

# Gettysburg Fire Department

## Emergency Vehicle Operators and Drivers Training Standard Operating Guidelines



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**Emergency Vehicle Operators/Drivers Training**  
**Standard Operating Guidelines and Practices**

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## **Effective Date**

These policies and procedures take effect on September 7, 2006, revision added January 1, 2010. All existing drivers will not be required to recertify on any apparatus that they are currently approved on. But if they wish to move on to the next piece of apparatus they will have to meet the new requirements for that apparatus as set forth in this document.

## **GETTYSBURG FIRE DEPARTMENT EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATORS SELECTION**

Emergency vehicles are the second most important asset of the department has, our members are the most important. The safe operation of these vehicles, particularly during emergency response, depends greatly on the ability and skills of the driver.

With so much, literally riding in the driver's hands, the department must select and utilize only the best drivers. Selecting, training and maintaining good, safe drivers will not be left to chance.

It is the goal of the department to minimize any negative attributes and maximize all of the good attributes of a driver by utilizing the following operations and methods when selecting a driver.

### **INITIALLY APPLYING TO BECOME AN OPERATOR/DRIVER**

The candidate must have successfully completed departmental probation and be an active member in good standing prior to starting any training. The only exception will be if the candidate is starting on the department's Ambulances. The candidate may start training after serving 6 months of their probation and obtaining at least 25 response points. The candidate will apply in writing on the departments drivers training request form. This form will be submitted to the Chief who will pass it on to the Drivers Training Officer. The Drivers Training Officer will then contact the applicant to begin the drivers training process.

Career EMS employees will complete appropriate forms and orientation. Career EMS will also be responsible in assisting in training new employees. When time permits, Career EMS will also be needed to assist in training volunteer members with the necessary driving requirements. Volunteers will need to check with career EMS personnel on availability and times for training. If a consistent pattern occurs where Career EMS will not assist Volunteers in obtaining their driving clearance, Driver Training Officer shall be notified.

Once approval has been received from the Drivers Training Officer to start initial training the candidate shall complete the following before starting to drive:

- Submit copy of valid drivers license
- Submit to a Motor Vehicle Record check - Appendix D (See Section on MVR requirements)
- Complete Annual Medical Statement – Appendix A (Prior to driving any apparatus).
- Complete Department Driver Training Request Form and receive Chief's approval to start training - Appendix B
- Review Driver Training Documentation procedures in Fire House Software program.
- View VFIS Intersection video program.
- Provide proof of having completed CPR and a Basic First Aid Course.
- Provide proof of having completed Pennsylvania State Fire Academy or Volunteer Firemen's Insurance Service and/or Equivalent Emergency Vehicle Operations Course.
- Provide proof of having completed Pennsylvania State Fire Academy or equivalent Essential of Firefighting Modules A & B or be Firefighter I certified
- Review 2 emergency Vehicle accidents and write a brief summary on how they could have been avoided from NIOSH's web site - [www.cdc.gov/niosh/fire/](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/fire/). Summary will be submitted to the Drivers Training Officer.

Once the above items have been completed the candidate may start the physical drivers training.

### **DRIVERS TRAINING LOG**

All drivers training will be logged and documented in the Fire House Software program and will become part of the candidates Personnel and Training file.

### **QUALIFIED DRIVERS TRAINERS**

There will be a list posted of the personnel that are qualified to take candidates out driving on the vehicle they are training on. Only approved Drivers Trainers will be allowed to take candidates out. The Driver Trainers will be selected by the Driver Training Officer and Chief. The list is also in Appendix E of this document.

### **DRIVER CERTIFICATION OFFICERS**

Drivers may complete Drivers Certification Testing at the direction of the Drivers Training Officer. The Drivers Training Officer and Chief will have the final say in the approval. These Officers are listed on the chart in appendix E.

## **VEHICLE INFORMATION PACKETS**

Each vehicle will have an information packet that describes the response duties/assignments, operation, features and equipment that is on the vehicle. Some of this information will be used on the vehicle familiarization written test.

## **VEHICLE FAMILIARIZATION TEST**

This will be a written test that will test the candidate's skill and knowledge of the apparatus, its equipment, operation and response area. This will include hydraulic problems on Engines and Ladder Trucks.

## **DRIVER CERTIFICATION TRAINERS**

Senior personnel who are currently driving apparatus may be approved by the Chief and Drivers Training Officer to complete driving tests and recommendations to the Drivers Training Officer that the candidate is qualified enough to operate the vehicle.

## **VEHICLE DRIVING TRAINING**

Drivers will be required to operate the vehicle in all of the following situations:

- in town (streets and alleys)
- Secondary road
- Highway
- Daytime
- Nighttime
- backing ( a high priority will be placed on the backing of apparatus - do to the fact that this is the number 1 insurance claim )

## **RESPONSE AREA KNOWLEDGE**

Drivers will be required to demonstrate their knowledge of the department's response area.

