

# SPOKANE COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 8

## Standard Operating Procedures

**90.01.04**  
APPARATUS-SAFETY,  
RESPONSE, ROADWAY  
OPERATION



Adopted: 12/20/16  
Reviewed: 11/09/22  
Revised: 11/09/22

Approved: 

**Purpose:** To ensure safe apparatus operation within District policy and applicable law.

**References:** WAC 296-305-04503  
WAC 296-305-04505  
WAC 296-305-0714  
RCW 46.61.035  
RCW 49.17.010  
DOT Part 49 CFR section 571, Standards 209 and 210  
DOT 23 CFR Part 634  
29 C.F.R. 1910.156

### **Procedure:**

1. Warning Devices.
  - a) District vehicles shall be operated in either an emergency mode, CODE, or non-emergency mode, NO CODE. CODE is utilizing vehicle emergency lights continuously and sirens as necessary. Regardless of the vehicle operation mode, it is the responsibility of the driver of each District vehicle to drive safely and prudently. It is the responsibility of the company officer to ensure that the driver is operating the District vehicle in a safe and prudent manner.
2. Personnel Restraints for Traveling.
  - a) All persons riding in a District vehicle on fire apparatus shall be seated and secured to the vehicle by seat belts or safety harnesses, without helmets any time the vehicle is in motion.
  - b) Seat belts shall comply with U.S. Department of Transportation Part 49 CFR Section 571, Standards 209 and 210.
  - c) Riding on the tailboard or in any other exposed position, such as sidesteps or running boards, is specifically prohibited.
  - d) The company officer and driver of the vehicle shall confirm that all personnel and riders are on-board and are properly attired (PPE) with their seat belts on before the vehicle is permitted to move. This confirmation requires a positive response from each rider, as in "ready".
3. Code Response.
  - a) A CODE response is authorized for proceeding to incidents with potential life loss, serious injury, or significant property loss.
  - b) Vehicles shall be operated in compliance with Federal and State Motor Vehicle Codes. These codes provide specific legal exceptions to traffic

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regulations that apply to District vehicles only when responding CODE to an emergency incident. Emergency response does not absolve the driver or the company officer of responsibility to drive with due caution. The driver of the emergency vehicle and when possible, its officer, are responsible for its safe operation.

- c) When responding CODE, warning lights must be on. Sirens must be sounded when appropriate to warn drivers of other vehicles, as required by the Federal and State Motor Vehicle Codes. When responding or returning NO CODE, warning lights and sirens shall not be used.
- d) The use of sirens and warning lights does not automatically give the right-of-way to the emergency vehicle. These emergency devices simply request the right-of-way from other drivers, based on their awareness of the emergency vehicle presence. Emergency vehicle drivers and company officers must make every possible effort to make their presence and intended actions known to other drivers, and must drive defensively to be prepared for the unexpected or inappropriate actions of others.
- e) District vehicles are authorized to exceed posted speed limits only when responding CODE. The officer and the driver using their best judgment of the risk of a CODE response and the benefit based on the urgency of the response will determine if a response is CODE or NO CODE. During a CODE response a maximum of 10 mph over the posted speed limit is authorized.
- f) Federal and State Motor Vehicle Codes prohibit travel in oncoming traffic lanes (i.e. beyond double yellow lines). However, when emergency vehicles must travel in oncoming traffic lanes, the maximum permissible speed shall be 20 mph. On limited access roadways (i.e. Interstates), the use of oncoming traffic lanes shall only be used after it is assured that all oncoming traffic has stopped. The officer shall confirm that traffic is stopped before entering any roadway against traffic.
- g) Intersections present the greatest potential danger to emergency vehicles. When approaching a negative right-of-way intersection (red light, stop sign, yield sign), the vehicle shall proceed only when the driver can account that all oncoming traffic in all lanes is yielding the right-of-way and at a maximum speed of 10 mph. When emergency vehicles must use center or oncoming traffic lanes to approach controlled intersections (traffic light or stop sign), before proceeding through the intersection they must lower their speed to a maximum of 10 mph, even when the emergency vehicle has a green light. When approaching and crossing an intersection with the right-of-way, drivers shall not exceed the posted speed limit.

