

HALIFAX FIRE DEPARTMENT R&R ARTICLE 12	OPERATION OF APPARATUS
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PURPOSE

To provide for the safety of Department personnel and civilians, to prevent accidents involving Department apparatus, and to ensure safe and prompt responses to emergencies.

SCOPE

It is the intent of this regulation to provide operating rules to members on responding to alarms, normal driving, use of vehicles, and communications. It is the responsibility of the operator of each Department vehicle to drive safely and prudently at all times. It is the responsibility of all firefighter responding on the apparatus to ensure the proper and safe operation of the vehicle.

DEFINITIONS

Code C response - No warning lights or warning signals are activated. Operators shall follow all applicable traffic signs and regulations. This response mode shall be used when operating Department vehicles during routine business, returning from alarms, or for non-emergency incidents. e.g. lock-outs, public assistance, illegal burning, responding to a station cover assignment.

Emergency response - Warning lights and warning signals are activated. This response mode shall be used during all **true emergency** incidents.

True Emergency - a situation in which there is high probability of death or serious injury to an individual or group of people, or a significant loss of property and the actions of the emergency vehicle crew may reduce the severity of that situation.

OPERATORS/DRIVERS RESPONSIBILITY

THE PRIMARY GOAL OF A VEHICLE OPERATOR IS TO DELIVER THE APPARATUS AND ITS CREW TO THE SCENE OF AN EMERGENCY IN A SAFE AND EFFICIENT MANNER.

Operators will be held accountable and responsible for the operation of Department vehicles and the following but not limited to:

- shall be completely familiar with the community's road network and similar features, which affect response.
- shall keep alert to conditions in their response area and the community, which would have an adverse effect on response routes.
- shall be responsible to ensure that their assigned vehicle(s) is ready and available to respond at the start of each shift.
- shall exercise extreme care at all times when operating Department vehicles. A good driver will drive defensively and be aware of all that is happening around you.
- shall maintain a safe distance apart from other department vehicles at all times.
- shall take the most direct and effective route to and from any incident.
- Shall drive such vehicle at a speed above posted speed limit if he/she exercises caution and due regard under the circumstances for the safety of persons and property and road conditions allow, and may drive such vehicle through an intersection of ways contrary to any traffic signs or signals regulating at such intersection if he/she brings such vehicle to a **full stop** and then proceeds with caution and due regard for the safety of persons and property, unless otherwise directed by a police officer
- shall exercise all necessary caution and restraint during inclement weather.
- Prior to moving the vehicle the driver shall check to be sure that all occupants are on board and in a safe seated belted position. Exit the station slowly, test the brakes, and enter the road with caution. During emergency responses the appropriate warning devices should be activated as you leave the station, or start the response.
- Shall will not drive apparatus off hard-packed, or black-topped roadways unless the situation warrants the apparatus be placed closer to the scene. Prior to driving off of a roadway the operator will determine if the off road surface is sufficient to carry the apparatus. Be alert to septic systems, cesspools, dry wells, etc.

- When operating 4 wheel drive trucks off-road the vehicle will be engaged in 4-wheel drive, in a range that is appropriate for the terrain, as soon as the vehicle leaves hard-packed, or black-topped roadways. When operating off-road no vehicle will exceed 10 miles per hour.
- No private or public property will be damaged, driven over, or driven through, unless the action is absolutely essential to saving of life or property. The decision to go off-road rests with the operator of the apparatus.
- No apparatus will be driven through flooded roadways unless the action is absolutely essential to saving life and property.
- Operators shall avoid backing up whenever possible. Where backing up is unavoidable, guides shall be used. If no guide is available the chauffeur shall dismount the vehicle and walk completely around the vehicle prior to backing.
- Operators will use wheel chocks anytime a vehicle is running and operator is out of driver's seat or the vehicle is left unattended with the exception of being parked at the station. Chock blocks shall be in place immediately upon leaving the cab of the truck. This applies to vehicles with GVW greater than 18,000 pounds.
- Operators shall stay alert to all notifications of road conditions and weather conditions pertaining to Department operations.
- Vehicle riders shall be accountable and responsible for the manner in which the driver operates the vehicle.
- Operators/riders shall follow established response procedures. Ultimately, the driver is responsible for his actions.
- Officer or I/C shall notify other responding apparatus to respond Code C whenever the conditions do not indicate a true emergency.

WARNING DEVICES

- Warning signals shall be used during Emergency Responses prior to entering traffic and well in advance of approaching intersections, and well in advance of attempting to pass other vehicles.

GENERAL USE OF VEHICLES

- No member shall operate a department vehicle without authorization to do so, or unless on official department business.