## **QUALIFYING TO BECOME A OPERATOR/DRIVER**

Once the requirements for the vehicle have been completed the drivers training officer will make a request in writing to the Fire Chief recommending the acceptance as an Operator/Driver.

## **MAINTIANING OPERATOR/DRIVER CERTIFICATION**

You must document that you Drove/Operated the Apparatus you are qualified on at least once in a 6 month period or you will need to recertify with the Drivers Training Officer.

## **SUSPENSION OF DRIVING PRIVILEGES**

If in the opinion of the Drivers Training Officer and/or the Fire Chief that it is in the best interest of the safety of the departments members driving privileges maybe revoked. Revocation will be based on evidence that the driver operator has operated a department owned vehicle in a reckless, negligent manner resulting in the potential of damages to life and property.

Disciplinary action for driving privileges will be in the form of Verbal, Written and suspension to permanent revocation if the privilege.

## **MOTOR VEHICLE REPORTS (MVR'S)**

Knowing our drivers on and off duty driving habits and records is an important tool in both selecting and maintaining the safest drivers for our emergency vehicles. Routine administrative reviews of all of the departments drivers MVR's will be done to keep track of the specific driving habits of individual drivers.

The department will review these records when a person makes application to start in the departments Emergency Vehicle Operators/Drivers Training program. Additionally all MVR's should be reviewed minimally every three years and a copy retained in each members personnel file.

Annually each driver will produce a copy of his or her valid driver's license.

The MVR's will be evaluated on the following and will be part of the evaluation process and should be used so everyone is evaluated equally.

Driver Training candidates must submit to a MVR as part of the initial application process when applying to start the departments drivers training program. If not having already done so within the past year for department purposes.

**GETTYSBURG FIRE DEPARTMENT  
EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATORS SELECTION  
DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES TRANSCRIPT EVALUATION  
REQUIREMENTS**

**CLASS A VIOLATION**

An individual who has a Class A violation within the past three (3) years normally receives a license suspension from the Department of Motor Vehicles, which issued the license. The department will invoke a suspension of driving privileges for anyone convicted of a Class A violation for a period of eighteen (18) months. Additionally, any of these individuals would also be required to attend an approved driver-improvement program, or equivalent training, and be re-certified to operate emergency vehicles.

**CLASS B VIOLATION**

Any individual who has a combination of two (2) Class B moving violation convictions and/or chargeable accidents in a three (3) year period will be issued a warning letter from the chief or Drivers training Officer of the department.

Any individual who has a combination of three (3) moving violation convictions and/or chargeable accidents in a three (3) year period will be issued a suspension of driving department vehicles for a period of ninety (90) days by the chief or Drivers Training Officer of the department.

Any individual who has more than three (3) moving violation convictions or three (3) chargeable accidents or any combination of more than three (3) of the formerly stated violations in a three (3) year period will be issued a suspension of driving department vehicles for a period of one (1) year. In addition, the same individual would be required to complete an approved driver improvement program and be re-certified to operate emergency vehicles.

**NOTE:** Unusual circumstances with individual cases would be evaluated on a one-to-one basis. If a member who is an apparatus operator receives any infraction of Violation Type A or B. If a violation of type A or B has occurred, the member will submit a copy of documentation stating such. If any license has been suspended, the member will submit that documentation and when his license has been re-issued by the state. A copy of such documentation will be submitted to the driver trainings officer and personnel record.

**VIOLATIONS**

Designation of Type A and Type B violations is based on a survey of state point systems. Violations receiving higher numbers of points are classed as Type A.



### **TYPE A VIOLATIONS**

1. Driving while intoxicated.
2. Driving under the influence of drugs.
3. Negligent homicide arising out of the use of a motor vehicle (gross negligence).
4. Operating during a period of suspension or revocation.
5. Using a motor vehicle for the commission of a felony.
6. Aggravated assault with a motor vehicle.
7. Operating a motor vehicle without owner's authority.
8. Permitting an unlicensed person to drive.
9. Reckless driving.
10. Hit and run driving.

### **TYPE B VIOLATIONS**

All moving violations not listed as Type A violations. (Exceeding posted speed limit is a Type B violation).

**NOTE:** Unusual circumstances with individual cases would be evaluated on a one-to-one basis.

### **FAILURE TO REPORT VIOLATIONS OR LOSS OF LICENSE**

Failure to report violations or lose of operators' license may result in an automatic 1-year suspension from operating department vehicles. Violations or licensure issues will be reported to the Drivers Training Officer.

**GETTYSBURG FIRE DEPARTMENT  
EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATOR/DRIVER REQUIREMENTS  
OPERATING GUIDELINES**

**OPERATOR/DRIVER REQUIREMENTS**

Each vehicle will have its own individual requirements to become an operator/driver. The candidate must meet the following criteria to be cleared to operate or drive the apparatus. Driving time must be documented in the training section of Fire House Software. Once the required time has been completed, drivers training form(s) filled out and all related skills demonstrations and testing completed this information will be submitted to the Drivers Training Officer along with a recommendation note from one of the trainers. The Driver Training Officer will then review all of the information and take the candidate out for a final check off ride, exercise and administer the vehicle written test. The Drivers Training Officer may assign this to one of the Certification Officers.

