

Pinos Altos Volunteer Fire Rescue - Standard Operating Guidelines

Category: Operations	SOG 3.6
Approved: 12-05-12	Title: Emergency Vehicle Operation

3.6.1 Purpose

The purpose of this guideline is to reduce injuries and financial loss by establishing guidelines to lessen vehicle accidents. This guideline establishes minimum qualifications for drivers, general driving rules and emergency response procedures.

3.6.2 Guidelines

3.6.2.1 Qualifications

3.6.2.1.1 All personnel, as a condition of driving, should understand and obey all local, state, and federal laws and regulations as they pertain to driving.

3.6.2.1.2 All personnel who drive a Fire/Emergency Medical Services (EMS) vehicle are required by Grant County Vehicle Accident Prevention Policy to possess a valid New Mexico driver's license classed for the particular type of vehicle to be driven. Personnel should comply with all requirements established by New Mexico for the appropriate class of license.

3.6.2.1.3 Personnel should comply with all requirements established by Pinos Altos Volunteer Fire Rescue (PAVFR) for the safe operation of department vehicles.

3.6.2.1.4 Drivers of all PAVFR vehicles, must be a member of the PAVFR Department, be at least 18 years of age, and meet the minimum training requirements set forth in this guideline.

3.6.2.1.5 All drivers should successfully complete the following training requirements for vehicles that are over 26,001 pounds (Engines and Tenders):

- a. Departmental approved Emergency Vehicle Operators Course (EVOC).
- b. At least ten (10) hours or one hundred (100) miles of behind wheel training (per type of vehicle).

3.6.2.2 General Driving Rules

3.6.2.2.1 Vehicle drivers should operate apparatus in such a manner as to not discredit themselves or PAVFR.

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- 3.6.2.2.2 Members should only ride or travel in the approved and provided seating of the vehicle, unless a specific space and restraints are provided on the vehicle for fire suppression while in motion. There should be no back/side step or front bumper riding on any Fire/EMS apparatus.
- 3.6.2.2.3 Drivers may not attempt to drive any PAVFR vehicle while under the influence of any alcoholic beverages or after taking any medicine, drug, or compound which may impair their senses or interfere with their ability to operate such vehicle.
- 3.6.2.2.4 All persons should be sitting in seats and should wear seat belts at all times while the vehicle is in motion.
- 3.6.2.2.5 Drivers should not move an apparatus without first checking around the entire vehicle to ensure that all personnel are secured (seated and belted) and that all vehicle equipment, doors, and compartments are secure.
- 3.6.2.2.6 Apparatus should not be placed in such a position as to endanger either personnel or the apparatus.
- 3.6.2.2.7 Apparatus should only be taken off road when absolutely necessary. Apparatus taken off road should be maneuvered with extreme caution and discretion. Drivers should carefully check the ground conditions prior to going off road.
- 3.6.2.2.8 Under no circumstances can any PAVFR vehicle ever be used to push another vehicle for any reason.
- 3.6.2.2.9 Non emergency towing of a vehicle is not recommended. In this situation, refer to a professional tow company. When in a situation requiring an emergency tow, use either the winch or the tow chains and straps attached to tow hooks on both vehicles.
- 3.6.2.2.10 Apparatus drivers should back their vehicles safely and only after another member is at the rear of the apparatus to provide backing directions. All other personnel should remain in the apparatus until directed by the driver to dismount. In the event the driver is alone, he/she should obtain backing assistance. If no assistance is available, the vehicle should be backed exercising extreme caution. Prior to backing, the driver should dismount the vehicle and check around the entire vehicle to ensure that the vehicle can be backed in a safe manner.
- 3.6.2.2.11 Apparatus drivers should place a wheel chock in the proper position immediately after stopping and dismounting from the cab of the vehicle, other than when in quarters. Foot brakes, spring parking brakes, and "PARK" position on automatic transmissions will not be the sole means for holding vehicles stationary. An exception is for vehicles weighing less than 26,001 pounds (Brush Trucks or Minis) need not place chocks when stopping in mobile operations.

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- 3.6.2.2.12 Vehicles emerging from an alley, driveway, or building should stop immediately prior to driving onto a sidewalk or roadway and should yield the right-of-way to pedestrians and other vehicles to avoid collisions.
- 3.6.2.2.13 Drivers and officers should not drive, or knowingly permit a vehicle to be driven, which is in such an unsafe condition as to endanger any person or property, or in violation of any existing Standard Operating Guideline.
- 3.6.2.2.14 Fire vehicle drivers who are involved in accidents may be subject to drug and alcohol screening. If an apparatus is involved in an accident, the "PAVFR Vehicle/Equipment Incident Damage Report" is to be completed. All vehicle malfunctions are to be reported immediately to the Battalion Chief of the station where the vehicle is assigned.
- 3.6.2.2.15 Drivers should use extreme caution when operating apparatus in low overhead areas and narrow spaces. When safe passage of the apparatus is questionable, the driver should stop and allow a member to dismount and guide the driver through such spaces. Should safe passage be questionable through such areas, an alternate route should be sought.
- 3.6.2.2.16 Vehicles should not park in designated fire lanes and posted no parking or designated handicap areas when on routine non-emergency business, such as preplans or training exercises.
- 3.6.2.2.17 Smoking is not permitted by any member while in an apparatus.

