

LOOKOUTS  
COMMUNICATION  
ESCAPE ROUTES  
SAFETY ZONES

# COUNTY OF VOLUSIA

## SAFETY GRAM

Battalion Commander/Safety  
Officer Barry G. Ellis

October 1, 2005

### VEHICLE CONTROL AND RIGHT-OF-WAY

Drivers of fire apparatus are responsible for the control of their vehicle and to know who has the right-of way when responding to an emergency. The revised Standard Operational Guideline 108.008, Driving Regulation Section IV, b, 4- All drivers shall maintain control of the vehicle that they are operating in such a manner as to provide the maximum level of safety for both their passengers and the general public. Apparatus drivers should be aware that civilian vehicle operators might not react in the manner that is expected or felt to be appropriate. An attempt should be made to have "avoidance" option(s) available when passing or overtaking vehicles. If another vehicle operator fails to yield the right of way to an apparatus, the apparatus driver cannot force the right-of-way, nor assume the right-of-way. Therefore, you do not have the right-of-way until the other vehicle yields to you.

The apparatus driver shall be aware of his/her rate of closure on other vehicles and pedestrians at all times to make sure that a safe following distance is established and maintained. All drivers shall follow the rule for safe following distance and allow one (1) second of following distance for every ten (10) feet of vehicle length for speeds under 40 mph and add one (1) additional second for each ten (10) mph for speeds over 40 mph, plus additional time for inclement weather and traffic conditions.

For example, the driver of a fire engine, which is approximately 30 to 32 feet in length, shall maintain a safe following distance of 3 seconds if they are traveling at 30 mph (1 second x 3 (30 feet long) = 3 seconds). If, however, the driver of a fire engine were traveling at 50 mph, they would leave a safe following distance of 6 seconds ((initial 1 second + 1 second for traveling of 40 mph) x 3 (30 feet long) = 6 seconds).

#### Dispersion level Chart

- Dispersion Range 0-40 is stable air, low fire intensity, less long range spotting.
- Dispersion Range 41-70 is moderate unstable air, increased fire intensity and long range spotting.
- Dispersion Range 70+ is unstable air, high amount of upper lifting, intense fire activity, potential for long range spotting and plume dominated wildfires.

Fireline Handbook Jan.'98

**F**ight fire aggressively, but provide for safety first.  
**I**nitiate all action based on current and expected fire behavior.  
**R**ecognize current weather conditions and obtain forecasts.  
**E**nsure instructions are given and understood.  
**O**btain current information on status.  
**R**emain in communication with crewmembers, your supervisor, and adjoining forces.  
**D**etermine safety zones and escape routes.  
**E**stablish lookouts in potentially hazardous situations.  
**R**emain in control at all times.  
**S**tay alert, keep calm, act decisively.

NWCG Handbook 3

Emergency response in apparatus SOG 108.008 section IV B, 5.

Drivers shall use prudence when operating any emergency vehicle. The following provision shall not relieve any driver of an emergency vehicle from exercising extreme due caution for the safety of all persons. These provisions will not protect the driver from consequences of his/her reckless disregard for the safety of others. Drivers that choose to disregard the provisions of this section will be held personally liable for their action.

Warning lights, electric sirens, and air horns will be used as necessary during emergency response. These devices will not be used when responding to non-emergency request for assistance, after a cancellation is received during an emergency response, or after the first on scene reports “nothing showing”.

When responding to an emergency, drivers may operate the vehicle/apparatus in speeds not to exceed ten (10) miles per hour over the posted speed limit as in accordance with Florida Statute (316.072).

Examples of conditions requiring slower response speeds include but are not limited to;

- a. Slippery road conditions
- b. Inclement weather
- c. Poor visibility
- d. Heavy or congested traffic conditions
- e. Sharp road curves
- f. Pedestrian or cycle traffic.

Safety Committee

The Safety committee did not meet in September. There are 17 Liability claims, 11 workman compensation claims and 2 near miss.

Liability

- Damage to bay door
- Damage to Bunker pants
- 3 Damage pagers
- Cracked windshield
- Deer vs. Battalion vehicle
- Damage door E-17
- Lost badge
- Damage to Auto ventilator
- 2 Broken Shields
- Debris from mower hits car

- E-36 hit post
- Lost pager
- E-11 crushes a grate
- E-22 hit post
- Damage to MSA mask

Worker compensation claims

- 2 High Blood pressure
- Back injury
- Injury to finger
- Injury to knee
- Poison ivy to face
- 3 Foot injuries
- Elbow injury
- Ankle injury

Near misses

- Squad 35's had a loss wiring
- Issues with unit pulling boat at 34.