**Service 1**

- 18 years of Age
- Current Drivers License
- EVOG
- Complete Vehicle Familiarization Test
- Complete Equipment Operation Checklist
- Complete 1 hours of driving or display competency to the Drivers Training officer or his designee.

**Ambulances**

- 18 years of Age (Includes West Shore Staff)
- Current Drivers License
- EVOG
- Complete vehicle familiarization Test
- Complete Equipment Operation Checklist and Skills
- Demonstration Exercise
- Complete 4 hours of driving or display competency to the Driver Training Officer or Designee.
- CPR
- Minimum of Emergency Responder

**Traffic 1**

- 18 years of Age
- Current Drivers License
- EVOG
- Complete vehicle familiarization Test
- Complete Equipment Operation Checklist and Skills

- Demonstration Exercise
- Complete 4 hours of driving or display competency to the Driver Training Officer or Designee.
- CPR

**Drivers training will be conducted by the Fire Police Captain or his designee**

### **Engine 1-1**

- 18 years of Age
- Current Valid Driver's License
- EVOG
- PSFA or Equivalent Pumps I
- PSFA or Equivalent Pumps II
- Complete vehicle familiarization Test
- Complete Equipment Operation Checklist and Skills Demonstration Exercise
- Complete Minimum 8 hours of driving or display competency to the Drivers training Officer.
- CPR
- Recommend minimum of Emergency Responder
- Recommend that the applicant has completed an Engine Company Operations class.

### **Engine 1-2**

- 18 years of Age
- Current Valid Driver's License
- EVOG
- PSFA or Equivalent Pumps I
- PSFA or Equivalent Pumps II
- Complete vehicle familiarization Test
- Complete Equipment Operation Checklist and Skills Demonstration Exercise
- Complete Minimum 8 hours of driving or display competency to the Drivers Training Officer or Designee
- CPR
- Recommend minimum of Emergency Responder
- Recommend that the applicant has completed an Engine Company Operations class.

### **Rescue 1**

- 21 Years of Age
- Current Drivers License
- EVOG

- PSFA or Equivalent Pumps I
- PSFA or Equivalent Pumps II
- PA DOH or Equivalent, Vehicle Rescue Awareness and/or Operations
- Complete vehicle familiarization Test
- Complete Equipment Operation Checklist and Skills Demonstration Exercise
- Complete Minimum 8 hours of driving or display competency to the Drivers Training Officer or his designee.
- PA DOH or equivalent, Vehicle Rescue Awareness and or Operations.
- CPR
- Required minimum of Emergency Responder
- Recommend Emergency Responder
- Recommend Engine Company Operations class

### **Truck 1**

- 21 Years of Age
- Current Drivers License
- EVOC
- PSFA or Equivalent Pumps I
- PSFA or Equivalent Pumps II
- PSFA or Equivalent Aerial Apparatus Practices
- PSFA or Equivalent Truck Company Operations I
- PSFA or Equivalent Truck Company Operations II
- Complete vehicle familiarization Test
- Complete Equipment Operation Checklist and Skills Demonstration Exercise
- Complete Minimum 12 hours of driving and operation or display competency to the Driver Training Officer or his designee
- CPR
- Required minimum of Emergency Responder

\*\*Current apparatus operator, will be grandfathered under the standards in which they completed their drivers training, and were approved by past Driver Training Officer or the Fire Board. It will be recommended that those, grandfathered should take the above mentioned training to improve their knowledge, skills and ability.

## **GETTYSBURG FIRE DEPARTMENT EMERGENCY VEHICLE RESPONSE GUIDELINES**

Department officers, as well as drivers, need to recognize the fact that the emergency vehicle response is the basis for the success or failure of all other emergency functions. These expensive vehicles carry all of the portable emergency equipment in addition to all of the personnel of the organization. Without the safe conveyance of these vehicles to the emergency scene, the emergency service organization cannot achieve its' mission of saving lives and protecting property. The department has developed sound emergency vehicle response guidelines to help provide sound direction to it's' officers and drivers. The following guidelines were developed for your safety and more importantly the safety of your crew.

### **PURPOSE**

Responding to any emergency call, the department places a great deal of responsibility on the drivers of our emergency vehicles. Not only must emergency vehicles drivers provide prompt conveyance of the apparatus, equipment, and personnel to provide service to those in need of our services, but as importantly, must accomplish this task in the safest and most prudent manner possible.

Emergency vehicle drivers have in their care, custody and control most of the major assets possessed by this organization (the personnel, vehicle, and portable equipment).

Emergency vehicle drivers also have a higher standard of care to provide 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 potential losses during each and every response. Safe arrival at the emergency scene shall be, and must always remain, the first priority of all emergency vehicle drivers.

