



Effective Date: 07/01/2014

Revised Date: 6/01/2015

**SAFETY, APPARATUS, AND STAGING**

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety of Valencia County staff and public alike while operating an emergency vehicle. As a public safety organization, we must remember that our responsibility for maintaining a safe driving environment begins the moment we first enter a vehicle and ends when we are safely at our destination. With this in mind, all vehicle operators must remain safety conscious and focused at all times.

Policy:

There are calls that do not necessitate the driver to expose personnel or the citizens of Valencia County to the dangers inherent with responding lights and sirens (code 3). The decision to respond in the non-emergency (Code 1) or emergency (Code 3) shall be left to the discretion of the company officer or senior firefighter. This decision will be made using information such as but not limited to; time of call, type of call, building occupancy, building type, specific information given by dispatch or other caller, condition of victim(s), weather conditions etc.

I. Driver/Operator requirements

- a. All driver/operators shall obtain the IFSAC certification of Driver/Operator, or a combination of Pump operations and hydraulics.
- b. Driver operators shall obtain CEVO and recertify annually.
- c. Driver/operator shall obtain a class E license.
- d. Driver/operators must operate the emergency vehicle with due regard and defense mode at all times.
- e. Driver/Operator shall follow and observe applicable state and federal laws.
- f. Driver/operator shall ensure all occupants wear seat belts at all times.
- g. Responding in Personally Owned Vehicles (POV) is forbidden unless otherwise ordered by the command staff. In the event an emergency situation requires POV response the individual must follow all traffic laws and regulations set forth by the State of New Mexico.



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- h. The use of Cell phones during the operation of an emergency vehicle is strictly prohibited.
- II. Response – Non-Emergent, Alarms necessitating code 1 response types are as follows but are not limited to;
- a. Fire alarms - The first due unit to fire alarm calls will use their discretion in selecting a response mode. All others units will respond Code 1 unless advised otherwise by the first due unit.
  - b. EMS Calls - Where the need for scene security exists. If the responding unit is not yet on scene when word is given by law enforcement that scene security has been established, the responding unit may upgrade to a Code 3 response, if needed.
  - c. Carbon monoxide alarms without notice of illness/injury.
  - d. Requests for additional Manpower without the request for code 3 response.
  - e. Lock out or keys left in running vehicles – VCES will only respond to Lock Outs when life or property are at risk. The IC may choose to respond Code 3 for calls involving children during the hotter months of the year. VCES shall advise property owner, if available, that VCES is not responsible for any damages that may occur.
  - f. Investigation of drums, barrels, gas or strange odors - if further information is received that leads the unit(s) to believe that this may be a hazardous materials call with potential for immediate danger to the public, staff will use their discretion in choosing the most appropriate response type.
  - g. Dumpster fires with no potential hazards or exposures noted.
  - h. Smoke in the area (smoke checks) - staff shall obtain as much information as possible from dispatch as to the nature of the smoke and may upgrade to Code 3, if warranted by such information.
  - i. Investigation of smoke in a structure. The first due unit will use discretion in choosing the appropriate response mode using information given during initial dispatch. All other responding units shall respond non-emergent mode (code 1) unless advised otherwise by the first due unit.



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III. Response – Emergent

- a. **Under no circumstance** will drivers run through stop signs or stop lights. The driver shall come to a complete stop at all red lights, stop signs, intersections, rail road crossings and negative rights of ways, insuring that all lanes are accounted for and clear of imposing potential for incident prior to proceeding though.
- b. During Code 3 response VCES vehicles may exceed the posted speed limit with due regard. Speeds shall be regulated by existing road conditions, traffic flow and weather. VCES vehicles shall not exceed 15 MPH while traveling through an active school zone and all emergency equipment shall be turned off.
- c. During Code 3 responses, fire apparatus will avoid passing other responding emergency vehicles. If this is unavoidable, the passing apparatus will request permission to pass via radio communication. This communication will be made and agreed upon prior to the apparatus passing.
- d. When responding to critical calls such as but not limited to; immediate life threat to life or limb, property etc. that may require both ES units, ONLY the primary ES unit will respond code 3, the secondary ES unit or back up unit will respond code 1 unless otherwise requested by the Incident Commander after a scene size up has been given. The secondary unit may assist with scene mitigation however, will remain available to cover other emergencies that arise within the County.

IV. Apparatus placement /staging

- a. The unique hazards of driving on or adjacent to an incident require the Driver/Operator to use extreme caution and alertness. It also requires that a prudent speed for the condition encountered is utilized. Driver/Operators must resist the tendency to drive hastily. They must consider the dangers the moving vehicle poses to emergency personnel as well as civilians on or around an incident.
- b. Whenever possible, Driver/Operators will try to avoid backing the apparatus. When backing is not avoidable and a spotter is available, the use of this spotter is required. In the event a spotter is unavailable the driver/operator will exit the vehicle and perform a walk around ensuring the area is clear of apparatus, equipment, or any



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other type of hazard and the area is clear for backing. Anytime an apparatus is backed, warning lights will be utilized.

- c. Apparatus staging areas shall be designated by IC or in such a way to block traffic for personnel protection on or near a roadway, or a staging area.
- d. Staging on a roadway, the emergency response vehicle shall be staged in a “fend off” position to protect fire and/or EMS operations.
- e. Driver operators shall ensure proper apparatus placement that will not hinder fire ground operations and ensure adequate egress in a timely fashion.
- f. Level 1/Forward staging shall be apparatus placement in the direction of the incident, away from the scene.
- g. Level 2 staging shall be at a designated area established by IC or staging officer.
- h. Driver operators shall ensure proper apparatus placement that will not hinder fire ground operations and ensure adequate egress in a timely fashion.