

Alive on Arrival



Tips for safe emergency vehicle operations

Did you know?

The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) Firefighter Fatality Reports indicate that many firefighters and other emergency responders have died on duty from crashes involving emergency and personal vehicles responding to and returning from fires and other emergencies.

If you are an emergency vehicle operator, keep yourself safe by following these important tips:

- Make sure you have been trained. National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1002, *Standard for Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator Professional Qualifications*, and NFPA 1451, *Standard for a Fire Service Vehicle Operations Training Program*, can help ensure that you received the proper training.
- Drive carefully and never assume other vehicles see you.
- Slower means safer. Don't drive faster than the posted speed and drive even slower when road conditions or visibility are poor.
- Always stop at intersections. Drive through intersections and railroad crossings only after coming to a complete stop. Be prepared to stop, even when you have the right of way.
- If you approach an unguarded railroad crossing, listen for an oncoming train by lowering your windows and turning off radios, fans and wipers, until it is safe to proceed.
- Park safely. Park your vehicle away from hazardous areas, such as downed electrical lines, falling debris, flames, toxic gases and smoke.
- If you park on a roadway, make sure your vehicle can be seen by oncoming traffic by using the correct emergency warning lights. Do not blind oncoming traffic with your headlights, spotlights or scene lighting — turn off lights that can blind other drivers when you are parked, especially at night.
- Always use the parking brake and appropriately chock the wheels of parked emergency vehicles.
- Do not move your vehicle until you and all passengers are safely seated and are wearing seat belts; every passenger needs to have a seat belt. If your vehicle does not have them for every passenger, they need to be installed.
- Make sure your vehicle is completely stopped before anyone unbuckles their seat belt and exits.
- Always use a spotter when backing up your vehicle.
- Never drive if you are under the influence of medications, drugs or alcohol, or if you are tired.



U.S. Fire Administration
Working for a fire-safe America

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If you are an emergency vehicle passenger, keep yourself safe by following these important tips:

- Put on your protective clothing before getting into the vehicle.
- Always wear a seat belt.
- Never ride on the exterior tail board or side running boards.
- Make sure the vehicle has come to a complete stop before you unbuckle your seatbelt and never try to jump onto or from a moving vehicle.
- Make sure all tools and equipment in passenger and patient treatment compartments are secured before the vehicle moves.
- Look before you exit. Watch for oncoming traffic, downed wires and other hazards.
- Never board an emergency vehicle as a responder under the influence of medications, drugs or alcohol.



If you are working the scene, keep yourself safe by following these important tips:

- Always wear your certified high-visibility American National Safety Institute (ANSI) 207, *High Visibility Public Safety Vests*, standard traffic vest.
- Use Department of Transportation (DOT)-approved orange traffic cones — at least 28 inches in height, with retro-reflective collars.
- Use retro-reflective coral DOT-approved signs stating “EMERGENCY SCENE AHEAD” to warn drivers.
- Use illuminated warning devices, such as flares or arrow boards, to channel moving traffic away from the incident scene.
- If you are a spotter for a backing vehicle, always be aware of its direction and location. Never turn your back on a vehicle headed in your direction.



As The Officer In Charge
You are responsible for safe and prudent operations of the emergency vehicle and for the safety of all passengers in the vehicle.



Find other USFA emergency vehicle and roadway operations safety resources at: https://www.usfa.fema.gov/operations/ops_vehicle.html.