



GALENA FIRE DEPARTMENT
Standard Operating Guideline
APPARATUS AND VEHICLE OPERATIONS

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Purpose: To define responsibilities of personnel operating fire department apparatus and vehicles and identify department expectations towards ensuring safe driving practices. This policy is written to comply with NFPA 1451 and 1500.

Introduction

The safe operation of an emergency vehicle depends heavily on the ability and experience of the Driver and the added resources and direction of the Officer. All drivers shall maintain control of the vehicle in a manner as to provide the maximum level of safety for both their passengers and the public. Drivers should be aware that civilian vehicle operators may not react in the manner 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 fails to yield the right of way to an emergency vehicle, the emergency vehicle driver cannot force or assume the right of way.

The driver of an emergency vehicle shall be responsible for its safe operation. When the driver is under the direct supervision of an officer or acting officer, that officer or acting officer shall also assume responsibility for the actions of the driver.

General Driving Requirements

Emergency vehicles shall only be operated and driven by department members or authorized maintenance personnel. Drivers shall meet the State of Illinois driver's license requirements along with the Fire Department's driver training requirements.

GFD personnel shall have the appropriate level of driver's license for the type(s) of apparatus or vehicles they are expected to operate. Any member, who has allowed their license to expire, be suspended or revoked, shall not drive department apparatus or vehicles, and shall immediately report this to the Fire Chief or highest-ranking officer in charge.

Smoking is prohibited inside any department apparatus or vehicle.

Vehicle headlights shall be utilized by all department apparatus and vehicles in both emergency and non-emergency driving situations.

Engines, trucks, and squads shall use the parking brake when parked in or out of the station, and wheel chocks shall be used on any incline, regardless of the grade.

Responding to Alarms – GFD Apparatus

All drivers shall respond in a safe and professional manner.

All drivers of GFD apparatus shall obey all cities, county and state traffic laws responding to and from alarms.

All members shall wear safety belts responding to and from alarms while riding on GFD apparatus.

All members shall remain seated until the vehicle has been safely positioned.

All members responding on any GFD apparatus shall have all required Personal Protective Equipment on or in their possession before getting on apparatus.



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Driver Responsibilities

The Driver's main priority shall be for the safe arrival of the crews to the emergency scene.

The Driver shall not move an emergency vehicle until all personnel are seated and secured with seatbelts and in approved riding positions.

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

- Red traffic lights.
- Stop signs.
- Blind intersections where there is no traffic control (traffic light or stop sign) in any direction.
- Prior to entering a controlled intersection (traffic light or stop sign) when traveling in oncoming lanes or on a painted or raised median.
- When other intersection or road hazards are present.
- When encountering a stopped school bus with flashing red warning lights and/or with deployed stop signal arm (stop sign).
- When encountering activated railroad crossings.
- When directed by the company officer or a law enforcement officer.
- After stopping at a red light or stop sign account for all lanes of traffic prior to Proceeding.

During non-emergency travel, drivers shall obey all traffic control signals.

The driver shall be aware of his/her rate of closure on other vehicles and pedestrians.

Officer Responsibility

The officer or acting officer riding in the front passenger seat is the ranking officer and provides an additional set of eyes and ears for the driver and shall also be responsible for making certain that the driver operates the vehicle in a safe manner that is consistent with this, and any other appropriate, policies. The officer shall:

- Ensure that all personnel on the vehicle are seated and secured with seat belts and in approved riding positions prior to movement of the emergency vehicle.
- Ensure driver is operating the vehicle in a safe and prudent manner during response in accordance with departmental policy and state law.
- Issue warnings about road and physical hazards to the driver.
- Direct the driver to cease any unsafe driving, such as excess speed or unsafe intersection practices.
- Operate the radio, and audio and visual warning devices as needed during the response.
- Assist the driver in determining the safest and most direct route to the emergency scene.

Emergency Vehicle Warning Devices

When responding to an emergency, warning lights and headlights shall be used and the siren shall be sounded as a warning to drivers and pedestrians.



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Drivers shall have a firm understanding that the use of sirens and warning lights does not legally allow right-of-way to an emergency vehicle, but that these devices simply request the right-of-way from other drivers, based on their awareness of the emergency vehicles presence. Drivers must make every possible effort to make their presence and intended actions known to other drivers and they must always drive defensively and be prepared for the unexpected actions of others.

