

SOUTH PORTLAND FIRE DEPARTMENT

STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

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| SOG #: | 6.101 | Effective Date: | 8/8/2012 |
| Title: | Emergency Vehicle Operations | # of pages: | 3 |
| Category: | General Operations | Classification: | Red |

1. **PURPOSE:** To inform all Fire Department members of the guidelines that the South Portland Fire Department expects will be followed by all members while operating emergency vehicles.
2. **POLICY:** It is the responsibility of all Fire Department members to be familiar with and follow this SOG when operating emergency vehicles. It is the responsibility of the driver of each Fire Department vehicle to drive safely and prudently at all times.
3. **PROCEDURES:** All Fire Department vehicles shall be operated in a safe and efficient manner. Seat belts shall be worn at all times. The following procedures shall be followed to ensure the safe operation and movement of the department vehicles. Engine companies, Ladder companies and Ambulances should have at all times two SPFD employees in the front seats of the apparatus whenever possible. The exception to this rule would be when an ambulance is transporting to the hospital.

The driver is responsible for operating the vehicle safely. The Co-driver is responsible for being a second set of eyes and ears anytime a unit is responding Code 3. Driver and Co-drivers must be focused on intersection management any time a SPFD vehicle enters into an intersection Code 3. Intersection management requires the Drivers and Co-drivers undivided attention. The Co-driver in addition to the Driver should be accounting for clearance in all traffic lanes, accounting for all pedestrian traffic and announce if it is clear or not clear to proceed.

1. When responding in an emergency mode, the vehicle shall be operated with both the red lights and the siren. In circumstances in which emergency lights are used, the siren power switch will be in the “on” position and will be activated as reasonably necessary to protect the public. Speed will be governed by weather and traffic conditions. At no time shall the emergency lights be used without intent to use the siren. While some circumstances may not require constant siren use, the siren shall be operated in conjunction with the emergency lights whenever approaching:
 - 1) An intersection
 - 2) Obscured roads and driveways
 - 3) Corners
 - 4) When encountering vehicle or pedestrian traffic

2. Emergency lights and siren are utilized to request other traffic to yield in order to expedite travel. At no time will department vehicles exceed the posted speed limits by more than 10 miles per hour. Under less than favorable conditions, the posted speed limit is the absolute maximum permissible. When emergency vehicles must travel in center or oncoming traffic lanes, the maximum permissible speed shall be 20 mph.

Intersections present the greatest potential danger to emergency vehicles. When approaching and crossing an intersection with the right-of-way, drivers shall not exceed the posted speed limit. Department vehicles shall slow down when approaching intersections and shall be able to come to a complete stop at a red light, stop sign, when encountering a stopped school bus with flashing warning lights (may proceed when school bus driver indicates it is safe), or active railroad crossing, before proceeding. Never, ever assume that you have the right of way because you are using the warning lights and siren.

The traffic light interrupter system, which is available at certain intersections of the City are only a tool. While responding to emergencies and utilizing the interrupter system you still must follow all traffic laws as well as this SOG.

3. Operation of any department vehicle, under other than emergency conditions, will be in accordance with existing state and city traffic regulations. All personnel shall be seated with safety devices properly engaged prior to vehicle movement. Seat belts shall be worn at all times.
4. When parking a vehicle, with the engine running, the operator will ensure that the emergency brake is set and chocks are properly placed at the wheel. When parking a vehicle, with the engine off, place the transmission in "Park" or in "Neutral" (for vehicles without "Park"), set the emergency brake and chock the wheel.
5. Backing up equipment is one of the most dangerous operations we do. Backing up should be the last option used due to the inherent danger involved. Operators should always attempt to position the apparatus so that the need for backing will be not be required or reduced as much as possible. Prior to backing up the officer and operator shall decide if backing up can be done safely. When backing up all safety precautions shall be used. This may mean having more than one spotter to ensure a clear path and/or control traffic (vehicle, bikers, or pedestrians) while the backing operation occurs. If at any time the operator loses sight of the spotter(s) or is not confident where the vehicle is the vehicle shall be STOPPED and the situation reassessed. If the public is anywhere near our moving vehicles always use a spotter, primarily to ensure everyone keeps clear of the vehicle. The only time that spotters should not be used is when backing into the station due to the lack of visibility of the spotter to the operator.

Mobile Data Terminals and Electronic Communications:

1. The mobile data computers are intended for fire department business only. At the beginning of every shift the each unit with a MDT needs to reboot the computer and then log on to the system (MDB and LG). All electronic communications while a fire department vehicle is moving needs to be conducted by the Co-driver only. All use of electronic devices while driving a fire apparatus is forbidden. This includes texting and voice calls by the driver.

4. REFERENCES:

- SPFD Memo: August 2, 2005

By Order Of:

Kevin W Guimond

Kevin W. Guimond
Fire Chief