In order to accomplish this enormous task all emergency vehicles drivers shall become familiar with, and constantly abide by the following policies and procedures.

### **LAW OF DUE REGARD**

State vehicle codes provide that privileges granted to emergency vehicles do not relieve the driver from the duty to drive with *DUE REGARD* for the safety of all persons using the highway, nor protect them from the consequences of an arbitrary exercise of this privilege.

Even when exempt from the specified traffic rules, a driver can be held criminally and/or civilly liable if involved in an accident where property damage, injuries, or a fatality occur. Specifically, the Law of Due Regard states:

*Sufficient notice of the emergency vehicle's approach must be given to allow other motorists and pedestrians to yield the right of way. Failure to give notice until a collision is inevitable generally does not satisfy the principle of "DUE REGARD".*

All driver's must be aware of their responsibilities under the *LAW OF DUE REGARD*.

### **TRUE EMERGENCY**

A situation in which there is a high probability of death or serious injury to an individual or significant property loss, and action by an Emergency Vehicle driver may reduce the seriousness of the situation.

### **INTOXICATING SUBSTANCES**

Any substance that alters the mental and/or physical capabilities of a driver. These will include, but will not be limited to alcohol (including beer) and drugs (both prescription and non-prescription).

Any driver/firefighter consuming an intoxication substance, this will include beer, at the fire company, at home, at a party, a bar, etc. will not be permitted to drive ANY apparatus, this will include Car 1 and Service 1.

### **NOTE:**

It will be up to the judgment of the line officer/s on the call to determine if the driver was consuming an intoxicating substance. If the Officer in-charge has cause or belief that the operator is under the influence then he may contact the Police Department for Evaluation.

### **DRIVER SENIORITY**

The Gettysburg Fire Department recognizes that experienced firefighters that have "retired" from firefighting and have restricted their duties to driving are a valuable resource to this department.

Therefore, every effort will be made to retain the quality driver's currently serving the Gettysburg Fire Department. New drivers are encouraged to continue their firefighting duties and gain driving experience during training programs and on calls when no other drivers are available. Drivers with seniority may drive when more than one driver is available. However, it should be noted that response should not be delayed to change drivers.

New drivers must come to the understanding that the best training in the world will not make up for years of experience.

## **EMERGENCY VEHICLE RESPONSE PROCEDURES**

### **1. CIRCLE OF SAFETY**

Prior to entering the cab and starting the vehicle, the emergency vehicle driver shall make a circle of safety around the vehicle to see that all equipment is secured, that all compartment doors are securely closed and any physical obstructions moved out of the way. During the circle of safety the emergency vehicle driver shall encircle the vehicles and visually inspect all 4 sides and the top of the vehicle before entering the cab. He/she should also verify right side and rear clearance with the person riding in the officer position and that all personnel are seated and buckled in. This shall be conducted prior to moving the vehicle regardless of whether or not the vehicle is about to leave on an emergency or non-emergency.

### **2. WARNING DEVICES AND TRUE EMERGENCIES**

When responding to a true emergency, all audible and visual warning devices will be operated at all times regardless of time of day and/or traffic conditions. All emergency vehicle drivers must understand that warning devices are not always effective in making other vehicle operators aware of your presence. Warning devices only request the right-of-way, they do not insure the right-of-way.

### **3. VEHICLE CONTROL AND RIGHT-OF-WAY**

All drivers shall attempt to maintain control of the vehicle that they are operating in such a manner as to provide the maximum level of safety for both their passengers and the general public. Emergency vehicle drivers should be aware that the civilian vehicle operators might not react in the manner in which is expected or felt to be appropriate. An attempt should be made to have options available when passing or overtaking vehicles.

If another vehicle operator fails to yield the right of way to an emergency vehicle, the emergency vehicle driver cannot 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.

The emergency vehicle driver shall be aware of his/her rate of closure on other vehicles and pedestrians at all time to make sure that a safe following distance is established and maintained. All drivers shall follow the rule for safe following distance and allow 1 second of following distance for every 10 feet of vehicle length for speeds under 40 mph and add 1 additional second for each 10 mph for speeds over 40 mph.

#### 4. RESPONSE SPEEDS

*Removed, see Maximum response speeds/ recommendation on pg. 16*

#### 5. RAILROAD INTERSECTIONS

At any time an emergency vehicle driver approaches an unguarded rail crossing he/she shall bring the apparatus or vehicle he/she is operating to a complete stop before entering the grade crossing. In addition the emergency vehicle driver shall perform the following prior to proceeding:

- turn off all sirens and air horns
- operator the motor at idle speed
- turn off any other sound producing equipment or accessories
- open the windows and listen for a train's horn

#### 6. NON-EMERGENCY RESPONSE

When responding to a call in a non-emergency response mode or normal flow of traffic (non-code 3 or when not responding to a true emergency) the vehicle will be operated without any audible or visual warning devices and in compliance with all state motor vehicle laws that apply to civilian traffic. At no time should any emergency vehicle be operated during response with only visual warning devices.

