



CHARLOTTESVILLE-ALBEMARLE RESCUE SQUAD

STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE

TOPIC: General Vehicle Operations	S.O.G. # 5.1
Approved by: Lair D. Haugh, Chief	Revised: 7/23/2007 Approved:

Purpose:

To provide a guideline for day-to-day vehicle operations.

Operations:

1. The on-duty crew captain is responsible for and has the authority to direct the location, condition and availability of all vehicles and equipment.
2. No vehicle shall be taken out-of-service for mechanical reasons without notification of the Fleet Operations Officer and Duty Officer.
3. The driver of the vehicle is responsible for notifying ECC of the status of the vehicle and upon its return shall ensure that all supplies used are restocked including fuel and oil.
4. There is to be no smoking in any squad vehicle at any time.
5. Seat belts will be worn by all front seat occupants in the vehicle at all times while the vehicle is in motion. Seat belts will be worn by patient care providers when practical.
6. A pre-probationary member shall not operate any squad vehicle except as needed to gain unit familiarization for a scheduled emergency vehicle operator's course. Such familiarization must occur under one of the following conditions:
 - a. There is a released operator on-board with the pre-probationary member, or
7. A probationary member shall not operate any vehicle under emergency conditions unless in the judgment of the Attendant-in-Charge a life threatening emergency exists requiring the driver to provide patient care.
 - a. The probationary member may then operate the vehicle only if they have successfully completed an approved EVOC course.
 - b. The Fleet Operations Officer may exempt specific probationary members from this limitation upon a written finding that the probationary member has experience in emergency driving in other fire or rescue organizations.
8. Probationary members who have not completed a course approved as an EVOC course by the Office of EMS shall be permitted to operate the vehicle when no patient is being transported and when under the direct supervision of, an accompanied by, a released driver.

Operation Under Emergency Conditions:

1. Virginia law permits emergency vehicles that are displaying warning lights, AND sounding the siren as reasonably necessary, to:
 - a. Park or stand on the roadway;
 - b. disregard signs regulating turning in certain directions, i.e., NO LEFT TURN 8am - 8pm;
 - c. Pass another vehicle at an intersection; and,
 - d. Proceed against a red traffic signal or stop sign



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2. Due regard for the safety of persons and property must be observed by the driver of the emergency vehicle. Whether or not the siren must be sounded is to be judged by traffic and other highway conditions.
 - a. Obviously, it is not necessary to have the siren sounding while stopped in the roadway.
3. Virginia law also allows emergency vehicles displaying warning lights to pass slow or stopped vehicles by driving off the paved surface to the right of such vehicles, with due regard for the safety of persons and property.
 - a. No siren signal is required nor advisable, as any such siren signal might cause the vehicles approached to pull into the path of the emergency vehicle.
4. Virginia law requires drivers of vehicles approached by emergency vehicles sounding their siren and displaying warning lights to, as quickly as traffic and other highway conditions permit, drive to the nearest edge of the roadway, clear of any intersection, and stop until the emergency vehicle passes.
5. The passing emergency vehicle must be operated with due regard to the safety of persons and property.
6. In addition to those permitted actions set forth in paragraph 1 above, Virginia law permits emergency vehicles operated as set forth in paragraph 1 to exceed the posted speed limit, again, having due regard for the safety of persons and property.
 - a. Squad vehicles should not exceed the posted limit by more than 10 miles per hour while responding to calls. Squad vehicles will observe the posted speed limit at all other times.
7. Nothing in Virginia law exempts the driver of an emergency vehicle from prosecution for reckless driving or from civil liability for failure to use proper care in the operation of the emergency vehicle. In Virginia, reckless driving includes driving 20 or more miles per hour over the posted speed limit.
8. Nothing in Virginia law allows a squad member operating their personal vehicle to exceed the speed limit, pass through a red light, pass vehicles by driving off the paved surface on the right, or to do any of the other things mentioned in this section.
9. Prior to entering an intersection against a red traffic signal or against a stop sign, when operating in the emergency mode, all operators should come to a complete stop and determine that passage is safe.
10. Responses to calls dispatched for purposes of public service (i.e., to assist a person back into bed) shall be run non-emergency unless to do so would unreasonably delay the response.
11. When, in the discretion of the AIC, a patient appears stable after examination and in consideration of the mechanism of injury, transport to a medical facility should be non-emergency unless to do so would unreasonably delay delivering the patient to the facility.
12. Any complaints made by private citizens or public officials about improper driving in squad vehicles or private vehicles displaying squad identification while responding to a call will be investigated by the safety committee.
13. All drivers must complete an approved EVOC course.
- 14.** The vehicle is not to be set in motion until the driver receives verbal approval from the AIC and it is safe to do so.

Vehicle Damaged or Involved in an Accident:

1. An accident is defined as any occurrence in which there is discernible damage to a C-ARS vehicle and/or damage to other property and/or personal injury, as determined by the Duty Officer.



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2. Any other occurrence involving contact between a C-ARS vehicle and another vehicle or structure with no damage or personal injury is defined as a driving incident.
3. In the event of a question as to whether an occurrence is an accident or incident, the Safety Committee will consult with the Fleet Operations Officer and make a determination.
4. The following procedure is to be followed any time a squad vehicle is involved in an accident or incident:
 - a. Do not continue your response or move the vehicle unless you have a priority one patient on-board.
 - b. Notify EOC to place the unit out-of-service, send another unit to continue transport or response.
 - c. Page the Duty Officer to respond to the scene of the incident.
 - d. Page the Fleet Operations Officer if there is a question as to whether the damage makes driving the vehicle unsafe.
 - e. Assess for injuries and hazards and have the appropriate agencies respond.
 - f. Under no circumstances admit guilt or make accusations of blame.
 - g. Have a driver not involved in the accident return the vehicle to quarters or towed at the discretion of the Duty Officer and/or Fleet Operations Officer to an appropriate location.
 - h. Have the Duty Officer prepare a report to be submitted to the Safety Committee and Chief.
 - i. Prepare a Special Incident Report Form and submit a copy to the Chief and Safety Committee.