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- h) CODE response is authorized only in conjunction with emergency incidents. Unnecessary emergency response shall not be permitted. When the first unit reports on the scene and confirms that there is no emergency, the incident commander will advise Dispatch and all additional responding units shall be alerted by the IC to lower CODE and continue to the scene if needed, or the incident will be canceled.
- i) During a CODE response, fire vehicles shall avoid passing other emergency vehicles if possible. If passing is necessary, the vehicle being passed must be contacted by radio and shall, when possible, move to the right lane.
- j) The unique hazards of driving on/or adjacent to the fireground requires the driver to use extreme caution and to be alert and prepared to react to the unexpected. Drivers must consider the dangers their moving vehicle poses to fireground personnel and spectators who may be preoccupied with the emergency and inadvertently step in front of or behind a moving vehicle.

### Code Response Summary:

- All personnel seated and belted, no helmets
- Warning lights operating
- Sirens activated as necessary
- Maximum 10 mph over posted speed limit
- Posted speed limit when entering intersections with green light
- 10 mph maximum, and control of traffic, at all red lights, stop signs and yield signs
- Traveling in center or oncoming traffic lanes, 20 mph maximum

### 4. Backing Apparatus.

- a) All fire apparatus that has an obstructed view to the rear shall not be used in reverse gear unless it has an operational reverse signal alarm distinguishable from the surrounding noise level.
- b) Drivers shall avoid backing whenever possible. Where backing is unavoidable, at least one spotter shall be used. If no spotter is available, the driver shall dismount and walk completely around the apparatus to determine if obstructions are present before backing.
- c) Members shall not be permitted to ride on the tailboard, running board, or on top of the vehicle while it is moving.

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### 5. Roadway Operations.

#### Rules:

- a) Place apparatus to provide a safe workplace on scene.
- b) Always look before stepping out of apparatus.
- c) Place cones and/or flares to enhance safety zone and control traffic.
- d) Protective clothing and Class II safety vest must be donned immediately upon exiting the vehicle.
- e) Excludes firefighters when they are exposed to flame, fire, high heat, or hazardous materials.
- f) Exempts firefighters from the requirement to use high-visibility safety apparel when they are exposed to hazardous conditions where the use of such apparel may increase the risk of injury to firefighter personnel.

#### Guidelines:

- a) Emergency personnel are at great risk while operating in or around moving traffic. There are precautions that can be taken to protect yourself and all crewmembers. Listed below are the recommendations for safe performance when operating in or near moving vehicle traffic.
  - i. Always maintain an acute awareness of the high risk of working in or around moving traffic. Never trust moving traffic. Always look before you step! Always keep an eye on traffic!
  - ii. Always position apparatus to protect the scene, patients, emergency personnel, and provide a protected work area. Where possible, angle apparatus at 45 degrees away from the curbside. This will direct motorists around the scene (See figure 1). Apparatus positioning must also allow for adequate parking space for the other fire apparatus (if needed) and a safe work area for emergency personnel. Allow enough distance to prevent a moving vehicle from knocking fire apparatus into the work areas.
  - iii. At intersections, or where the incident may be near the middle of the street, two or more sides of the incident may need to be protected. Block all exposed sides. Where apparatus is in limited numbers, prioritize the blocking from the most critical to the least critical (See Figures 2, 3, and 4).
  - iv. For first arriving engine companies or PL's where a charged hoseline may be needed, angle the apparatus so the pump panel is "downstream," on the opposite side of on-coming traffic when possible. This will protect the pump operator (See Figure 5).

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- v. The initial Company Officer (or Command) should assess the parking needs of later-arriving fire apparatus and specifically direct the parking and placement of these vehicles as they arrive to provide protective blocking of the scene. This officer must operate as an initial safety officer.
- vi. During DAYTIME operations, leave all emergency lights on to provide warning to drivers.
- vii. For NIGHTTIME operations, turn OFF fire apparatus headlights. This will help reduce the blinding effect to approaching vehicle traffic. Other high-intensity emergency lights should be reduced.
- viii. Crews should exit the curb side or non-traffic side of the vehicle whenever possible.
- ix. Always look before stepping out of apparatus, or into any traffic areas. When walking around fire apparatus parked adjacent to moving traffic, keep an eye on traffic, and walk as close to fire apparatus as possible.
- x. When parking apparatus to protect the scene, be sure to protect the work area also. The area must be protected so that patients can be extricated, treated, moved about the scene, and loaded into ambulances safely.
- xi. Once enough fire apparatus have “blocked” the scene, park or stage unneeded vehicles off the street whenever possible. Bring in ambulances one or two at a time and park them in safe locations at the scene. This may be “downstream” from other parked apparatus, or the Ambulance may be backed at an angle into a protected loading area to prevent working in or near passing traffic. At residential medical emergencies position ambulances to best protect patient loading areas. (See Figures 6 and 7).
- xii. After initial operations are set, place the traffic cones at the scene to direct traffic. This should be initiated by the first company arriving on the scene and expanded, if needed, as later arriving companies arrive on the scene. Always place and retrieve cones while facing on-coming traffic.
- xiii. At major intersections a call for police response may be necessary. Provide specific direction to the police officer as to exactly what your traffic control needs are. Ensure the police are parking to protect themselves and the scene. Position ambulances to protect patient loading areas. (See Figure 8).

