


Northwest Fire/Rescue District Standard Operating Procedures	Procedure	6102 Driver Safety		
	Section	6100 Operating District Vehicles		
	General Section	6000 General Operations		
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**Purpose:** It is the responsibility of the driver of each Fire District vehicle to drive safely and prudently 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 Fire District vehicles **ONLY** when responding to an emergency incident or when transporting a patient to a medical facility. Emergency response (Code 3) does not absolve the driver of any responsibility to drive with due caution. The driver of the emergency vehicle is responsible for its safe operation at all times.

**Scope:** Drivers of Northwest Fire District Vehicles and Apparatus

**Procedure:** The officer in charge of the vehicle is responsible for the safety of all vehicle operations and managing compliance of this procedure. The driver is responsible for the safe operation of the apparatus and the condition/readiness of equipment.


**Code 3 Driving -** 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. 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 presence. 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 and/or inappropriate actions of others.

Fire District vehicles are authorized to exceed the posted speed limit only when responding Code 3 under favorable conditions. This applies only with light traffic, good roads, good visibility, and dry pavement. Under these conditions a maximum of 10 mph over the posted speed limit is authorized. Under less than favorable conditions, the posted speed limit is the absolute maximum permissible.

Code 3 response is authorized only in conjunction with emergency incidents. Unnecessary emergency response shall be avoided. In order to avoid any unnecessary emergency response, the following rules shall apply:

- When the first unit reports on the scene with "nothing showing" or an equivalent report, any additional units shall continue Code 2.
- The first arriving unit will advise additional units to respond Code 2, whenever appropriate.

**Intersections -** 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. When emergency vehicles must travel in center or oncoming traffic lanes, because all other lanes normally available are blocked, the maximum permissible speed of the apparatus shall be 10 mph under the posted speed limit and a maximum of 20 mph within

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100 feet of a four-way intersection. When emergency vehicles must use center or oncoming traffic lanes to approach controlled intersections, (traffic light or stop sign) they must come to a complete stop before proceeding through the intersection, including occasions when the emergency vehicle has green traffic lights.

**Driving Against Traffic** - When approaching a negative right-of-way intersection (red light, 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.

**Backing Vehicles** - See *Procedure 6108 Vehicle Backing*

**Seat Belts** - All District employees are required to use seat belts at all times when operating a District vehicle equipped with seat belts. Anyone riding as a passenger/attendant in a District vehicle is also required to use seat belts; i.e., ambulance, engine, ladder, utility service van, staff vehicle, etc. The Company Officer/driver of the vehicle will confirm that all members and ride-alongs are onboard and properly attired with seat belts on before the vehicle is permitted to move.

All members shall ride only in regular seats provided with seat belts. Riding on tailboards is not permitted on any vehicle at any time.

**Passing of Emergency Vehicles** - 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.


**Defensive Driving** - The unique hazards of driving on or adjacent to the emergency scene requires the driver to use extreme caution and to be alert and prepared to react to the unexpected. Drivers must consider the dangers their moving vehicle poses to emergency scene personnel and spectators who may be preoccupied with the emergency, and may inadvertently step in front of or behind a moving vehicle. When stopped at the scene of an incident, vehicles should be placed to protect members who may be working in the street and warning lights shall be used to make approaching traffic aware of the incident.

**Other Safe Operations** - At night, all necessary vehicle mounted floodlights and any other lighting available shall be used to illuminate the scene provided it does not negatively affect the flow of traffic. All members working in or near traffic lanes shall wear high visibility vests. If it is not necessary to park vehicles in or near traffic lanes, the vehicle should be pulled off the road to parking lots, curbs, etc., whenever possible.

### **Standard Safety Practices:**

Prompt, safe response shall be attained by:

1. Leaving the station in a responsive manner:
  - quickly mounting apparatus

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- all members on board, seated and belts on
  - station doors fully open
2. Driving defensively and professionally at reasonable speeds.
  3. Knowing where you are going.
  4. 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 members have mounted safely and before station doors are fully opened.
2. Driving too fast for conditions.
3. Driving recklessly or without regard for safety.
4. Taking unnecessary chances with negative right-of-way intersections.
5. Intimidating or scaring other drivers.