#### 7. ORDINARY TRAVEL PROCEDURES

All drivers shall obey all traffic laws and traffic control devices when driving any fire department vehicle under ordinary travel conditions. Any driver observed breaking any traffic laws or driving any vehicle in an aggressive manner will be subject to disciplinary action including, suspension of driving privileges.

#### 8. RIDING POLICY

The department requires all persons riding on fire apparatus to be seated in approved riding positions and be secured to the vehicle by seat belts whenever the vehicle is in motion. The emergency vehicle driver and/or the person riding in the officer position shall verify that all personnel are properly seated and in seat belts before the vehicle is moved. Standard communication signals should be formulated and utilized by all personnel.

***The department prohibits the riding on tail steps, sidesteps, running boards, or any other exposed position.*** Personnel who perform emergency medical care while the vehicle is in motion should be secured to the vehicle by a seat belt or safety harness designed for occupant restraint.

#### 9. BACKING

The department recognizes that backing emergency vehicles is made hazardous by the fact that the driver cannot see much of where he/she intends to go. The department recommends that whenever possible drivers should avoid backing, ***as the safest way to back up a vehicle is not to back up at all.***



When it is necessary to back-up any departmental vehicle all drivers shall follow the following practices.

### **VEHICLE BACKING PRACTICES**

Backing an emergency vehicle is a very hazardous undertaking. There are many accidents and injuries, which result from improper backing practices.

Emergency vehicles of all types are especially hazardous because of the many blind spots interfering with the driver's ability to see hazards. ***A spotter will be used when at all possible.***

To reduce the risk of accident and injury, the department has developed the following practices.

### **GENERAL RULES FOR BACKING APPARATUS.**

- 1) If you can avoid backing, don't do it!
- 2) Never be in a hurry when backing.
- 3) If there is no spotter available:
  - i) Reconsider backing up. Is it really necessary?
  - ii) Make a reasonable attempt to get someone to act as a spotter
  - iii) If a spotter cannot be obtained, get out the unit and walk around the unit completing a "circle of safety" and survey the backing area.  
Before proceeding to back unit, being sure to also check overhead clearance
  - iv) Give a final warning of two horn blasts just prior to backing

### **B) Driver Responsibilities**

- 1) Bring the unit to a complete stop
- 2) Roll window down completely
- 3) Make visual and verbal contact with the spotter. "If you cannot see or hear the spotter, do not backup!"
- 4) Driver and spotter must establish and continue eye contact in the left rear view mirror at all times
- 5) Drivers must have a thorough knowledge of spotter hand signals
- 6) The spotter hand signals to the driver indicating it is safe to begin backing
- 7) The driver gives a two blast warning on the horn just prior to backing

### **C) Spotter Responsibilities:**

- 1) Conduct a "circle of safety" and survey the backing area and all other sides of the vehicle checking for hazards. Before proceeding to back unit, being sure to also check overhead clearance
- 2) Communicate any observed hazards to the driver
- 3) Place yourself eight to ten feet to the left rear of the unit
- 4) Establish visual and verbal contact with the driver and continue eye to eye contact in the left rear view mirror at all times

- 5) Be familiar with hand signals before allowing backing maneuvers to begin
- 6) Stop the driver if any hazards are observed or if you are uncertain of the direction that the driver is maneuvering

### **MAXIMUM RESPONSE SPEED**

Excessive speed is a critical factor in many serious accidents and in the ability to keep the emergency vehicle under control.

Although many states permit emergency vehicles to exceed the posted speed limit, the department has found that excessive speed does not improve response times significantly enough to overcome the risk involved. With that in mind the departments Standard Operating Guidelines include the following recommendations, which are designed to supplement the state and local requirements for the operation of an emergency vehicle during emergency response.

### **MAXIMUM RESPONSE SPEED RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommended maximum response speed is the posted speed limit, but not to exceed 10 mph over the posted speed limit, even if permitted by the state vehicle code.

Maximum response speed will be reduced whenever road, traffic or weather conditions do not permit the safe operation of your emergency vehicle regardless of the posted speed limit.

During periods of inclement weather (wet, snow or icy conditions), the maximum response speed will (shall) not exceed the posted speed limit.

The maximum speed when proceeding through any uncontrolled intersection or green light should be no greater than the posted speed limit.

### **DRIVER AND OFFICER RESPONSIBILITY**

The safe operation of an emergency vehicle depends heavily on the competency of the driver and the added resources and direction of the front seat officer. All drivers shall attempt to maintain control of the vehicle that they are operating in such a manner as to provide the maximum level of safety for both their passengers and the general public. Emergency vehicle drivers should be aware that the civilian vehicle operators may not react in the manner in which is expected or felt to be appropriate.

An attempt should be made to have options available when passing or overtaking vehicles. If another vehicle operator fails to yield the right of way to an emergency vehicle, the emergency vehicle driver cannot 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.

