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OPERATIONS MANUAL  
STANDARD INSTRUCTION 01 FIRE SUPPRESSION  
SECTION 09 RESPONSE GUIDELINES

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<b>TITLE</b> O P E R A T I O N S   M A N U A L	<b>STANDARD</b> <b>INSTRUCTION</b> 01		<b>DEPARTMENT</b> F I R E - R E S C U E
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**I.     PURPOSE**

To establish procedural guidelines that will allow a safe and timely response while complying with the policies and procedures of San Diego Fire-Rescue Department, the City of San Diego and the California Vehicle Code.

**II.    SCOPE**

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

**III.   AUTHORITY**

The fire chief authorizes the information within this policy.

**IV.    POLICY**

A.     Accountability

1. All SDFD employees operating emergency and non-emergency department vehicles will abide by this policy.
2. Emergency response (code 3) does not absolve the driver of the responsibility to drive with due regard.
3. Drivers will be held personally responsible for their actions.
4. Drivers are directly responsible for the safe operation of emergency vehicles.
5. Company officers are ultimately responsible for the safe operation of emergency vehicles.

B.     California Vehicle Code Regulations Pertaining to Code 3 Operations

1.     21055 CVC-Exemption of Authorized Emergency Vehicles  
“The driver of an authorized emergency vehicle is exempt from the rules of the road under all the following conditions:”
  - a.     “If the vehicle is being driven in response to an emergency call or while engaged in rescue operations or.....is responding to, but not returning from, a fire alarm...”
  - b.     “If the driver of the vehicle sounds a siren as may be reasonably necessary and the vehicle displays a lighted red lamp visible from the front as a warning to other drivers and pedestrians.”

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2. 21055 CVC-To legally function as an emergency vehicle

- a. The vehicle must be responding to an emergency incident.
- b. A lighted lamp exhibiting a red light is visible from a distance of 1000 feet to the front of that vehicle.
- c. A siren is sounded as is reasonably necessary as a warning to other drivers and pedestrians.

3. 21056 CVC-Effect of Exemption

"Section 21055 does not relieve the driver of a vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons using the highway, nor protect them from the consequences of an arbitrary exercise of the privileges granted in that section."

4. 21806 CVC-Authorized Emergency Vehicles

"Upon the immediate approach of an authorized emergency vehicle which is sounding a siren and which has at least one lighted lamp exhibiting red light...the surrounding traffic shall, except as otherwise directed by a traffic officer, do the following:"

"The driver of every other vehicle shall yield the right-of-way and shall immediately drive to the right-hand edge or curb of the highway, clear of any intersection, and thereupon shall stop and remain stopped until the authorized emergency vehicle has passed."

5. 21807 CVC-Effect of Exemption

"The provisions of Section 21806 shall not operate to relieve the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons and property."

6. 22350 CVC-Basic Speed Law

"No person shall drive a vehicle upon a highway at a speed greater than is reasonable or prudent having due regard for weather, visibility, the traffic on, and the surface and width of, the highway, and in no event at a speed which endangers the safety of persons or property."

C. Emergency Warning Devices

1. Traffic preemption devices will only be used when all warning devices are operating.

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2. A siren will be sounded as is reasonably necessary as a warning to other drivers and pedestrians.
3. During a “no code” response, the vehicle is to be driven in a routine, non-emergency manner. No warning devices, including traffic preemption devices, shall be utilized.

D. Code 3 Operations

1. SDFD vehicles responding code 3 are to be operated with ‘due regard’ for safety or with the normal flow of traffic when favorable conditions exist.  
Due Regard (definition): How a reasonably careful person performing under similar circumstances would act.
2. Emergency vehicles shall come to a complete stop at all ‘controlled intersections’.  
Controlled Intersections (definition): Any intersection controlled by a red or yellow traffic light, stop sign, or yield sign.
3. Emergency vehicles shall not exceed the posted speed limit when entering intersections with a green light.
4. When approaching heavily congested intersections during emergency responses, avoid forcing civilian vehicles into an intersection against the right of way.
5. SDFD employees violating a red light at a photo enforcement intersection, whose action cannot be cleared by a documented response, will be financially responsible for the citation. The driver and captain/supervisor may face disciplinary action.
6. Emergency vehicle drivers must drive defensively, and be prepared for unexpected, inappropriate actions of others.
7. During inclement weather or hazardous road conditions, vehicles shall drive at reduced speeds as appropriate, and at no time exceed the posted speed limit.
8. The posted speed limits during emergency responses on freeways/highways may be exceeded by 10 mph, if favorable conditions exist.
9. Freeway responses shall be “no code” unless in the opinion of the company officer a “code 3” response would be advantageous or more appropriate.