Speed Limit

In accordance with the Motor Vehicle Code, emergency vehicles are authorized to exceed posted speed limits when responding to an emergency, under favorable conditions. This applies only with light traffic, good roads, good visibility, dry pavement, and no road construction. The maximum speed limit shall not exceed 10 mph beyond the posted speed limit. At no time shall speed exceed the posted speed limit. Under less than favorable conditions, the posted speed limit is the maximum permissible speed.

Travel in oncoming traffic lane.

- When an emergency vehicle must travel in an oncoming traffic lane or on a painted or raised median in the immediate approach to an intersection, they shall slow to a speed that will allow for the complete stop that is required prior to entering the intersection.
- When an emergency vehicle must travel in an oncoming traffic lane for longer distances than the immediate approach to an intersection, the speed of the apparatus/vehicle is the minimum speed necessary to access the target roadway or destination in a safe manner.

Intersections

Intersections present the greatest potential danger to an emergency vehicle. When approaching and crossing a controlled intersection with the right-of-way (green light), drivers shall not exceed the posted speed limit.

When emergency vehicles must use oncoming traffic lanes or a painted or raised median to approach controlled intersections (traffic light or stop sign), they must come to a complete stop before proceeding through the intersection, including occasions when the emergency vehicle has green traffic lights.

When approaching a right-of-way intersection (red light, stop sign), the vehicle shall come to a complete stop and proceed only when the driver can account for all oncoming traffic in all lanes yielding the right-of-way.

Emergency Vehicle Pre-emption (EVP) Intersections

Drivers must be cautious when approaching an intersection with an EVP device. When approaching an EVP equipped intersection, the apparatus should be given a green traffic light. If the traffic light does not turn green, the Driver should proceed as normal for a red traffic light.

Passing other Vehicles

During an emergency response, drivers shall avoid passing other responding emergency vehicles.

Traffic laws require that private vehicles slow down and pull to the right when they see an emergency vehicle approaching. It shall be the standard practice of the GFD to pass vehicles on the left. The exception to this is only in situations when doing so would create a safety hazard greater than passing on the right (risk vs. benefit).

If it is necessary to pass on the right, the driver shall slow to a speed that allows for a safe and complete stop if necessary.



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Railroad Crossings

Drivers shall use caution and ensure that it is safe to proceed prior to crossing any railroad tracks. Apparatus shall not drive around crossing gates that have been lowered, nor proceed through a crossing with activated signals (non-gated). The only exceptions shall be:

- When it has been confirmed by railroad personnel that the gates or signal are activated due to a malfunction or maintenance.
- When there appears to be an obvious malfunction and the company officer has left the vehicle and has visually confirmed the absence of any approaching trains in either direction.

Vehicle Retarders and Jake Brakes

Vehicles and apparatus equipped with engine, transmission or driveline retarders or Jake brakes shall operate with the retarder in the "on" or "high" position. Due to the slippery nature of wet snow or ice-covered roads, the retarder or brake is to be placed in the "off" position when encountering these conditions.

Driving at On-Scene Incident Operations

The unique hazards of driving on or adjacent to an incident scene requires that drivers use extreme caution and to be alert and prepared to react to unexpected actions and circumstances. Drivers must consider the dangers the moving vehicle poses to fireground personnel and to other vehicles on scene. In addition, spectators who may be preoccupied with the emergency may inadvertently step in front of or behind a moving or stationary vehicle.

When stopped at the scene of an incident, vehicles shall be placed to protect personnel working in the street and warning lights shall be used to make approaching traffic aware of the incident. Safety cones shall be placed to further ensure the safety of personnel.

At night, vehicle mounted floodlights and any other lighting available shall be used to illuminate the scene and vehicle headlights which should be shut off when possible.

If it is not necessary to park apparatus or vehicles in or near traffic lanes, they shall be pulled off the road to parking lots, curbs, etc. whenever possible.

Wheel Chocks

Wheel chocks shall be utilized on apparatus as follows:

- When so equipped. wheel chocks will be applied when the vehicle is parked and not in quarters.
- Wheel chocks shall be set in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendation.

Placement and removal of wheel chocks is the responsibility of the driver.