### **DRIVER RESPONSIBILITY**

A) Driver of emergency vehicles shall be directly responsible for the safe and prudent operation of the vehicle under all conditions

B) Driver's first priority shall be for the safe arrival of the emergency vehicle at the emergency scene

C) ***Driver shall not move emergency vehicles until all personnel on the vehicle are seated and secured with seat belts and in approved riding positions***

D) During emergency response, drivers of emergency vehicle shall bring the vehicle to a complete stop for any of the following:

- 1) When directed by a law enforcement officer
  - 2) Red traffic lights
  - 3) Stop signs
  - 4) Negative right-of-way intersection
  - 5) Blind intersections
  - 6) When the driver cannot account for all lanes of traffic in an intersection
  - 7) When other intersection hazards are present
  - 8) When encountering a stopped school bus with flashing warning lights
- E) 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
- F) During emergency response or non-emergency travel, drivers of emergency vehicle shall come to a complete stop at all railroad grade crossings
- G) The driver shall be aware of his/her rate of closure on other vehicles and Pedestrians
- H) 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)

\*\*\* Whether actually an elected or appointed officer or not, the individual riding in the front passenger seat of an emergency vehicle takes on the role of co-driver.

## **INTERSECTION PRACTICES**

Intersections are the locations where the 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. With this in mind, the department has established the following intersection operating guidelines.

## **INTERSECTION CROSSING GUIDELINES**

### **GENERAL CONCERNS**

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. Vehicle Density

### **INTERSECTION PROCEDURES**

#### **CROSSING ON GREEN**

- a. Slow down
- b. Take foot off accelerator (cover brake)
- c. Look in all three directions, be aware of oncoming vehicles turning in front of your vehicle.
- d. Proceed with caution - one lane at a time

#### **CROSSING ON RED**

- a. Come to a stop
- b. Establish eye contact with drivers of other vehicles.
- c. Wait for partner to communicate it is all clear.
- d. Wait two seconds
- e. Proceed with caution.

#### **MAKING RIGHT OR LEFT TURNS ACROSS STOPPED VEHICLES**

- a. Come to a stop next to the vehicle.
- b. Establish eye contact with side vehicle's driver via your partner or yourself.
- c. Wait for your partner to tell you it is clear.
- d. Be aware of vehicles approaching you from behind.
- e. Proceed with caution.

### **SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS**

#### **SLOW DOWN PRIOR TO INTERSECTION IN ORDER TO:**

- a. Get a good view of the situation.
- b. Avoid startling unaware motorists.

#### **USE SIREN**

- a. Use yelp siren mode
- b. Use headlights hi-lo beam
- c. Be Patient, keep signaling

#### **PASSING**

- a. Avoid passing on right unless it is the last resort.
- b. Avoid traveling in opposing traffic lane unless you are certain traffic is clear.
- c. If you must proceed, do so with extreme caution and stay to your far right.

### **CONTROLLED INTERSECTIONS**

(Those intersections where the police department or fire police are directing/controlling traffic.)

- a. Slow down prior to intersection

- b. Take foot off accelerator (cover brake)
- c. CONFIRM that the intersection is controlled.  
Proceed with caution.

## **SPECIAL RESPONSE INSTRUCTIONS**

### **GETTYSBURG SQUARE**

Unless the response is in the Unit block of Carlisle St, Baltimore St. or on Chambersburg St. and out Chambersburg Rd. the use of the Square as a response route should be avoided do to congestion.

### **ACTIVATION OF EMERGENCY (RED WARNING) LIGHTS**

***Driver will NOT activate Emergency (red warning) lights until his/her officer gives the OK to respond.***

***When Red (warning) Lights come on – No Firefighters will approach or attempt to board apparatus.***

### **OFFICER VS DRIVER**

Any officer that gets behind the wheel of an emergency apparatus should be relieved of his/her duties as an officer depending on the situation. They may relinquish command responsibilities to the person in the Front Seat Position or next arriving officer as the situation dictates.

### **WEATHER:**

Weather plays a major factor in all fire ground operations, it is imperative that all drivers be cognizant to the weather conditions and their effects upon the roadway and vehicle control. It is the sole responsibility of the driver/operator to skillfully and safely get to the scene and return to the station. In doing so, the driver, must remain in control of the apparatus under all road conditions; rain, snow, sleet etc. The driver shall operate the vehicle under poor road conditions, in a ***heightened level of awareness and at slower more controlled speed.***

Effects of road conditions on our fleet can vary. The following are some to consider.

Rain - Slick road conditions from oil in asphalt, and other vehicles  
Excessive water on roadways can lead to hydro planning.  
Water on windshield can reduce visibility, fog on windshield.

Sleet- Partially wet or frozen road conditions, may lead to issues in stopping.  
The vehicle may slide when attempting to stop or make turns  
Freeze windshield, reduce visibility  
Heightened awareness when driving.

Snow- Inability to stop or turn.

Reduce visibility in snow storm.

May lead to uncertain road conditions, conditions can turn in the blink of an eye.

