

SPRINGFIELD FIRE DEPARTMENT

Series 700

Title:	Privately Owned Vehicle Response	702
Category:	Department Operations	7/2017

Definitions

“Authorized emergency vehicle” (MCL 257.2): Vehicles of the fire department, police vehicles, ambulances, privately owned motor vehicles of volunteer or paid firefighters, or volunteer members of an emergency rescue unit if authorized by the fire chief of an organized fire department, a county sheriff, or the director of the department of state police.

“Emergency mode” (Priority 1): Full response use of lights and sirens on authorized emergency vehicles.

“Non-emergency mode” (Priority 3): No lights or sirens, obey all traffic laws and speed limits

“Privately Owned Vehicles, POV”: Vehicles personally owned and operated by department employee in the course of their duties. The vehicle is not authorized as an emergency vehicle (MCL 257.2). The vehicle may be equipped with courtesy/warning lights. Employee driving POV are to respond to all calls for service in non-emergency mode.

Responding to Alarms in Privately Owned Vehicles (POV)

- **State Law:**
When responding to calls for service, all driving is to be in accordance with the Michigan Vehicle Code, Public Act 300.
- **Respond to Calls for Service:**
When any responding to the station or scene of calls for service in a POV, each member must strictly adhere to all applicable motor vehicle laws granted to the general public.
- **License:**
All drivers of POV must have a valid Michigan Driver’s License and a good driving record. No member of this department shall drive a POV for the fire department use if they have any disciplinary driving restrictions or any operational changes to their driving license. Any changes must be brought to the immediate attention of the fire chief. Driving status may be reviewed any time by the fire chief.
- **Vehicle:**
The vehicle used as a POV in the course of duty must be properly licensed and insured.
- **Seatbelt:**
Seatbelt and restraints must be used in POV.

- **Communication Equipment:**
All POV's responding to an alarm must have a communications receiving device that monitors the fire frequency.

- **Warning Device:**
In order for a private vehicle to run emergency mode it must be equipped with at least one roof-mounted lamp, displaying a flashing, rotating, or oscillating red light, that is visible from a distance of at least 500 ft and 360 degrees of the vehicle. It must also have a mechanical or electronic siren capable of warning other drivers of said vehicle approach.

- **Emergency Mode Response:**
The driver of the POV will turn on all overhead lights and headlights while responding in emergency mode. The siren shall be used to give adequate warning to other drivers and pedestrians. Remember, you are asking for permission to have the right-of-way while running with lights and sirens. (Utilize wise discretion during early AM hours and special circumstances.) When responding to an emergency alarm with red lights and sirens you must be within the city of Springfield or in a bordering jurisdiction.

- **Intersections:**
Any intersection requires prudent action by the POV driver. The following steps should be taken:
 - Do not rely on warning devices to clear traffic.
 - Scan the intersection for possible hazards (right turns on red, pedestrians, fast-moving vehicles, etc.)
 - Begin to slow down well before reaching the intersection and cover the brake pedal with the driver's foot; continue to scan in all four directions (left, right, front, back).
 - Change the siren cadence not less than 200' from intersection.
 - Scan intersection for possible passing options (pass on right, left, wait, etc.); avoid using the opposing lane of traffic if at all possible.
 - Establish eye contact with other vehicle drivers.
 - Confirm all other vehicles are stopped.
 - Account for traffic one lane at a time, treating each lane of traffic as a separate intersection

- **Speed Limit:**
The POV driver may exceed the posted speed limit in accordance with Public Act 300, so long as life and property are not endangered and in a reasonable prudent manner.

- **Direction of Movement (travel):**
The POV driver may disregard regulations governing direction of movement or turning in specified directions provided the driver does not endanger life or property.

- **Passing Private Vehicles:**
POV drivers should always pass other vehicles on the left side of the vehicle being passed because state law instructs other vehicles to yield to the right for emergency vehicles. When conditions only allow for passing on the right, it must be done with extreme caution.
- **Passing School Buses:**
Emergency vehicles must never pass a school bus while the bus' red flashing lights are illuminated. You must come to a complete stop and proceed with caution after the bus driver gives permission to do so.
- **Following Emergency Vehicles:**
Extreme caution should be used when following other emergency vehicles. Distance between vehicles should be more than the driver estimated will be needed to stop safely.
- **Crossing the Center Line:**
Crossing the center line or using the left turn lane is permitted when all normal lanes are blocked. POV drivers must be sure that all on-coming traffic lanes and turning lanes are stopped. In this case, drivers must proceed slow enough to stop to avoid vehicles turning left in front and also on-coming vehicles making right turns into your path of travel.
- **Due Regard**
Nothing in the department's Personnel Policy Manual or the Springfield Personnel Policy shall relieve the driver of the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons. Nor shall it protect the driver from the consequences of reckless disregard for the safety of others.

Prohibited On Duty Driving/Practice

- Responding for an alarm when the member is under the influence of any substances that may alter their mental or physical status. (e.g. alcohol, medications, etc.)
- Reckless disregard of the safety of others.
- Riding on tail steps, sidesteps, running boards, or any other exposed position.
- Distractive driving by POV drivers when responding to calls for service.

Accidents Involving Members

All members of the Springfield Fire Department that are involved in a motor vehicle accident while responding to a call for service are required to take the following actions:

- STOP immediately!!! Render first aid to injured parties.
- Notify dispatch and police with brief initial report.
- Secure witnesses to the accident, however, only talk about the accident with police officers handling the report.
- Notify the chief or his designee as soon as reasonably possible.

- The incident commander will submit a report that explains the circumstances of the incident to the fire chief.

Qualifications and Requirements

- It is required that firefighters who drive personally owned vehicles have an unrestricted valid Michigan driver's license.
- Perform a review, at least annually, of the driving record of each of the firefighters.
- Provide a copy of up-to-date automobile liability insurance certification annually to the chief.
- Must be through the first six (6) month probationary period of employment before using or installing emergency lights and siren for responding to all calls.

Non-Compliance

While it is recognized that timeliness in response to an emergency is important, it is imperative that POV drivers understand the importance of safe driving. Non-compliance with the SOG and any driver observed breaking any traffic laws or operating any vehicle in an aggressive or unsafe manner will be subject to disciplinary action.