
Ocean City Fire Department Standard Operating Guidelines

Safety

Subject: Emergency vs Non-emergency Response

Revised: 15 September 2018

Approved: 18 December 2018

Effective: 1 February 2019

Section: 707.00

707.01 Purpose

To establish a guideline that will prioritize the response of emergency vehicles, in order to provide for the maximum safety to responders and the public the department serves.

707.02 Scope

This document applies to all personnel operating fire department vehicles.

707.03 Definitions

- A. As defined in the Maryland Medical Protocols for EMS Providers:
1. Priority 1 – a critically ill or injured person requiring immediate medical attention; unstable patients with a potentially life threatening injury or illness.
 2. Priority 2 – less serious condition, requiring emergency medical attention but not immediately endangering the patient’s life.
 3. Priority 3 – non-emergent condition, requiring medical attention, but not on an emergency basis
 4. Priority 4 – does not require medical attention
- B. Emergency Response/Transport – the driver of the department vehicle is exercising the emergency vehicle driving privileges as enumerated in § 21-106 of the Maryland Transportation Article. When a driver exercises emergency vehicle driving privileges, the driver of a department vehicle shall utilize the vehicle’s audible and visual signals in compliance with § 22-218 of the Maryland Transportation Article.
- C. Non-emergency Response/Transport – the driver of the department vehicle **DOES NOT** exercise the emergency vehicle driving privileges as enumerated in § 21-106 of the Maryland Transportation Article. During a “cold response/transport”, the driver of the department vehicle shall not use emergency lights or sirens. The driver will comply with all applicable traffic laws and regulations, including posted speed limits, traffic control devices, and regulations governing the direction of movement or turning in a specified direction.
- D. Public Service Call – a call for service, either EMS or fire, which is not an emergency. Examples include patient lifting, individuals inconvenienced by a malfunctioning elevator, landing zones...

707.04 Statutes and Standards

- A. The Annotated Code of the Public General Laws of Maryland, Title 21 – Transportation, Subtitle § 21-106, governs the exercise of emergency vehicle privileges.
- B. The Annotated Code of the Public General Laws of Maryland, Title 22 – Transportation, Subtitle § 22-218, governs the use of audible and visual signals on vehicles.

707.05 Policy

A. Public Service Calls – All public service calls shall be a non-emergency response unless otherwise upgraded to an emergency response by an on-duty chief or shift commander.

B. Fire Calls

1. Silent alarm tone

- a. The initial response of all apparatus to calls that utilize the fire alarm tone shall be an emergency response.
- b. At all times the driver of the vehicle is expected to exercise due caution and follow all departmental policies and procedures that regulate the response of emergency vehicles.
- c. An on-duty chief or shift commander may downgrade the response to a non-emergency response at any time.

2. Fire alarm tones

- a. The initial response of all apparatus to calls that utilize the fire alarm tone shall be an emergency response.
- b. At all times the driver of the vehicle is expected to exercise due caution and follow all departmental policies and procedures that regulate the response of emergency vehicles.
- c. An on-duty chief or shift commander may downgrade the response to a non-emergency response at any time.

C. Medical Calls

1. Response

- a. The initial response for all medical calls shall be an emergency response.
- b. At all times the driver of the vehicle is expected to exercise due caution and follow all departmental policies and procedures that regulate the response of emergency vehicles.
- c. An on-duty chief or shift commander may downgrade the response to a non-emergency response at any time.

2. Transport

a. Priority 1 and 2 patients

- i) The transport of priority 1 and 2 patients may be an emergency transport.
- ii) At all times the driver of the vehicle is expected to exercise due caution and follow all departmental policies and procedures that regulate the response of emergency vehicles.
- iii) Regardless of the patient's priority, the primary care provider may direct the driver of the vehicle to proceed with a non-emergency transport.

b. Priority 3 and 4 patients

- i) The transport of all priority 3 and 4 patients shall be a non-emergency transport.

ii) At all times the driver of the vehicle is expected to exercise due caution and follow all departmental policies and procedures that regulate the response of emergency vehicles.

iii) In the event that the priority of the patient should change during transport to priority 1 or 2, the primary care provider may direct the driver of the vehicle to proceed with an emergency transport.