right.

#306 Apparatus Backing Operations

306.1 The district recognizes that backing fire apparatus is made hazardous by the fact that the driver cannot see directly behind the apparatus. The district recommends that whenever possible drivers should avoid backing. When it is necessary to back up any district apparatus all drivers shall follow one of the two following measures:

a.) The district's first choice of backing is that before any apparatus is put into reverse and backed that a spotter be put in place near the rear of the apparatus. The spotter should be safely positioned so that the apparatus driver can see him at all times. If at any time the driver loses sight of the spotter, he shall stop immediately until the spotter makes himself visible again.

b.) If conditions exist that make the use of a spotter impossible, all drivers, before attempting to backup any fire apparatus, shall make a circle of safety to see that; no person or persons are directly behind the apparatus or in its intended path of travel; all equipment is securely closed; any physical obstructions are moved out of the way. The driver should also note all potential obstructions in the intended path of travel.

#307 Riding Guidelines

307.1 The district requires all persons riding on fire apparatus to be seated in approved positions and be secured to the vehicle with seat belts whenever the vehicle is in motion.

307.2 The district prohibits the riding on tailboards, sidesteps, running boards, or any other exposed position, at any time.

#308 Response with Personnel Vehicles

308.1 All members responding to the stations or direct to the scene of an emergency must have a valid blue light and siren permit as per Missouri State Statute 307-175. Therefore making your vehicle the same as an emergency vehicle so that all emergency vehicle guidelines should be followed. This shall include speed not to exceed 10 mph over the posted limit or faster than traffic or road conditions permit, so as not to endanger life or property.

308.2 Remember the use of blue lights and sirens does not relieve the operator of that vehicle from complying with all other traffic laws and regulations.

308.3 Remember all personnel will carry minimum automobile insurance as required by state laws.