

Operations and Maintenance Procedures

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O&M Section # N/A	SCUD Task # 230
Section: Emergency	Revision Date: 09/06/16

Driving Emergency Traffic

SCOPE AND PURPOSE

When driving emergency traffic, Sevier County Utility District places a great deal of responsibility on accomplishing this task in the safest and most prudent manner possible. During emergency driving, drivers have a higher standard of care to provide to the general motoring public and must make every attempt possible to provide due regard for the safety of others. Drivers must constantly monitor and reduce the amount of risk and exposure to potential losses during each and every response. Safe arrival at the emergency scene shall be, and must always remain, the first priority. In order to accomplish this enormous task all employees responding by driving emergency traffic shall become familiar with, and constantly abide by the following policies and procedures.

RESPONSIBILITY

All Operations Supervisors, or other designee, is responsible to ensure that employees are trained and following procedures when responding to an emergency.

QUALIFICATIONS

SCUD employees must be eighteen (18) years or older, possess a valid Tennessee drivers license (on file with Human Resources), and have completed emergency driving training (including classroom training and road or course driving) before driving emergency traffic in a SCUD vehicle.

EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

Vehicle equipped with proper emergency driving lights and sirens.

PROCEDURES

- Prior to entering the cab and starting the vehicle, take a quick circle around the vehicle to see that all equipment is secured, that all compartment doors are securely closed and any physical obstructions moved out of the way.
- When driving emergency traffic, all audible (sirens) and visual warning devices (lights) will be operated at all times. Employees must understand that warning devices are not always effective in making other vehicle operators aware of your presence. Warning devices only request the right-of-way, they do not insure the right-of-way.
- Employees shall attempt to maintain control of the vehicle that they are operating in such a manner as to provide the maximum level of safety for themselves and the general public. Employees should be aware that the civilian vehicle operators may not react in the manner in which is expected or felt to be appropriate. An attempt should be made to have options available when passing or overtaking vehicles. If another vehicle operator fails to yield the right of way to an emergency vehicle, the emergency vehicle driver cannot force the right of way, nor can you assume the right of way, therefore you do not have the right of way until the other vehicle yields to you. The emergency vehicle 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 keep a minimum following distance of **two (2)** seconds from the vehicle ahead when traveling **up to fifty (50)** miles per hour. When traveling **more than fifty (50)** miles per hour, the following distance shall increase to a minimum of **three (3)** seconds.
- When driving emergency traffic, drivers shall operate their vehicle no more than **fifteen (15)** miles per hour over the posted speed limit, conditions permitting. Examples of conditions requiring slower response speeds include but are not limited to;

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- slippery road conditions
 - inclement weather
 - poor visibility
 - heavy or congested traffic conditions
 - sharp curves
 - When it is necessary to travel in the lane of oncoming traffic, the **maximum** speed allowed is **fifteen (15)** miles per hour.
 - Extreme care should be taken when approaching any intersection as intersections are the locations responsible for a large percentage of major accidents involving emergency vehicles. Drivers are required to practice the organizations intersection operating guidelines during all emergency responses.
 - **Uncontrolled intersections** - Any intersection that does not offer a control device (stop sign, yield or traffic signal) in the direction of travel of the emergency vehicle or where a traffic control signal is green upon the approach of the emergency vehicle. All emergency vehicle drivers should do the following:
 - Scan the intersection for possible hazards (right turns on red, pedestrians, vehicles traveling fast, etc.). Observe traffic in all four (4) directions (left, right, front, rear)
 - Slow down if any potential hazards are detected and cover the brake pedal with the driver's foot.
 - Change the siren cadence not less than two hundred (200) feet the from intersection
 - Avoid using the opposing lane of traffic if at all possible.
 - If you cannot proceed through an intersection due to your position in traffic, all warning devices should be turned off until traffic clears enough to resume emergency driving

Emergency vehicle drivers should always be prepared to stop. If another vehicle operator fails to yield the right of way to an emergency vehicle, the emergency vehicle driver cannot force the right of way, nor can you assume the right of way, therefore you do not have the right of way until the other vehicle yields to you.

- **Controlled intersections** - Any intersection controlled by a stop sign, yield sign, yellow traffic light or a red traffic light requires a complete stop by the emergency vehicle driver. In addition to bringing the vehicle to a complete stop these additional steps must be followed as well;
 - Do not rely on warning devices to clear traffic.
 - Scan the intersection for possible hazards (right turns on red, pedestrians, vehicles traveling fast etc.) as well as driver options.
 - Begin to slow down well before reaching the intersection and cover the brake pedal with the driver's foot, continue to scan in four (4) directions (left, right, front and back).
 - Change the siren cadence not less than 200 feet from the intersection.
 - Scan intersection for possible passing options (pass on right, left, wait, etc.) avoid using the opposing lane of traffic if at all possible.
 - Come to a complete stop.
 - Establish eye contact with other vehicle drivers.
 - Proceed one lane of traffic at a time treating each lane of traffic as a separate intersection.

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- If you cannot proceed through an intersection due to your position in traffic, all warning devices should be turned off until traffic clears enough to resume emergency driving.
- Once inside a subdivision, the speed limit **MUST** be obeyed and lights and sirens may be turned off.
- Emergency vehicle drivers should never pass on the right unless all other options have been considered and are not accessible.
- On a two (2) lane road, DO NOT pass on a blind curve.
- Communication should be through the two-way radio. This is so everyone can be aware of what the emergency is and how it is being addressed.
- If you must make or receive a phone call while driving emergency traffic, it **MUST** be done using hands free technology.
- Above all, KEEP YOUR EMOTIONS IN CHECK!
- Once on the scene, audible warning devices may be turned off but visual warning devices may remain on.

REPORTING/NOTIFICATION

Not applicable

RELATED PROCEDURES

EMER003 – Blowing Gas Investigation