Glare from snow pack can produce a blinding effect on operators eyes.

Use of on spots at discretion of operator.

Black Ice- There is no way for an operator to know of black ice. Prevention is the best method, if conditions warrant that ice may be present on the roadway use caution, and reduce speed.

Weather conditions also play a factor in our fire ground tactics and strategy. One of the largest concerns for drivers is the vehicle operation in the fire ground.

**Engine/Rescue-** Follow manufactures recommendation for hot/cold weather operations. Circulate water through pump and motor to reduce heat in the summer and lessen the chance of frozen piping in the winter. When in doubt engage the pump and circulate water. Moving water does not freeze as quickly as standing water. Continually watch motor gauges and hose lines for excessive heat or frozen parts.

**Ladder Truck-** Follow manufactures recommendation for hot/ cold weather operations. The ladder will also be affected by strong wind conditions, be cognizant of high winds. Cold weather, water spray may land on the ladder causing icing to occur, shrugging should be used to eliminate ice buildup. When operating in winter weather, the operator should remove all snow and ice build up from ground prior to placing jacks down, eliminating any potential of the ladder truck sliding. The operator should continuously inspect the apparatus for problems under severe weather conditions.

\*\*This section is still being completed. All driver/operators should reflect upon their training and experience when operating under various weather conditions.

## **ACCIDENTS:**

### **PREVENTION:**

Prevention of all accidents is the main focus of this chapter.

### **VEHICLE ROLLOVER PREVENTION**

Emergency vehicle rollovers are an all too frequent cause of vehicle damage. They are also a cause of serious injury and fatalities. Very often however, these incidents are of a highly preventable nature. All emergency vehicles are subject to rollovers but, tankers, pumper tankers, ladders and ambulances are particularly vulnerable because of their high center of gravity.

The simplest method of prevention, is for the emergency vehicle driver to just slow down. Excessive speed greatly reduces the drivers ability to control the vehicle on curves or when making evasive steering moves. Driving at a reduced speed will increase the drivers' ability to keep the vehicle under control under a wider range of circumstances. Excessive speed increases the likelihood that the weight will shift and cause the vehicle to be uncontrollable.

In addition to excessive speed and shifting weight, another leading cause of vehicle rollover is over steering after dropping off the road surface onto the shoulder of the road.

Over steering will cause the vehicle to rollover by causing the weight to severely shift from one side to the other and/or by the vehicle tires gripping the road at an excessive angle once brought back off of the shoulder.

The potential for this type of incident increases as the difference in height between the road surface and the shoulder increases. The greater the difference in height the greater the angle of steering must be applied to overcome the resistance of the road surface against the tires of the vehicle. Once the tires are at a great enough angles to overcome the resistance and return to the driving surface they will either grip or shoot the vehicle in the opposite direction or will buckle and roll. Either way, the results are the same.....a wrecked vehicle.

The following safe driving points will increase the emergency vehicle driver's ability to maintain control of their vehicle should he/she run off of the road surface onto the shoulder:

### **THINGS TO DO:**

- Take your foot off of the accelerator and allow the vehicle to slow down gradually.
- Do not apply full braking! Use soft application of the brakes, natural deceleration and downshifting to bring the vehicle to a safe speed or complete stop.

- Under soft shoulder conditions feather the accelerator to help maintain control of the vehicle while slowing.  
Once the vehicle has been stopped or been brought down to a safe speed, gently steer the vehicle back onto the road surface using a lower gear and/or feathered acceleration to assist in overcoming the surface drop off or soft shoulder

**THINGS NOT TO DO:**

- Do not attempt to steer back onto the road surface at speed or under acceleration.
- Do not make any sudden or drastic steering movements.
- Do not apply full braking.
- Do not attempt to accelerate over the surface drop off.



**GETTYSBURG FIRE DEPARTMENT  
ACCIDENT POLICY and ACCIDENT REVIEW POLICY/PROCEDURES**

The following is the policy and procedures that are to be followed when a department vehicle is involved in an accident.

**ACCIDENT POLICY/PROCEDURE**

**INITIAL ACTION**

1. Driver must stop when involved in accident that involves another vehicle or the possibility of personal injury and or (Update for property damage)
2. Officer will ensure the safety of the Personnel and check for any injuries, Advise County that the vehicle is Out of Service. If in an Emergency Response mode advise county that the unit is Out of Service and have it replaced on the response. Request whatever resources are needed, including EMS for any injured person, if Personnel on the apparatus are uninjured and can perform EMT level skills, it is recommended to do so.
3. Make notification to the Police Department through 911 communications center by radio or phone for any accident involving department owned vehicle.
4. Officer will request the Chief and Duty Officer to be notified, either by phone or through 911 communications.
5. Chief or Duty Officer will ensure that all reports are completed and filed. (Workers Comp, Injury, Accident etc.)

