



Alive on Arrival

No. HS-2012-2 March 14, 2012

Learning Objective: The student shall identify techniques for improved safety during emergency vehicle operations.

Year after year, a leading cause of on-duty firefighter deaths is from vehicle crashes. These should be among the most preventable types for all emergency responders.

What Can Be Done?

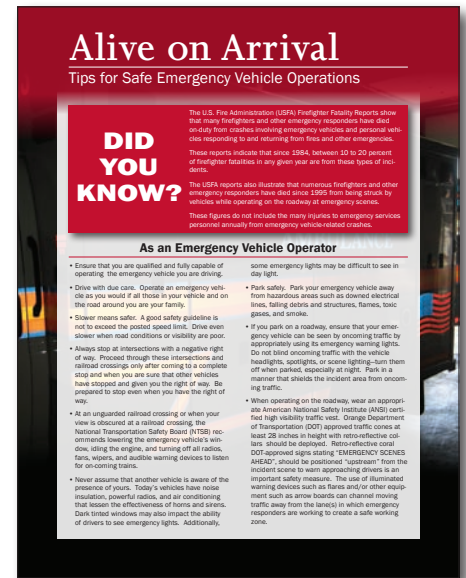
Selection and Training—Have a selection process on who drives emergency vehicles as well as those who are allowed to respond in their own personally owned vehicle (POV). Ensure adequate training for all who drive emergency vehicles. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1002, *Standard for Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator Professional Qualifications* specifies the job performance requirements for personnel who drive and operate fire apparatus. In addition, NFPA 1451, *Standard for a Fire Service Vehicle Operations Training Program* establishes minimum requirements in this area. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) *Emergency Vehicle Operator Course*, and similar courses, provides classroom and operational (driving range) instruction. For POVs, training that details relevant safety procedures and your State law/motor vehicle code related to personal vehicle response should be provided.

Seatbelts—There is no reason that anyone driving or riding as a passenger in any fire department vehicle or personal vehicle should not be wearing a seatbelt.

Slow Down—Slower means safer in any fire department vehicle or while responding in a POV. A good safety guideline is not to exceed the posted speed limit. Drive even slower when road conditions or visibility are poor.

Stop—When driving an emergency response vehicle, 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. Never assume that another vehicle is aware of your presence. Today's vehicles have noise insulation, powerful radios, and air conditioning that lessens the effectiveness of horns and sirens. Dark tinted windows may also impact the ability of drivers to see emergency lights.

The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) has developed the numerous initiatives, programs, and partnerships aimed to prevent vehicle crashes. View them at: www.usfa.fema.gov/fireservice/research/safety/vehicle.shtm



U.S. Fire Administration Publication: "Alive on Arrival—Tips for Safe Emergency Vehicle Operations"

Alive on Arrival

Tips for Safe Emergency Vehicle Operations

DID YOU KNOW? The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) Firefighter Fatality Reports show that many firefighters and other emergency responders have died on-duty from crashes involving emergency vehicles and personal vehicles responding to and returning from fires and other emergencies. These reports indicate that since 1984, however, 20 to 25 percent of firefighter fatalities in any given year are from these types of incidents.

The USFA reports also illustrate that numerous 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 injuries to emergency services personnel annually from emergency vehicle-related crashes.

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 it fitted in your vehicle and on the road around you are 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. Be prepared to stop even when you have 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 windows, setting the engine, and turning off all radios, fans, wipers, and audible warning devices to listen for oncoming trains.
- Never assume that another vehicle is aware of the presence of your. Today's vehicles have noise insulation, powerful radios, and air conditioning that lessen the effectiveness of horns and sirens. Dark tinted windows may also impact the ability of drivers to see 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 downed electrical lines, falling debris and structures, flames, toxic gases, and smoke.
- If you park on a roadway, ensure that your emergency vehicle can be seen by oncoming traffic by appropriately using its emergency warning lights. Do not blind oncoming traffic with the vehicle headlights, spotlights, or scene lighting—turn them off when parked, especially at night. Park in a manner that shields the incident area from oncoming traffic.
- When operating on the roadway, wear an appropriate American National Safety Institute (ANSI) certified high visibility traffic vest. Orange Department of Transportation (DOT) approved traffic cones at least 24 inches in height with retro-reflective collars should be deployed. Retro-reflective cone DOT approved signs bearing "EMERGENCY SITES AHEAD" should be positioned "upstream" from the incident scene to warn approaching drivers in an important safety measure. The use of illuminated warning devices such as flares and other equipment such as arrow boards can channel moving traffic away from the scene in which emergency responders are working to create a safe working zone.