



# *City of Winter Park Fire-Rescue*

## *Standard Operating Guideline*

# 220.01

**Title: Vehicle Operations / Emergency & Non-Emergency**

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**Purpose:** To establish a procedure for all personnel to follow when operating any vehicle owned by the City of Winter Park Fire Department in an emergency and non-emergency mode.

**Scope:** This procedure is to be used as a guideline in the operation of fire apparatus under both routine and emergency conditions. All personnel are to be reminded that this procedure is designed to ensure that each unit arrives safely at the scene of the emergency and is able to render assistance.

### **General:**

#### **220.01.01. Safe Operations:**

**All personnel are to be seated and belted-in at all times when any vehicle is in motion.** The driver of the vehicle will be responsible for assuring that all passengers are seated and secured prior to the movement of the vehicle.

#### **220.01.02. Warning Devices:**

When involved in an emergency response the audible devices shall be operated for the duration of the response. Discretion should be used to limit the amount of disturbance created through a residential neighborhood during non-peak hours.

#### **220.01.03. Speed Limits / Due Regard:**

City speed limits should be strictly followed during routine driving of any vehicle. On emergency responses, speed limits should also be noted, and may only be exceeded when it is safe to do so.

Before exceeding the posted speed limit for a particular highway the following factors should be considered:

- time of day
- area of operation
- weather conditions
- conditions of the road surface

In addition, the driver should always practice due regard for the safety of all others on the highway prior to exceeding any posted highway regulation.

**It is recommended that vehicles come to a complete stop at all stop signs or traffic signals that are indicating STOP.** This shall take place during both emergency and non-emergency travel. There may be an occasion on an emergency response where a complete stop would not be performed. If a vehicle proceeds through any stop signal they are only doing so after being yielded that right-of-way by others in that intersection. Even with excellent conditions, the vehicle should be slowed to almost the stopping point to insure absolute control of the vehicle. It is recommended that even when the emergency vehicle has been given the right-of-way or has a clear or "green" intersection that they slow to a point that will allow the driver the time to avoid a collision with any oncoming vehicles.

Always remember that the responsibility for the safety of the passengers and pedestrians, and the adherence to all traffic laws, is in the control of the driver any time the vehicle is in motion.

#### **220.01.04. Use of Traffic Pre-Emption Devices:**

All vehicles equipped with the 3M "Opti-Com Traffic Pre-Emption device shall operate the unit during the complete duration of the emergency response. The use of the Opti-Com system does not give the emergency vehicle the right-of-way, the system still requires the driver to consider all vehicles and pedestrians in the intersection and practice due regard for their safety. The Opti-Com is designed to give a green signal to the approaching emergency unit and a red signal to all others in the intersection. Drivers are reminded that it takes several seconds for the Opti-Com to "capture" the intersection and a complete stop may still be required. Use of the Opti-Com system during non-emergency travel will be considered a violation of Department policy and the action will be dealt with accordingly.

**220.01.05. Crossing into On-Coming Traffic:**

The practice of crossing a Solid-Yellow line or proceeding into any on-coming traffic is not recommended. When all other options are blocked and the only clear avenue of travel is into on-coming traffic lanes, the driver should be prepared for any situation. This is one of the most dangerous acts to be performed by an emergency vehicle during any response.

All emergency vehicles while responding to an emergency shall attempt to pass to the left of all vehicles. At times this act will bring the emergency vehicle into on-coming traffic. The driver should use due regard for the safety of those in all lanes prior to passing any vehicle.

**220.01.06. Seat Belt Usage:**

Seat belts are to be used by all employees at all times while all vehicles are in motion. Drivers, as well as the units OIC are responsible for seeing that all passengers are secured prior to movement.

The only exception to the safety belt use order is during the loading of hose to the rear of the apparatus. If hose is to be loaded while the vehicle is in motion all personnel involved shall be first pointed out to the driver and a SAFETY OFFICER shall position themselves at a point where the driver can see them in their mirrors. In addition, the SAFETY OFFICER shall have a radio and be in communications with the driver for the duration of the operation.

**220.01.07. Back-Up Operations:**

A back-up person will be utilized at all times when operating a vehicle in reverse, regardless of the distance involved.

The back-up person shall be equipped with a portable radio to advise the driver/operator "it is clear to back" and be able to direct the driver if needed.

The driver shall keep the back-up person in sight at all times. If the driver loses sight of the back-up person at any time, the vehicle should be brought to a stop until visual contact is restored. No personnel shall act as a back-up person from the tailboard of any vehicle.

When a back-up person is not available and the driver of the unit is alone, the driver shall stop the vehicle prior to backing and perform a "walk-around" of the vehicle and look at the area to be backed into prior to moving the vehicle. It is stressed that this is only to be used when the driver is alone with the vehicle and backing is the only option. In addition, emergency scenes may require the driver to perform a backing maneuver without the assistance of another person. If this is attempted during an emergency operation, every precaution should be taken to ensure the safety of all involved.

**220.01.08. FDOT "Open Roads" Guideline**

When traffic related incidents occur it will be a high priority of all responders to clear emergency vehicles from highway travel lanes as soon as possible.

When working an incident where no injuries or other hazards exist operations should be conducted in as expedient a manor as possible considering the severity of the event.

Apparatus should only close those lanes of traffic, which are absolutely necessary to safely conduct firefighting activities or provide for patient care.

On State highways, Incident Commanders should coordinate with law enforcement and FDOT representatives to set up appropriate traffic control measures during extended events. This includes expediting the removal of vehicles at, and around the scene and restoring the roadway to normal as soon as possible.

As soon as local law enforcement or the FDOT, has set up appropriate traffic control measures designed for the safety of all responders, fire apparatus initially used to shield emergency workers should be relocated to an appropriate area.

As always, the Incident Commander is responsible for the safety of all scenes and for the exercising of this guideline.



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