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xiv. High visibility vests, fusees, cones, signs, and other devices are to be used, taking into account variables that include fire and explosion risk, etcetera...as determined by the incident commander. Protective clothing and Class II safety vest must be donned immediately upon exiting the emergency vehicle.

1. During normal daylight lighting conditions, don helmet and Class II safety vest or structural PPE and Class II vest when operating in or near moving traffic.
2. During dusk to dawn operations or when ambient lighting is reduced due to inclement weather conditions, don helmet, full protective clothing and Class II vest.
3. All staff personnel and assigned student trainee personnel arriving on an apparatus or emergency vehicle must don a Class II vest prior to exiting vehicle.

High-visibility vests are an approved option to wearing the turnout coat when conditions warrant removal of bunker gear.

b) Interstate Operations.

- i. Interstate emergencies pose a particular high risk to emergency personnel. Speeds are higher, traffic volume is significant, and civilian motorists have little opportunity to slow, stop, or change lanes.
- ii. The State Patrol will also have a desire to keep the interstate flowing. Where need be, the Interstate can completely shut down. This, however, rarely occurs.
- iii. For interstate emergencies, continue to block the scene with the first arriving apparatus to provide a safe work area. Other companies may be used to provide additional blocking if needed.
- iv. The initial Company Officer, or Command, must thoroughly assess the need for apparatus on the Interstate and their specific positions. Companies should be directed to specific parking locations to protect the work area, patients, and emergency personnel.
- v. Other apparatus should be parked downstream when possible. This provides a safe parking area.
- vi. Staging of ambulances off the Interstate may be required. Ambulances should be brought into the scene one or two at a time. A safe loading area must be established.
- vii. Traffic cones should be placed further apart, with the last cone approximately 150 feet "upstream," to allow adequate warning to drivers. Place and retrieve cones while facing the traffic.

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- viii. Command should establish a liaison with the State Patrol, as soon as possible, to jointly provide a safe parking and work area and to quickly resolve the incident. A request for the State Emergency Incident Response Team may be necessary for an added level of protection.
- ix. The termination of the incident must be managed with the same aggressiveness as initial actions. Crews, apparatus, and equipment must be removed from the Interstate promptly, to reduce exposure to moving traffic.

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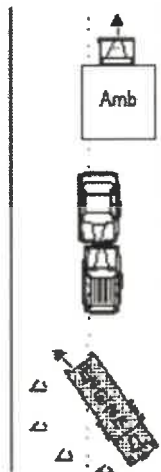
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### Examples

Figure #1



Where possible, angle apparatus at a 45 degree angle from the curb.

Figure #3

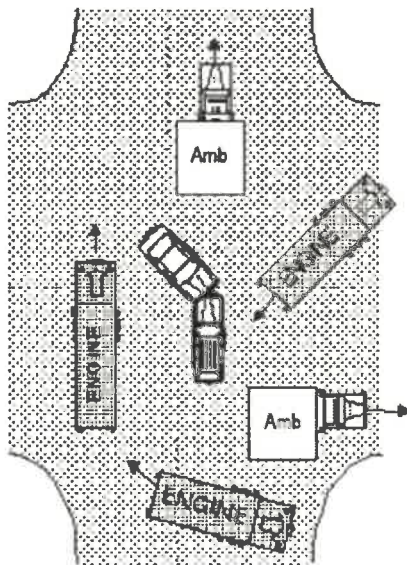


Figure #2

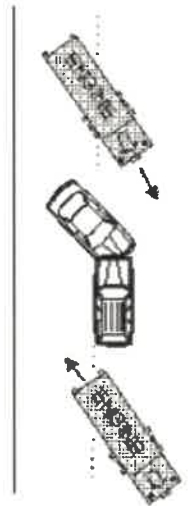
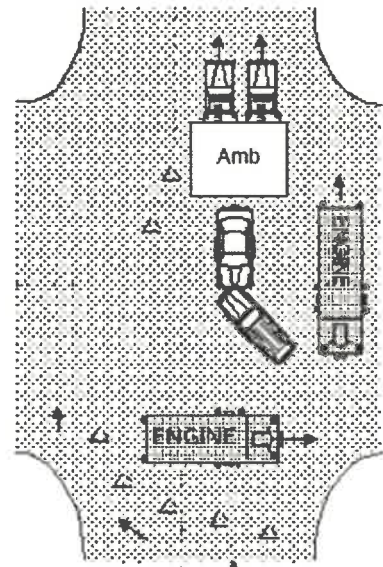


