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OPERATIONS MANUAL

STANDARD INSTRUCTION 02 SPECIAL RESPONSE GUIDELINES

SECTION 45 TOLL ROADS/EXPRESSWAY

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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish policies and procedures for San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD) personnel in the use of SR-125 (toll road) and the I-15 Expressway.

II. SCOPE

This policy shall apply to all sworn San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD) personnel.

III. AUTHORITY

The fire chief authorizes the information within this policy.

IV. POLICY

A. State Route 125 (SR-125)

SR-125 is a 10-mile toll road which extends from SR-54 in Spring Valley south through eastern Chula Vista to SR-905. The Expressway Operations Center monitors 80 live cameras which are located along the length of SR-125. There are no call boxes, so requests for emergency aid are initiated at the Expressway Operations Center.

1. Emergency Response Guidelines

Responding SDFD units shall be aware of the following operating procedures regarding emergency responses on SR-125:

- a. There is no charge to SDFD first-responder or transport units when responding to incidents on SR-125 or when using SR-125 to reach an incident.
- b. Depending on the location of the incident, the Expressway Operations Center will contact Heartland Communication Center or Metro Zone Emergency Command and Data Center (ECDC).
- c. 911 calls from drivers on cell phones are routed to the California Highway Patrol (CHP), then to ECDC.
- d. If an emergency response is generated through Heartland Communication Center, two first-responder units will be dispatched, each from opposite directions.

2. Fire Apparatus Equipped with Transponders

- a. Select engine companies that routinely respond and use SR-125 are issued transponders.
- b. When completing an apparatus change out, the transponder is taken from the front-line apparatus to be used on the reserve apparatus.

B. Interstate 15 Express Lanes

1. There are 20 miles of express lanes along the I-15 freeway stretching north from just north of SR-52 at SR-163 to SR-78 in Escondido.

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2. There are four lanes with a moveable barrier which allows Caltrans to make up to three lanes available to drivers during rush hours in the peak direction.
3. Concrete barriers separate the express lanes from the main lanes for sixteen miles between SR-163 and Via Rancho Parkway.
4. More than 20 access points provide direct access from the main traffic lanes to the express lanes approximately every two to three miles.
5. Direct access ramps allow immediate access to the express lanes directly from surface streets and transit stations, eliminating the need to travel across multiple lanes of traffic to enter and exit express lanes. They are located at Escondido, Del Lago, Rancho Bernardo, Sabre Springs, and Miramar College transit stations.
6. General emergency response procedures and considerations:
 - a. Emergency crews responding to incidents in the express lanes should enter the express lanes in the direction of traffic flow to reach the incident. This will allow for emergency vehicle blocking procedures to ensure crew safety.
 - b. Many segments of the express lanes are at different elevations than the main freeway lanes.
 - c. Officers may request an additional engine company to respond in the opposite direction of the express lane in case of severe traffic in the affected lane.
 - d. Emergency response vehicles shall not drive against traffic of any express lane segment without having the express lanes completely shut down. This action should only be taken as a last resort, and then only with the coordination of the CHP.
 - e. Officers should consider the use of a helicopter in cases of extreme traffic gridlock.
7. Quick release barricades
 - a. Quick release barricades are installed to allow access to the southern segment of the express lanes from I-15 main freeway lanes.
 - b. Emergency response vehicles are not able to utilize these barricades for access due to the fact they are too narrow to safely enter.
 - c. They may be used as an access point for other vehicles.

C. Toll Road Use Procedures

1. Any time a vehicle (without a toll road transponder) uses a toll road for emergency operations, the supervisor or driver operator must communicate to the Emergency Command and Data Center (ECDC) battalion chief via email at sdfdmzcommandbc@sandiego.gov the following:
 - a. Date and time

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- b. Apparatus number
- c. License number
- d. Make/model of vehicle
- e. Strike team or incident number