



RUSSELLVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT  
POLICY MANUAL

Policy Number:  
Section:  
Original Date:  
Revised Date:

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all RFD personnel understand the department's policy toward emergency operation of department apparatus and vehicles.

## POLICY

It is the responsibility of the driver of each apparatus to drive safely and prudently at all times. Vehicles shall be operated in compliance with the Arkansas Motor Vehicle & Traffic Law. This law provides specific legal exceptions to regular traffic regulations that apply to fire department apparatus only when responding to an emergency incident. Emergency response does not absolve the driver of any responsibility to drive without due caution. The driver of the emergency vehicle is responsible for its safe operation at all times.

**Warning Lights, Sirens, and Air Horns.** When responding Code 3 to an emergency apparatus shall have warning lights on and sirens must be sounded to warn drivers of other vehicles. The use of sirens and warning lights does not automatically give the right-of-way to the emergency vehicle. These devices simply request the right-of-way from other drivers, based on their awareness of the emergency vehicle presence. Emergency vehicle drivers must make every possible effort to make their presence and intended actions known to other drivers, and must drive defensively to be prepared for the unexpected inappropriate actions of others.

**Exceeding Posted Speed Limit.** Fire department vehicles are authorized to exceed posted speed limits only when responding to an emergency with lights and sirens operating under favorable conditions but never more than 10 miles per hour over the posted speed limit. This applies only with light traffic, good roads, good visibility and dry pavement, as long as life and property is not endangered. Under less than favorable conditions, the posted speed limit is the absolute maximum permissible.

**Intersections and Right of Way.** Intersections present the greatest potential danger to emergency vehicles. When approaching and crossing an intersection with the right-of-way, drivers shall not exceed 10 miles per hour. When emergency vehicles must use center or oncoming traffic lanes to approach controlled intersections, traffic light or stop sign, they must be prepared to come to a complete stop before proceeding through the intersection, including occasions when the emergency vehicle has the green traffic light. When approaching a negative right-of-way intersection, red light or stop sign, the responding vehicle shall come to a complete stop and may proceed only when the driver can account for all oncoming traffic and that all lanes are yielding the right-of-way.

**Other Emergency Vehicles.** During an emergency response, department vehicles should avoid passing other emergency vehicles. If passing is necessary, permission must be obtained through radio communications.

**Cell Phone Use.** Use of city issued or personal cell phones, whether making or receiving a call, text messaging or use of any other feature, shall be prohibited during emergency responses. There shall be exceptions made in cases of, but not limited to, the following: radio communication failure, security threats, resource inquiries, incident status, media or when other emergency communication needs arise.

Russellville Fire Department vehicles shall be operated in a manner that provides for the safety of all persons and property. Safe arrival shall always have priority over unnecessary speed and reckless driving enroute to an emergency incident.

Approved

Fire Chief