Figure #4



Often times two or more sides may need to be protected. Prioritize placement of the apparatus by blocking from the most critical to the least critical side



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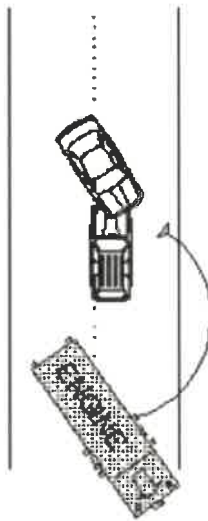
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Figure #5



To protect pump operator, position apparatus with the pump panel on the opposite side of on-coming traffic.

Figure #6

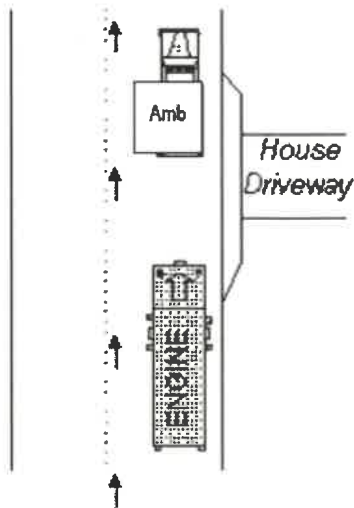
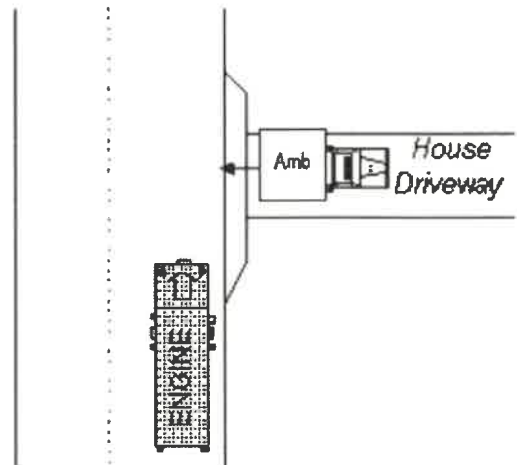


Figure #7



Where possible, park rescues in driveways or position rescue to protect patient loading area.

