
Ocean City Fire Department Standard Operating Guidelines

Safety

Subject: Seat Belt Use
Revised: 15 September 2018
Approved: 18 December 2018
Effective: 1 February 2019
Section: 705.00

705.01 Purpose

To establish a guideline to provide maximum protection for all members while riding in or operating Fire Department vehicles and/or other city vehicles.

705.02 Definitions

For the purpose of this guideline, a “service vehicle” means any vehicle owned, leased, or rented by the Town of Ocean City or the Ocean City Volunteer Fire Company, Incorporated.

705.03 Scope

- A. This guideline shall apply to all members operating in any or all capacities of their duties in day-to-day activities and emergency operations.
- B. This guideline also applies to the use of privately owned or other vehicles if used on duty within the scope of Fire Department duties and responsibilities.

705.04 Responsibility

- A. Driver Responsibility – The driver of a service vehicle is responsible for the safe operation of that vehicle at all times, including compliance with all traffic laws as well as the Department’s other policies and procedures related to the operation of emergency vehicles.
- B. Officer Responsibility – The officer in charge of a service vehicle is responsible for supervising the driver and all other assigned personnel. This includes ensuring that the driver complies with all traffic laws as well as the Department’s other policies and procedures related to the operation of emergency vehicles.
- C. All members are required to comply with all safety policies and procedures while driving, operating, riding in or performing any function that involves a service vehicle.

705.05 Statutes and Standards

- A. The Annotated Code of the Public General Laws of Maryland, Title 22 – Transportation, Subtitle § 22-412, governs the usage of seatbelts in vehicles, including emergency vehicles.

705.06 Policy

- E. To ensure the safety of all members, all drivers and passengers, in all service vehicles, shall wear seatbelts.
- F. All members shall use the seatbelt installed by the service vehicle's manufacturer. The seat belt shall be properly and securely fastened when operating or riding in any service vehicle so equipped while on duty.
- G. No member shall modify, remove, deactivate, or otherwise tamper with the service vehicle's seatbelts. This rule does not apply to the Department's mechanics or other authorized repair personnel.
- H. Malfunctioning damaged, or inoperable seatbelts shall be immediately reported to the on-duty supervisor and prompt action shall be taken to repair or replace the damaged or defective equipment.
- I. Fire Apparatus:
 - 1. No member shall stand in the cab to don personal protective equipment (PPE) while the apparatus is in motion.
 - 2. Except as described in E(4) below, the driver shall not move the apparatus until all members are properly and securely fastened. The officer shall verify that all personnel in the vehicle are properly restrained with seatbelts.
 - 3. When responding to emergency incidents on fire apparatus, all members are required to have PPE donned prior to boarding the apparatus; this does not include self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). SCBA shall be donned upon arrival at the incident after the apparatus has come to a full stop. The following steps shall be followed:
 - a. Don PPE, except the helmet, prior to boarding the apparatus.
 - b. Board the apparatus
 - c. Fasten the seatbelt
 - d. Arrive at the destination
 - e. Unfasten seatbelt
 - f. Don SCBA, if necessary
 - g. Exit the apparatus
 - 4. When it is necessary for members to be on the exterior of the fire apparatus for the purpose of repacking hose and it is necessary for apparatus to be moved to accomplish this task, members in the hose bed are not required to wear seatbelts or restraint devices.
- J. EMS Units:
 - 1. All vehicle occupants shall use seatbelts when the vehicle is in motion.
 - 2. All patients on the stretcher shall be secured at all times while the vehicle is in motion.
 - 3. Any individual who is not a member of the Department (police, family...) shall use seatbelts when the vehicle is in motion.
 - 4. When appropriate, child restraint seats shall be used while the vehicle is in motion.
 - 5. Except as described below, all members shall wear seatbelts while in the patient compartment.
 - a. Members may release seat belts when the restraint device impairs their ability to provide necessary patient care. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following: performing CPR, endotracheal intubation, or placing an intraosseous needle.
 - b. Once the patient care task is complete, the member shall reapply the seatbelt.