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10. Responding emergency vehicles will routinely use the lane closest to the center of the street, in the direction of travel.
11. When emergency vehicles must travel into oncoming traffic lanes, the maximum permissible speed is 15 mph.
12. If a vehicle stops in the path of an emergency vehicle, it may be passed on the right once it is reasonably established that the vehicle is completely stopped.
13. Do not pass another emergency vehicle unless communications for such a maneuver has been completed.  
  
Emergency vehicles canceled en-route shall reduce code when it is safe to do so. Reducing code should take place once the emergency vehicle is clear of intersections or past traffic that has yielded the right of way.
14. Staff and support vehicles will normally respond no-code to incidents, unless requested code-3 by the incident commander.
15. When responding code 3 and approaching a school bus displaying red lights and/or a stop sign clapboard, on either side of an undivided roadway, emergency vehicles will come to a complete stop. Once the driver has made visual contact with the bus driver, or can be reasonably assured that it is safe to pass, the emergency vehicle may do so at 15 mph.
16. At no time shall any SDFD vehicle be driven through or around a railroad crossing when crossing gates and/or alarms are activated. Notify ECDC if response will be delayed.
17. Firefighters may drive fire apparatus code 3 while a rated engineer is on the apparatus. The firefighter must be properly licensed and certified on the particular apparatus. Firefighters in an out-of-class assignment have all the responsibility and authority of an engineer.

E. City Streets, Highway, and Freeway Emergencies

1. Where practical, emergency vehicles should be parked off the roadway to allow normal traffic flow and access for other emergency vehicles.
2. Where necessary, an emergency vehicle should be placed to protect the scene, patients, and emergency personnel.
3. Emergency vehicles should be positioned so as to afford maximum protection for the work zone, and visibility to oncoming traffic based on environment and physical road conditions. Company officers should consider requesting additional resources as necessary to ensure maximum protection.

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4. When responding to emergencies on freeways and city streets, ambulances should park in front of the engine or truck companies to provide maximum protection of the work zone.
5. Company officers shall make every effort to coordinate scene protection with law enforcement officials.

F. Safe Driving Practices

1. SDFD personnel are required to use seat belts at all times when operating emergency and non- emergency vehicles.
  - a. Seatbelts should be used whenever possible when treating a patient in the back of an ambulance. If sitting for a prolonged period of time, seat belts will be used.
2. Prior to apparatus movement company officers, supervisors and drivers will ensure:
  - a. Crewmembers are seated with seat belts fastened
  - b. Equipment is secured
  - c. Compartment and cab doors are secured
3. Safe Backing Practices
  - a. Backing should be avoided
  - b. Standardized hand signals shall be used for backing (reference Drill Manual)
  - c. Emergency vehicles that are backing shall utilize code 3 warning lights, and sound a horn twice to signify the beginning of movement
  - d. All crew members will assist the driver throughout the backing process
  - e. Crew members will be at the rear of the apparatus, on the ground, on either side, and will utilize the back-up buzzer if so equipped.
  - f. The captain/supervisor will be on the ground in a position to ensure a safe backing operation.
  - g. If the driver loses sight of the backer, they shall immediately stop until contact is re-established.
  - h. Company officers, drivers, and crew members can be held responsible for backing accidents.
  - i. Personnel on foot are to refrain from entering traffic lanes at any time when backing into stations.

G. Chock Block Usage

1. All SDFD personnel, operating any vehicle other than an ambulance, passenger car or sport utility, are required to use a chock block when the vehicle is parked or left unattended. Supervisors will be accountable for the proper use of chock blocks.

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2. Fire apparatus when parked inside of a fire station, are exempt from wheel chock usage if:
  - a. The vehicle is not running.
  - b. A parking brake device is operational and in use in conjunction with SDFD approved “rack” with the left rear tires cradled within it.
  
3. Chock blocks at emergency incidents
  - a. Engine companies may chock either driver’s side front or rear tires.
  - b. Truck companies must chock the driver’s side front tires only.  
During aerial operations, both front tires are to be chocked to prevent movement of the truck.
  - c. All other vehicles will typically chock the left rear tire.