

Purpose: To establish procedures/policy for the operation of Cumru Township Fire Department Fire Vehicles under Normal or Routine Driving as well as Emergency Driving circumstances.

Administration: The Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chief and Deputy Chief of Health and Safety will have primary responsibility for administration of this policy within the scope of their job descriptions.

Policy: All personnel operating Cumru Township Fire Department Fire Vehicles shall exercise due regard for the safety of all persons. No task, call, assignment, or incident justifies disregard for public safety. Further, the public expects the fire department to demonstrate exemplary driving behavior. All department personnel who operate fire vehicles will comply with safe driving procedures outlined herein, with particular attention to responding to calls for service and/or engaging in "emergency driving." Emergency warning devices (emergency lighting and siren(s)) shall be used consistent with all legal requirements and any applicable Cumru Township Fire Department Standard Operating Guidelines, for the safety of the public and other firefighters.

Definitions:

Emergency: An imminent life-threatening incident that is in progress, or a sudden occurrence that, in an Officer's opinion based on the information provided or observed, requires an expedient response to protect property and/or life or health of the public.

Normal Flow or Routine Driving: Driving which dictates that vehicle speed is consistent with the normal flow of traffic, obedience to laws pertaining to operation of vehicles and posted signs, adherence to commonly understood "rules of the road," and courtesy.

Emergency Driving: Driving in response to a reported or observed emergency. The risk created by emergency driving must be balanced by the personnel operating fire vehicle with the need to safeguard life and health of persons.

Emergency Equipment: Blinking, rotating, flashing, or alternating emergency lighting and siren(s), designed to give intermittent signals automatically from fire vehicle as a "warning" device. Public Address (PA) equipment is also included.

Officer In Charge (OIC): Fire department officer in command of an incident, drill, detail or other CTFD activity, or the ranking officer on board the vehicle being operated by CTFD personnel.

Procedures

- No one other than a qualified operator may operate a Cumru Township Fire Department Fire Vehicle. The Officer in Charge (OIC) may approve exceptions. Examples of "exceptions" would include but not be limited to: mechanics authorized to repair a vehicle, driver trainees in approved training situations, etc.
- Decisions with respect to the mode of response for CTFD vehicle made by the officer in command of an incident will take precedence over those of the officer on board the vehicle unless the officer on board the vehicle judges conditions to merit changing the mode of response to protect the safety of the personnel on board or the public likely to be affected by the vehicle during response. Examples would include but not be limited to: the officer on board changing vehicle response mode to "normal flow" because of poor road conditions, etc.
- Vehicles not equipped with approved emergency equipment, whether permanently mounted or portable, shall not be operated in a manner as defined under emergency driving in this policy.
- Fire Department personnel shall exercise good judgment and discretion when activating a vehicle's emergency equipment.
- Normal or Routine Driving shall be used at all times when operating Cumru Township Fire Department Fire Vehicle unless the OIC determines an emergency situation dictates that emergency driving is appropriate.

- Emergency Driving may be used if, in the OIC's opinion, an emergency situation dictates that emergency driving is appropriate.
- In the absence of an OIC determination during an incident response, the personnel on board Cumru Township Fire Department Fire Vehicle responding to the incident should follow Policy 8.5 on Vehicle Mode of Response. This policy should also be used by the officer on board the vehicle to determine a default mode of response in the absence of relevant information on scene conditions and risks.
- The operator of Cumru Township Fire Department Fire Vehicle, when responding to an emergency and using the emergency equipment, may:
 1. Park or stand, irrespective of the posted traffic laws;
 2. Proceed past a red signal indication or stop sign, but only after slowing down or coming to a stop as may be necessary for safe operation;
 3. Exceed the maximum speed limits by no more than 10 mph, so long as the driver does not endanger life and/or property;
 4. Disregard regulations governing direction of movement, or over taking vehicles, or turning in specific directions, so long as the driver does not endanger life and/or property.
- The driver of a Cumru Township Fire Department Fire Vehicle when responding to an emergency shall abide by all provisions of PA Vehicle Code Section 3105, Drivers of Emergency Vehicles.
- The authority to drive in a manner consistent with the PA Vehicle Code or the aforementioned procedures does not relieve Officers or drivers of the responsibility of exercising due regard for others. When regulating speed and driving behavior, officers and drivers should give consideration to such factors as the nature and seriousness of the incident being responded to, weather conditions, traffic control devices, character of the area being traversed, traffic volume, traffic patterns and road configurations.

References:

PA Vehicle Code Section 3105