

**PHOENIX REGIONAL
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**

DRIVER SAFETY

M.P. 205.08

08/26-R

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PURPOSE

This procedure identifies the minimum standards for the operation and supervision of emergency vehicle movement and safety.

ARIZONA MOTOR VEHICLE CODE AND SAFETY

It is the responsibility of the driver of each Fire Department vehicle to drive safely, in a reasonable and prudent manner at all times. Vehicles shall be operated in compliance with the Arizona Motor Vehicle Code. This code provides specific legal exceptions to regular traffic regulations, which apply to properly equipped and authorized Fire Department vehicles only when responding with lights and siren to an emergency incident or when transporting a patient to a medical facility. Under ARS 28-624, *Authorized Emergency Vehicles*, emergency response (Code 3) drivers must exercise due regard for the safety of all persons and are not protected from the consequences of reckless disregard for the safety of others. The driver of the emergency vehicle is responsible for its safe operation at all times. This responsibility includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. All City of Phoenix employees are required to wear seat belts at all times when operating a City vehicle.
2. Anyone riding as a passenger/attendant in a City vehicle is also required to wear seat belts (e.g., Rescue, Engine, Ladder, Utility, Squad, Staff Vehicle, etc.). The Driver and/or Company Officer of the vehicle will confirm that all personnel and riders are on board, properly attired, with seat belts on, before the vehicle is permitted to move.
3. Drivers shall avoid backing whenever possible. Where backing is unavoidable, spotters shall always be used. If no spotter is available, the driver shall dismount and walk completely around the apparatus to determine if obstructions are present before backing (Refer to M.P. 205.08A, Standard Signals for Backing of Fire Department Apparatus).
4. All personnel shall ride only in regular seats provided with seat belts. Riding on tailboards or in other exposed positions is not permitted on any vehicle at any time.
5. The unique hazards of driving on or adjacent to the fire ground require the driver to use extreme caution and to be alert and prepared to react to the unexpected.
6. Drivers must consider the dangers their moving vehicle poses to fire ground personnel and spectators who may be preoccupied with the emergency and may inadvertently step in front of or behind a moving vehicle.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE POLICY

Phoenix Fire Department vehicles shall be operated in a manner that provides for the safety of all persons and property. Prompt, safe response shall be attained by:

1. Leaving the station in a standard professional manner;
2. Quickly mounting apparatus;

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3. All personnel on board, seated with seat belts on;
4. Station apparatus bay doors open fully;
5. Driving defensively and professionally at reasonable speeds;
6. Knowing where we are going (i.e., your destination and routing), effectively managing multiple other tasks (e.g., Mobile Computer Terminal monitoring, alarm room updates, road closers, staging locations, hydrant locations, etc.); and
7. Using warning devices to move around traffic and to request the right-of-way in a safe and predictable manner.

Fast response shall not be attained by:

1. Leaving quarters before the crew has mounted safely and before the apparatus bay doors are fully open.
2. Driving too fast for conditions.
3. Driving recklessly or without regard for safety.
4. Taking unnecessary chances with negative right-of-way intersections.

CODE 3 EMERGENCY RESPONSE STANDARDS

The following rules govern emergency response:

1. Maximum of 10 mph over the posted speed limit.
2. Recognizing there will be a brief deceleration period, a maximum of 20 mph when traveling in center or oncoming traffic lanes.
3. When traveling in center or oncoming traffic lanes, complete a stop at all stop signs and traffic lights regardless of the color of the light.
4. When traveling with traffic, a complete stop at all red lights and stop signs.
5. In active school zones, Code 3 lights and sirens may be used, but do not exceed the posted speed limit. Consider Code 2 when conditions warrant.

RESPONSE ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Response codes will be displayed on the Mobile Computer Terminal (MCT). If no response code is designated, the response will be Code 2 unless directed by a Company Officer. Officers and Rescue Attendants must press the correlating response code button on the MCT or through notification to the Alarm Room on the appropriate tactical radio channel.

Response codes for all emergency response vehicles will be determined by the Company Officer based on information received from the Alarm Room, time of day, traffic conditions, weather conditions, and other factors.

Rescue units will respond as directed by deployment policy; they do not have the authority to upgrade their response to Code 3 unless directed by the responding or on-scene Company

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Officer. When a Rescue is the “first due” unit on a BLS incident, they will respond as directed by the Alarm Room or the responding Company Officer. Rescue crews should keep the responding Company Officer apprised (by radio) of excessive time delays or other conditions that may warrant an upgrade to Code 3.

CODE 3 DRIVER AND CO-DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

Fire Department emergency response vehicles shall have 2 PFD members in the front seats of the vehicle whenever possible while responding Code 3. In addition to supervisory responsibilities, Company Officers or ranking Officers in the front seats have Co-driver responsibilities.

1. The Driver is responsible for operating the vehicle safely and in compliance with this policy.
2. The Co-driver is responsible for being a second set of eyes and ears anytime a unit is responding Code 3.
3. Driver and Co-driver must be focused on intersection management at any time a PFD vehicle enters an intersection Code 3.
4. Intersection management requires the Drivers' and the Co-driver's undivided attention.
5. The Co-driver and the Driver should be accounting for clearance in all traffic lanes, including pedestrian traffic.
6. Where a complete stop is required by policy, the Co-driver shall announce if it is clear or not clear to proceed. The Driver makes the final decision of when it is clear to proceed.

Note: The Company Officer or ranking Officer is responsible for safety and policy compliance.

