

**TOWN OF WATERTOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT
STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES**

**SECTION: Apparatus Operation
SUBJECT: Driving Emergency Vehicles
REVISED: 03/2019**

PURPOSE:

To establish Fire Department policy relative to driving/operating fire apparatus, and other department owned vehicles during emergency and non-emergency responses. To comply with NFPA 1500, and 1002.

POLICY:

- A. All members shall follow departmental guidelines for safe driving.
- B. Whenever parking, the wheel chocks provided with the fire apparatus shall be utilized at all times, except when parked in their stations.
- C. Members driving fire department vehicles shall observe the speed limit (never exceed a speed which is safe, reasonable and proper for existing conditions).
- D. When backing fire apparatus, a member shall serve as a guide to assist the driver and insure a safe backing operation. For backing the aerial truck into a fire station, two members shall serve as guides, one in the back and one in the front to ensure the nothing on the bucket hits the door header.
- E. If no member is able to assist in backing, the driver will do a complete walk around of the apparatus to check for hazards before proceeding.
- F. Members driving fire department vehicles shall utilize defensive driving techniques.
- G. Fire department members driving emergency vehicles shall use extreme caution when approaching and traversing street intersections.
- H. No member shall drive any fire department vehicles until a departmental approved Emergency Vehicle Driving Course has been completed, they have completed the requisite State and departmental apparatus operations training and have demonstrated their successful operation of the apparatus to the Foreman of that vehicle, the Station Captain and the department Chief or to those appointed by the Chief to test driver-operators.
- I. Fire department members driving emergency vehicles shall utilize warning devices in accordance with guidelines set forth.
- J. Fire department members driving emergency vehicles shall use extreme caution on approach to the emergency scene.
- K. Drivers must hold a valid New York State driver license and have a minimum of three years driving experience.
- L. Vehicle headlights shall be on at all times.
- M. The ladder truck will respond first to all fire alarm and structure fire calls on the west side of the town using appropriate routes deemed necessary except for Mall calls.
- N. Qualified operators shall pass proficiency testing at least annually to include driving and operating the apparatus. See attached checklist.
- O. Although the apparatus is equipped with Opticom Emitters, never assume the traffic signals will change – use caution while responding.
- P. Seat belts shall be worn at all times while riding in or driving apparatus.

- Q. Protective clothing, except helmets should be worn while responding. Operators are not required to wear turnout coats if they inhibit safe operation.

DEFINITIONS:

- A. NFPA 1500 – Health and safety for firefighters Section 6.2 and 6.3 drivers/operators of fire department vehicles.
- B. NFPA 1002 – qualifications for apparatus vehicle drivers
- C. NYS V&T LAW – section 100 definitions of emergency vehicles and emergency operations, and defines a true emergency.

RESPONSIBILITY:

All fire department members are responsible to drive defensively and in a safe manner. It is also the members responsibility to report any unsafe operation or violations of these guidelines.