- All members shall call “on the air” via the vehicles radio any time the vehicle leaves quarters.
- No member, while on duty, shall take a vehicle and leave quarters, without the authorization of the Officer on duty, unless responding to an emergency incident.
- No member, while on duty, shall enter another city or town unless it is necessary in the performance of duty or authorized.
- All members shall operate department vehicles in a safe and courteous manner at all times.
- All members shall follow all applicable State, Federal, and local traffic regulations.
- On duty members will be allowed to make one service call per shift for the purposes of picking up food. Members on holdovers or working consecutive shifts may make a morning or evening trip for the purposes of picking up food. No other personal trips are to be made while on duty, unless approved by the Chief of Department.
- All members shall be responsible for maintaining full fuel tanks after returning to quarters.
- During inclement weather any time a Department vehicle is out of quarters, the driving lights shall be on.
- Vehicles shall be cleaned and washed as needed, above and beyond the required cleaning as outlined in other procedures. Any vehicle, which is driven through a flooded roadway, shall be thoroughly cleaned immediately upon return to quarters.
- The number of personnel responding on apparatus shall be limited to the number of seats available. Personnel shall not stand or attempt to leave an apparatus before it has come to a complete stop.
- No member shall ride on the rear step, side step, hose bed or on any portion of an apparatus when the vehicle is moving .

Exception: # 1- when reloading hose, during hose reloading one member will maintain direct communication with the chauffeur and the hose loading operation.
 # 2 - when operating in off-road mode at a brush fire.

- vehicles shall be placed to protect personnel who may be working in the street or area. At night, vehicle floodlights and any other lighting available shall be used to illuminate the scene. When operating on highways request the police for additional protection. Vehicles should be placed in a position to protect the scene. **Vehicles at incidents shall park same side as incident to avoid crossing any streets.**
- Private vehicles will not be used for department business, unless authorized by the Chief of Department.
Exception: # 1 - when responding to emergencies while off-duty.
- When two or more vehicles are being driven on the same road, they shall proceed single file and travel in the same lane.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Emergency response is authorized only in conjunction with emergency incidents. Unnecessary emergency response shall be avoided. In order to avoid unnecessary emergency response, the following rules shall apply, The first arriving unit will advise additional arriving units to proceed "code C" whenever appropriate.

When approaching intersections the driver shall be prepared to stop at all times.

The driver will come to a complete stop, at any posted intersection, in accordance with Mass. General Law chapter 89 section 7B.

Department vehicles are not exempt from the State Law regarding stopping for school buses. If you are approaching a school bus, which has its red lights flashing, you must come to a complete stop. The only exception is if the bus driver signals to you that it is safe to pass.

MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS

CHAPTER 89 SECTION 7 The members and apparatus of the Fire Department while going to a fire or responding to an alarm, police vehicles, and ambulances on a call for the purpose of hospitalizing a sick or injured person shall have the right of way through any street, way, lane, or alley. Whoever willfully and maliciously obstructs or retards the passage of any of the foregoing in the

exercise of such right shall be punished by a fine of not more than fifty dollars or imprisonment for more than three months.

CHAPTER 89 SECTION 7A Upon approach of any fire apparatus which is going to a fire or responding to an alarm, every person driving a vehicle on a way shall immediately drive said vehicle as far as possible to the right hand curb or side of said way and shall keep the same at a standstill until such fire apparatus has passed. No person shall drive a vehicle over a hose of the fire department without the consent of a member of such department. No person shall drive a vehicle within 300 feet of any fire apparatus going to a fire or responding to an alarm, nor drive said vehicle, or park or leave the same unattended, within 800 feet of a fire or within the fire lines established by the fire department or upon or beside any traveled way, whether public or private, leading to the scene of a fire, in such a manner as to obstruct the approach to the fire of any fire apparatus ambulance, safety or police vehicle, or any vehicle bearing an official fire or police department designation. Violation of any provision of this section shall be punishable by a fine of not more than one hundred dollars.

CHAPTER 89 SECTION 7B The driver of a vehicle of a fire, police or recognized protective department and the driver of an ambulance shall be subject to the provisions of any statute, rule, regulation, ordinance or by-law relating to the operation or parking of vehicles, except that a driver of fire apparatus while going to a fire or responding to an alarm, or the driver of a vehicle of a police or recognized protective department or the driver of an ambulance, in an emergency and while in performance of a public duty or while transporting a sick or injured person to a hospital or other destination where professional medical services are available, may drive such vehicle at speed in excess of the applicable speed limit if he/she exercises caution and due regard under the circumstances for the safety of persons and property, and may drive such vehicle through an intersection of ways contrary to any traffic signs or signals regulating at such intersection if he brings such vehicle to a full stop and then proceeds with caution and due regard for the safety of persons and property, unless otherwise directed by a police officer regulating traffic at such intersection.