CODE 3 DRIVING POLICY

Fire Department Drivers and Co-drivers will comply with the following while operating vehicles Code 3:

1. When responding Code 3, warning lights must be on and sirens must be sounded to warn drivers of other vehicles, as required by the Arizona Motor Vehicle Code.
 - a. The use of sirens and warning lights does not automatically give the right-of-way to the emergency vehicle. These devices simply request the right-of-way from other drivers, based on their awareness of the emergency vehicle.
 - b. Emergency vehicle drivers must make every possible effort to make their presence and intended actions known to other drivers and must drive defensively to be prepared for the unexpected inappropriate actions of others.

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2. Fire Department vehicles are authorized to exceed posted speed limits only when responding Code 3 under favorable conditions. Under these conditions a maximum of 10 mph over the posted speed limit is authorized.
 - a. Recognizing there will be a brief deceleration period, when an emergency vehicle must travel in center or oncoming traffic lanes, the maximum permissible speed shall be 20 mph.
 - b. When an emergency vehicle must use center or oncoming traffic lanes to approach- controlled intersections (traffic light or stop sign), the vehicle must come to a complete stop before proceeding through the intersection, including occasions when the vehicle has a green traffic light.
 - c. Left Hand Turn Lanes: For the purposes of this policy, any designated left-hand turn lane shall be considered an oncoming traffic lane. When operating Code 3 and using a left-hand turn lane for forward travel or lane advancement, emergency vehicles must come to a complete stop and treat the movement as entering oncoming traffic. The only exception is when the left-hand turn lane is being used to execute a left turn under a protected green arrow signal, in which case the vehicle has the right of way and may proceed without stopping.
 - d. When an emergency vehicle approaches a negative right-of-way intersection (red light or stop sign), the vehicle shall come to a complete stop and may proceed only when the Driver can account for all oncoming traffic in all lanes yielding the right-of-way.
3. Code 3 response is authorized only in conjunction with emergency incidents. Unnecessary emergency response shall be avoided. To avoid any unnecessary emergency response, on multi-company responses, the first arriving unit (Incident Commander) will advise additional units to respond Code 2 when appropriate.
4. During an emergency response, fire vehicles should avoid passing other emergency vehicles. If passing is necessary, permission must be obtained through radio communications, using the communications order model.
5. Emergency vehicles shall reduce speed to at or below the posted limit and may continue Code 3, defined in this context as the use of lights and siren only, with no authority to exceed the posted speed. When encountering a School Bus or authorized Crossing Guard displaying a deployed stop sign, emergency vehicles shall come to a complete stop and shall not proceed until the stop sign is fully retracted or removed and all pedestrian traffic

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is confirmed clear by both the Driver and Co-driver. This applies regardless of posted school zone signage. Drivers shall proceed with extreme caution, maintain heightened awareness of pedestrian and vehicle activity, and adjust speed as conditions require. Due to the unique hazards in school zones, downgrading to Code 2 is preferred whenever conditions indicate a safer, more controlled response is necessary. All Code 3 operations in these areas shall be conducted with due regard for public safety.

6. Water Tenders are not permitted to respond Code 3.

ALS AND BLS EMERGENCY MEDICAL TRANSPORT

Response codes for Rescue units during patient transport will be established by the on-scene Company Officer prior to the Rescue unit leaving the scene. If the on-scene Company Officer determines that a Code 3 transport is required, the Company Officer should make every reasonable effort to have a crewmember in the Co-driver position. Emergency medical transport status shall be recorded via LV3 MCT code or via the tactical radio channel to the Alarm Room.

In the event a Rescue must change the response status from Code 2 to Code 3 while en route to a medical facility, the members should make every effort to reassign available personnel to the Co- driver position, and rapid notification should be made to the Alarm Room.

During a transport, if at any time an attendant must remove their seatbelt to treat a critical patient, the following must occur:

1. The attendant must determine the urgency of the needed treatment and the most appropriate time during transport to accomplish the treatment.
2. The Driver will be notified of the needed treatment and will pull over when possible to allow the attendant to perform the treatment. Once the treatment is completed and the attendant is seat-belted, the transport will continue.
3. If the transport needs to continue due to the patient's life-threatening condition or patient care dictates, the attendant should advise the Driver that they are going to be unrestrained to perform critical treatment. The critical treatment will be performed, and the attendant will return to the belted position immediately.
4. The Driver and attendant should communicate about the condition of the patient and changes in driving conditions. If appropriate, the Driver should communicate about upcoming turns, braking, or changes in traffic conditions.

DRIVER/OPERATOR, SUPERVISOR, & MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of the Driver/Operator of each Fire Department vehicle/apparatus to comply with the Arizona Motor Vehicle Code and this policy. When determining whether a

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violation of this policy has occurred, the Fire Department will consider the fact that driving and supervision of policy compliance are inherently divided attention tasks and that human factors can sometimes cause minor deviations from policy requirements. An example of a minor deviation is momentarily exceeding the maximum allowable speed by 5 mph or less. Conversely, an example of a major deviation is traveling through a controlled intersection without stopping when required or exceeding allowable speed limits by 10 mph or more; in these instances, the violation must be reported up the chain of command and will be managed through the disciplinary process.

The Company Officer or ranking Officer in the vehicle is ultimately responsible for policy compliance. The Fire Department recognizes that not all fire department vehicles have the same tools to assist with monitoring policy compliance. For example, when vehicles do not have a passenger speedometer, it could be difficult for a Company Officer to notice **minor** deviations of speed. However, when the Company Officer or ranking Officer recognizes or should reasonably recognize a violation of policy, they have a duty to act to stop the violation.

To ensure the highest level of safety for fire department members and the public, anytime collisions occur involving fire department vehicles or property, a fact-finding review should take place to determine if additional training is warranted, a change in equipment could improve safety practices, or a policy review is necessary.