

**SAFETY PROCEDURES
OPERATING EMERGENCY
VEHICLES**

**ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY
FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES
DEPARTMENT
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES
VOLUME-1
Rev. 3/2010**

**105.04
PAGE 1 OF 4**

When responding to emergency calls, all fire apparatus drivers will observe the following rules and regulations:

- A. The Georgia State Law, "Uniform Rules of the Road Act", Code Title 40, Chapter 6, Article 1. [SEE ATTACHMENT A]
- B. Under wet, foggy or any other hazardous weather or road conditions, Fire and Emergency Services Department vehicles will react pessimistically to the conditions encountered.
- C. Fire vehicles should avoid passing other emergency vehicles. If unavoidable, the passing arrangement will be conducted through radio communications.
- D. Fire vehicles should never pass a stopped school bus when the bus is loading or unloading passengers.
- E. Avoid backing where possible; where backing is unavoidable, use spotters at the rear of the vehicle to safely guide the operator. When backing a Fire Apparatus, there shall be at least one spotter with a portable radio at the rear of the apparatus. Emergency lights shall be activated while backing. The apparatus shall be stopped if at any time the spotter is not in plain view of the apparatus operator. If spotters are unavailable, dismount and walk completely around the apparatus before backing.
- F. Ensure that overhead doors at the station are raised for maximum clearance. The driver shall ensure that Shore Line connectors are removed from apparatus and clear from the vehicle before moving the vehicle.
- G. While responding to an emergency scene, all fire vehicles WILL come to a complete stop at ALL stop signs and red signal lights. The driver must then determine that the intersection is clear before proceeding with caution.

The unique hazard of driving on or adjacent to the fireground requires the driver to use extreme caution and alertness, and also requires a prudent speed for the conditions encountered. When driving apparatus on the fireground, drivers should resist the tendency to drive hastily. Drivers must consider the dangers their moving vehicles pose to the fireground personnel and spectators who may be preoccupied with the emergency; and inadvertently step in front of, or behind a moving vehicle. Drivers must also be aware of the potential that exists for vehicle accidents on, or near the fireground due to distractions caused by the emergency.

ATTACHMENT A

O.C.G.A. § 40-6-6

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TITLE 40. MOTOR VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC
CHAPTER 6. UNIFORM RULES OF THE ROAD
ARTICLE 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

O.C.G.A. § 40-6-6 (2009)

§ 40-6-6. Authorized emergency vehicles

(a) The driver of an authorized emergency vehicle or law enforcement vehicle, when responding to an emergency call, when in the pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of the law, or when responding to but not upon returning from a fire alarm, may exercise the privileges set forth in this Code section.

(b) The driver of an authorized emergency vehicle or law enforcement vehicle may:

(1) Park or stand, irrespective of the provisions of this chapter;

(2) Proceed past a red or stop signal or stop sign, but only after slowing down as may be necessary for safe operation;

(3) Exceed the maximum speed limits so long as he or she does not endanger life or property; and

(4) Disregard regulations governing direction of movement or turning in specified directions.

(c) The exceptions granted by this Code section to an authorized emergency vehicle shall apply only when such vehicle is making use of an audible signal and use of a flashing or revolving red light visible under normal atmospheric conditions from a distance of 500 feet to the front of such vehicle, except that a vehicle belonging to a federal, state, or local law enforcement agency and operated as such shall be making use of an audible signal and a flashing or revolving blue light with the same visibility to the front of the vehicle.

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Rev. 3/2010**

**105.04
PAGE 3 OF 4**

(d)(1) The foregoing provisions shall not relieve the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons.

(2) When a law enforcement officer in a law enforcement vehicle is pursuing a fleeing suspect in another vehicle and the fleeing suspect damages any property or injures or kills any person during the pursuit, the law enforcement officer's pursuit shall not be the proximate cause or a contributing proximate cause of the damage, injury, or death caused by the fleeing suspect unless the law enforcement officer acted with reckless disregard for proper law enforcement procedures in the officer's decision to initiate or continue the pursuit. Where such reckless disregard exists, the pursuit may be found to constitute a proximate cause of the damage, injury, or death caused by the fleeing suspect, but the existence of such reckless disregard shall not in and of itself establish causation.

(3) The provisions of this subsection shall apply only to issues of causation and duty and shall not affect the existence or absence of immunity which shall be determined as otherwise provided by law.

(4) Claims arising out of this subsection which are brought against local government entities, their officers, agents, servants, attorneys, and employees shall be subject to the procedures and limitations contained in Chapter 92 of Title 36.

(e) It shall be unlawful for any person to operate an authorized emergency vehicle with flashing lights other than as authorized by subsection (c) of this Code section.

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Rev. 3/2010**

**105.04
PAGE 4 OF 4**

In an effort to reduce maintenance and fuel costs and provide for scene safety, it will be the policy of this department to shut down any apparatus not being utilized at an incident. ***THIS DOES NOT APPLY TO LEVEL 1 STAGING.*** This policy applies for an extended incident where the number of personnel is more critical than the apparatus itself.

The following guidelines will apply:

- The apparatus must be completely off the travel roadway.
- During darkness and low visibility, leave marker lights on.
- Ensure the apparatus is secured by whatever means possible.
- Apparatus placement is in a location where, if needed, it can be retrieved in a reasonable amount of time.

The decision to park and shut off any apparatus will be based on the Incident Commander's ***judgment***, while keeping ***safety*** in mind as his/her main factor for consideration.