

# WHAT CAN YOU DO?

## As An Emergency Vehicle Passenger

- Always put on protective clothing before getting in an emergency vehicle.
- Always ride seated in the interior of the emergency vehicle with your seatbelt fastened. Do not loosen your seatbelt when the vehicle is in motion.
- If not completely enclosed by the vehicle, wear a helmet and use eye protection.
- Never ride on the exterior tail board or side running boards of an emergency vehicle.
- Never stand in a moving emergency vehicle.
- Never try to jump onto or from a moving emergency vehicle.
- Ensure that all tools and equipment in passenger and patient treatment compartments are secured safely before the emergency vehicle moves.
- Ensure that the emergency vehicle has come to a complete stop before you unbuckle your seatbelt and exit the vehicle.
- Upon exiting an emergency vehicle, ensure that it is safe to do so. Watch for oncoming traffic, downed wires, and other hazards. Look before you exit.
- When operating on the roadway, wear appropriate personal protective clothing with fluorescent and retro-reflective material.

# WHAT CAN YOU DO?

## As An Emergency Vehicle Passenger (con.)

- If you are performing as a spotter for a backing emergency vehicle always be aware of its direction and location. Never turn your back on a vehicle headed in your direction.
- Never board an emergency vehicle as a responder under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

## As The Officer In Charge

- You are responsible for safe and prudent operations of the emergency vehicle and for the safety of all passengers in the vehicle.

For more information or copies of this publication, please contact:

**Federal Emergency Management Agency  
U.S. Fire Administration**

16825 South Seton Avenue  
Emmitsburg, Maryland 21727  
800-561-3356  
[www.usfa.fema.gov](http://www.usfa.fema.gov)

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# Alive on Arrival

## Tips for Safe Emergency Vehicle Operations



**FEMA**

## DID YOU KNOW?

United States Fire Administration (USFA) Firefighter Fatality Reports show that over 115 firefighters and other emergency responders have died since 1995 from crashes involving emergency vehicles and personal vehicles used in response and other on duty activities by firefighters.

These reports indicate that since 1984 between 20 to 25 percent of firefighter fatalities are from these types of incidents.

These USFA reports further show that over 35 firefighters and other emergency responders have died since 1995 from being struck by vehicles while operating on the roadway at emergency scenes.

These figures do not include the many emergency services personnel who were injured annually from emergency vehicle-related crashes.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

### As an Emergency Vehicle Operator

- Ensure that you are qualified and fully capable of operating the emergency vehicle you are driving.
- Drive with due care. Operate an emergency vehicle as you would if all those in your vehicle and on the road around you were your family.

- Slower means safer. A good safety guideline is not to exceed the posted speed limit. Drive even slower when road conditions or visibility are poor.
- Always stop at intersections with a negative right of way. Proceed through these intersections and railroad crossings only after coming to a complete stop and when you are sure that other vehicles have stopped and given you the right of way.
- At an unguarded railroad crossing, or when your view is obscured at a railroad crossing the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) recommends lowering the emergency vehicle's window, idling the engine, and turning off all radios, fans, and wipers to listen for on-coming trains.
- Never assume that another vehicle is aware of the presence of yours. Today's vehicles have noise insulation, powerful radios, and air conditioning that lessen the effectiveness of horns and sirens. The same could be said for dark tinted windows with emergency lights. Additionally, some emergency lights may be difficult to see in day light.
- Park safely. Park your emergency vehicle away from hazardous areas such as near downed electrical lines, falling debris and structures, flames, toxic gases, and smoke.
- If you park on a roadway, ensure that it can be seen by oncoming traffic by appropriately using the vehicle's emergency warning lights. Do not blind oncoming traffic with the vehicle headlights or other lighting -- turn them off when parked, especially at night. Another emergency vehicle also may be located safely where oncoming traffic can be alerted.
- The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1500 Standard, *Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program* (2002 Edition) states that "Fluorescent and retro-reflective warning devices such as traffic cones with DOT-approved retro-reflective collars and DOT-approved retro-reflective signs stating "EMERGENCY SCENE" (with adjustable directional arrows) and illuminated warning devices such as flares and/or other appropriate warning devices shall be used to warn oncoming traffic of the emergency operations and the hazards to members operating at the incident." (Used with permission from NFPA -- 1 Batterymarch Park; Quincy, MA 02269-9101.)
- Always use the parking brake and appropriately chock the wheels of parked emergency vehicles.
- Don't move your emergency vehicle until you and all passengers are seated safely and wearing seatbelts. If your emergency vehicle does not have seatbelts for every occupant, it would enhance the safety of responders to have them installed.
- Make sure your emergency vehicle is completely stopped before anyone exits.
- Always use a competent spotter when backing your emergency vehicle.
- Never drive an emergency (or any other) vehicle under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Be aware of how any medication may affect your ability to operate an emergency vehicle.