**INVESTIGATION**

The Chief or Duty Officer will respond to the scene to work with the Police Department to begin the primary investigation. This may include the following:

1. Statements from the Driver, Officer, Firefighter(s), Witnesses and other vehicle operators.
2. Photographs of the apparatus, other involved vehicles, properties, and the overall scene.
3. Obtain Copies of reports from police department.

Upon returning to the station the Driver and Officer will complete an accident report.

The Chief or Duty Officer shall notify the Departments Insurance Carrier.

## **ACCIDENT SCENE**

The Chief or the Duty Officer will ensure the following:

1. Work with Police and Fire Police to ensure Scene is kept safe and secure until on scene investigation is completed.
2. Arrange for the removal of the vehicle/equipment from the scene. (If vehicle is drivable it may be driven from the scene by another driver after the police department has released it.)
3. If Vehicle Operation Status is questionable. A Mechanic will be notified to check the vehicle. Vehicle will remain out of service until mechanic certifies that the vehicle is safe for operation.
4. If firefighter injuries or death(s) occurs, the President, Vice President, Public Information Officer, Chaplin or designee shall be notified to respond to the hospital and to coordinate family and departmental support.
5. Ensure that Incident Stress Debriefing is offered for personnel involved.
6. Public Information Officer to act as Media Spokes person for the Incident.
7. Chief or Duty Officer ensures Drivers Training Officer and Safety Officer are notified. All current driving certifications, training and vehicle maintenance will be gathered, reviewed and held in confidence until Investigation is completed. Any documents requested by Police should be requested either through Subpoena, or through Department Lawyer. As to protect the department and its members from legalities. It should also be stressed that no member discussion, on scene, or therefore at any time, the occurrence of the incident, nor form an opinion of fault or guilt.

## **INITIAL SUSPENSION OF DRIVING PRIVILEGES**

Any driver involved in an accident will be suspended from driving until a decision is rendered by the Accident Review Board and the Chief. Suspension and other discipline will be based on the nature and severity of the Accident. In severe cases the driver maybe permantly suspended from driving the apparatus.

## **SUSPENSION OF DRIVING PRIVILEGES**

Any driver involved in an avoidable/ preventable accident may be suspended from driving based on the findings of the Accident Review Board. Suspension and other discipline will be based on the nature and severity of the Accident. In severe cases the driver maybe permanently suspended from driving the apparatus.

## **BOARD OF REVIEW**

The Drivers Training Officer and Safety Officer will meet within 24 hours of the accident to review the incident. If in the opinion of these two that an accident review board needs to be established they will do so based on the severity of the accident including; cost, injury, damage, intent, etc.. If the above two officers are not available the Chief will appoint replacements as needed.

The board will be chaired by the Safety Officer. The board will be made up of the Drivers Training Officer, a Trustee which will be selected by the Safety Officer by means of a lottery, 2 Apparatus Drivers for the apparatus of the vehicle involved in the incident by means of a lottery. The board will meet within 72 hours of the incident and render an opinion.

It should be noted though that in the case of serious accidents that the board may take longer than the 72 hours to render an opinion and reserves the right to do so and take as long as needed.

In the event that the Drivers Training Officer and Safety Officer find that the incident does not warrant a Review Board then they shall document their findings in writing to the Chief.

If a board is established the Safety Officer and Drivers training Officer will document the Boards findings and recommendations to the Chief for further action.

Chief or Duty Officer will surrender all reports, photos, documentation etc. to the Drivers Training Officer whole will prepare them for the Safety Officer and Review board. This will ensure accuracy, and chain of evidence with all other documentation.

The board reserves the right to call on personnel to testify on the facts presented if needed.

The Board will determine the accident to be either preventable or non preventable.

## **BOARD DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS**

Based on the findings of the review board the following recommendations may be made to the Chief for action to be taken on:

1. Counseling
2. Remedial Drivers Training
3. Station Public Service
4. Re taking of EVOC
5. Suspension of Driving Privileges – Per Apparatus or all Department Vehicles, Permanent Restriction.

The Chief shall notify the driver within 72 hours of the board's decision, and a report on the board's findings will be placed in the drivers personnel file.

### **BOARD DECISION APPEAL**

The driver may appeal the board's decision and findings by requesting an appeal to the Fire Board. The fireboard will meet within 72 hours of receiving a written request. A member of the review board will be requested to attend meeting.

### **RETURNING TO DRIVERS DUTY**

After completing the disciplinary actions the following must be completed:

1. Contact the Drivers Training Officer in writing for review and recertification.
2. Driver Training Officer will notify the Chief in writing as to the member's readiness to return to active driver's status.
3. Chief shall review the request and notify the member in writing of his decision.

**Appendix A**  
**VFIS**  
**ANNUAL MEDICAL STATEMENT**

## **Appendix B**

### **Drivers Training Request Form**

**Appendix C**  
**Drivers Record Request Form**

## **Appendix D**

### **Drivers Training Manual Receipt Letter**



**Revisions:**

September 1, 2007 A. Baldwin

January 1, 2010 B. Dempsey