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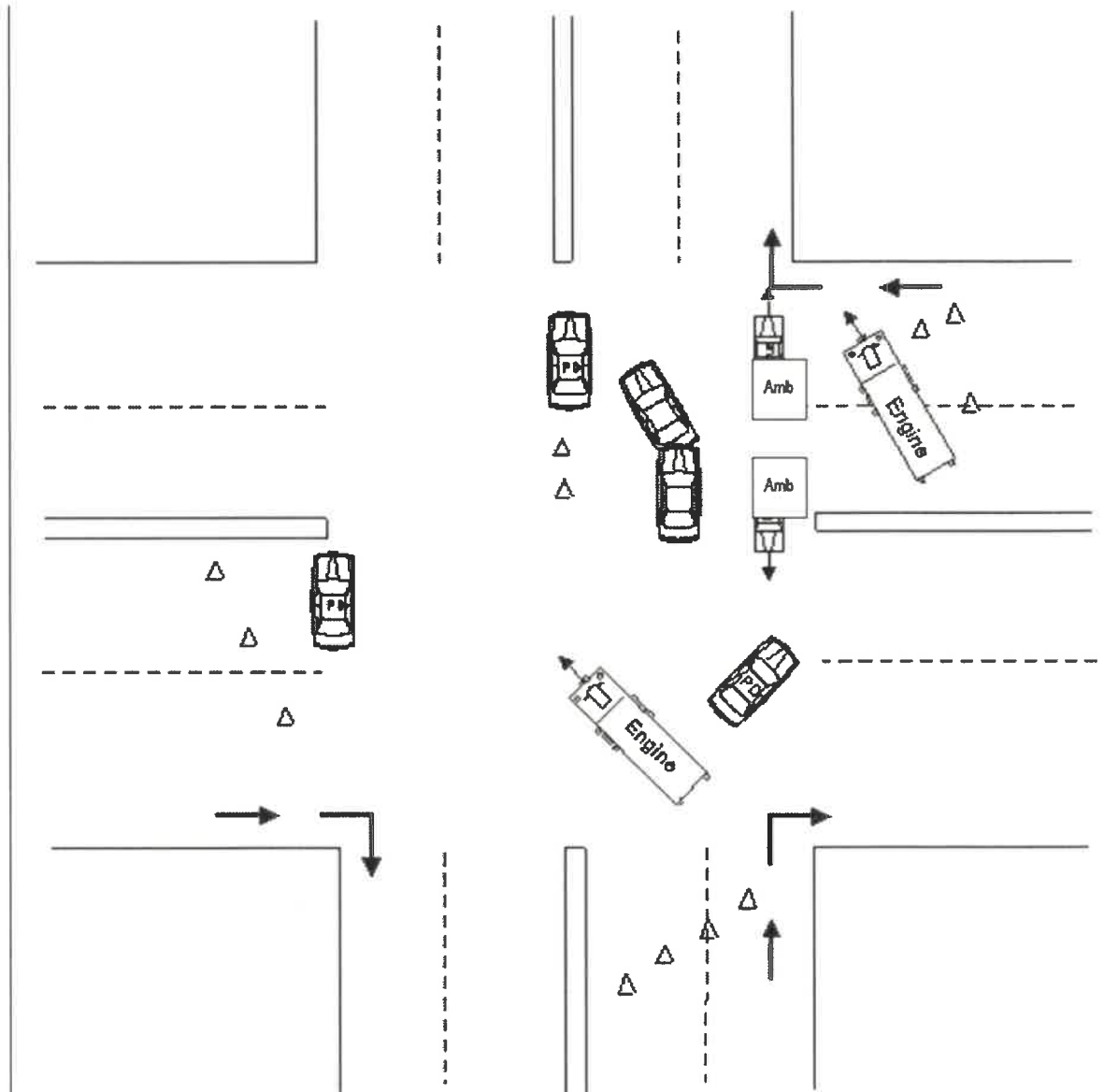
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Provide specific direction to police as to what traffic control needs you have. Position rescues to protect patient loading areas.

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### 6. Chemical Identification Book.

- a) Each fire apparatus shall carry a current U.S. Department of Transportation Emergency Response Guidebook or equivalent.

### 7. Ladders.

- a) Ladders stowed on the sides of apparatus that protrude past the tailboard shall have guards over the protruding ends.

### 8. Wildland Vehicles.

- a) **NOTE:** See WAC 296-305-0714 on exceptions for wildland vehicles.

### 9. Hose Loading While Vehicle is in Motion.

- a) A safety observer shall be appointed. The observer will be in a position to have an unobstructed view of the loading operation and be in visual and voice contact with the driver.
- b) The observer shall ensure the safety of those members working behind the apparatus before allowing the apparatus to back up.
- c) Maximum apparatus speed during hose loading shall be 5 miles per hour.
- d) The member in charge of the operation shall ensure all vehicular traffic is controlled while hose loading is in progress.
- e) Personnel may stay in the hose bed, only if they are seated in it, while the apparatus backs to the loading location.

### 10. Operational Procedures.

- a) Firefighting apparatus shall be brought to a full stop before employees are allowed to step from the apparatus.
- b) Firefighters shall not be in the apparatus hose bed while hose is being run out from the bed.
- c) Headlights shall be on at all times when any fire or emergency vehicle is responding to a call.
- d) All apparatus over 20,000 pounds (gross vehicle weight) shall utilize wheel blocks when parked at an emergency scene.

### 11. Emergency Vehicle Requirements.

- a) Apparatus responding to alarms shall meet specifications in RCW 46.61.035, relating to operations of authorized emergency vehicles.

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### 12. Training.

- a) All operators of emergency vehicles shall be trained in the operation of apparatus before they are designated as drivers of such apparatus.
- b) Once trained, all operators shall familiarize themselves with any apparatus prior to operating such apparatus even for brief periods of time.

### 13. Equipment Carried on Apparatus.

- a) Vehicles used to transport firefighters and other authorized personnel shall have compartments for carrying sharp tools, saws, chisels, axes, etc., or when carried on the outside of the apparatus, equipment with sharp points and edges shall be covered to prevent injury.