3.6.2.3 Emergency Response Procedures

The following provision under this guideline will not relieve any driver of an emergency vehicle from exercising due regard for the safety of others which means that a reasonably careful person performing similar duties and under similar circumstances would act in the same manner. These provisions will not protect the driver from consequences of his/her reckless disregard for the safety of others. Drivers should use prudence when operating any emergency vehicle. Drivers that choose to disregard provisions in the section may be held personally liable for their actions.

- 3.6.2.3.1 Emergency vehicle drivers should observe all speed limits at all times.
- 3.6.2.3.2 At night and during inclement weather, speed should be reduced below the posted speed limit as necessary. In all instances, extreme caution should be observed.
- 3.6.2.3.3 Emergency vehicle drivers should reduce the speed of the vehicle sufficiently at all intersections to negotiate a full stop when the intersection cannot be safely entered. All emergency vehicle drivers should yield the right-of-way to any vehicle that is already in an intersection and should not enter an intersection until all oncoming traffic has yielded the right-of-way and the intersection can be negotiated safely. Upon entering

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the intersection, the vehicle should be under complete control and driven at such a speed that it can be safely stopped to avoid a collision should another vehicle enter the intersection. Emergency vehicle drivers should realize the 'right-of-way' must be granted by the other driver.

3.6.2.3.4 When an emergency vehicle is the first responder to a true emergency in the PAVFR District, the vehicle driver should use audible and visual warning devices.

True emergency is defined as a situation in which there is a high probability of death or serious injury to an individual or significant property loss.

3.6.2.3.5 Emergency vehicle drivers should be aware of the running routes of other companies and be alert for other responding apparatus. The right-of-way for two (2) responding pieces of apparatus should be determined by the following sequences:

- a. Apparatus having the right-of-way by traffic control devices.
- b. Apparatus that will be traveling through an intersection without negotiating any turns should have preference over vehicles having to turn.
- c. Apparatus negotiating a right hand turn at an intersection should have preference over apparatus that must turn left.
- d. The first vehicle in the intersection should have the right-of-way.

3.6.2.3.6 When emergency vehicle drivers are responding behind another responding emergency vehicle, they should use extreme caution. The driver should reduce the speed of the vehicle and/or regulate the travel distance between the two vehicles to negotiate a full stop and avoid a collision if the vehicle in front stops abruptly. The vehicle driver should be prepared to negotiate a full stop and avoid a collision if other vehicles pull into his/her path after yielding the right-of-way to the first vehicle.

3.6.2.3.7 Emergency vehicle drivers should not overtake or pass other responding emergency vehicles, unless they are given the right-of-way by the forward vehicle and driver, and it is safe to do so.

3.6.2.3.8 Emergency vehicles should be driven on the right hand side of the center line of roadways except when passing. This also applies when there is a median strip in the center of the road. Drivers should not travel on the left side of the median strip or center dividing line unless necessary due to congested traffic. When crossing left of center and entering oncoming traffic, the driver should slow the vehicle down to 20 miles per hour or less, depending on the speed limit and road conditions.

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- 3.6.2.3.9 When overtaking and passing motorists, emergency vehicle drivers should pass on the motorists' left side except when the motorists have stopped at an intersection making a left turn, or when the motorists have pulled to the extreme left of the roadway and indicated by their actions that they are aware of the emergency vehicle's presence. Drivers may then pass on the motorists' right side, but should exercise extreme caution.
- 3.6.2.3.10 Emergency vehicle drivers may travel against traffic on one-way streets and lanes only when the emergency is in that section of that street or lane, not as a means of taking a shorter route. Whenever it is necessary to travel the wrong way on a one-way thoroughfare, they should reduce the speed of the vehicle to negotiate a full stop to avoid a collision and proceed with extreme caution. At no time during this maneuver should the vehicle's speed exceed 20 miles per hour or the speed limit, whichever is less.
- 3.6.2.3.11 The use of audible and visual emergency warning signals should not be permitted on a moving emergency vehicle while involved in non-emergency activity or any out-of-district emergency call.
- 3.6.2.3.12 Emergency vehicle drivers should not proceed across a railroad crossing if the warning devices are operating or the gates are lowered.
- 3.6.2.3.13 Emergency vehicle drivers should stop for all school buses displaying flashing lights, and should proceed only after the driver of the school bus signals that it is safe to do so and all flashing lights are turned off.
- 3.6.2.3.14 When approaching the scene of any emergency, emergency vehicle drivers should slow down well in advance so as not to endanger personnel and equipment already on the scene as well as citizen spectators. Apparatus should be parked in accordance with the Incident Commander's instructions. Every attempt should be made to avoid blocking roadways so as not to impede other apparatus. Apparatus should be positioned so that it has emergency and safe egress at all times.
- 3.6.2.3.15 Apparatus should be utilized as a barrier from oncoming traffic whenever possible. When acting as a barrier, apparatus warning lights should remain on, and at least (3) florescent and retro-reflective warning devices such as traffic cones, illuminated warning devices such as highway flares, or other appropriate warning devices should be used to warn oncoming traffic of the emergency operations and the hazards to personnel operating at the incident.