

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to assure the efficient response of personnel and emergency vehicles to the scene of an emergency while minimizing risk to persons and property.

POLICY:

State and local laws may exempt ambulances from regular traffic laws when the vehicle is responding to an emergency. However, neither state nor local laws absolve the driver from the responsibility of driving with due regard (Wis. Stat. 346.03 (5) and 346.19 (2)) for the safety of others on the road. The driver bears full responsibility for the safety of patient and staff as well as the public and remains fully accountable for his/her actions.

DRIVER TRAINING – Only personnel who have completed the service's driver training program and are listed by the Service Director as approved drivers, may operate service vehicles, unless a person operates the ambulance under supervision as part of the driver training program.

All emergency vehicle operators shall undergo specific training prior to driving an emergency vehicle. A formal training course, such as the Emergency Vehicle Operations Course (EVOC) or Coaching the Emergency Vehicle Operator (CEVO) shall be used whenever possible. If such a formal training course is not continually or readily available, the service may create its own in-house course based on the principles of EVOC, CEVO or other standardized emergency vehicle operator courses. Training shall include both classroom and behind the wheel education. EMS personnel shall successfully complete a final evaluation conducted by a local service official other than one who has provided the training before operating a service vehicle other than during driver training.

DRIVER BACKGROUND – All ambulance operators shall have an acceptable driving record as established by local service policy. Driving records shall be routinely and regularly checked.

SEAT BELTS – All personnel and passengers shall use the ambulance safety belt restraining systems.

All personnel in charge of a service emergency vehicle will insure that all passengers use safety belts whenever the vehicle is in motion. All personnel in the patient care area shall be seat-belted at all times unless this interferes with essential patient care.

EXITING STATION – On leaving the station the driver shall be aware of other emergency vehicles leaving at the same time. On leaving the station the driver shall gently apply the brakes to assure their operation prior to entering the street. Vehicles leaving the same location should respond using the same route when practical. Emergency vehicles shall not travel closer than 500 feet of each other and they shall utilize different audible warning devices.

WARNING DEVICES – All audible and visual warning devices shall be in operation when making an emergency response. Headlamps should be turned on whenever the ambulance is moving for added safety.

SPEED – The maximum speed of any responding vehicle shall be reasonable and prudent with consideration of the posted speed limit. The driver shall always maintain a speed consistent with safe operation of the vehicle under the prevailing conditions.

INTERSECTIONS – Intersections are the most dangerous areas to approach during an emergency response/transport. The driver shall maintain the ability to come to a complete stop until all other traffic in the intersection has yielded.

DRIVING LEFT OF CENTER – Driving in the center turning lane or left of center is extremely dangerous and shall be avoided whenever possible. If it is necessary to drive in the center turning lane or left of center, the maximum permissible speed shall be prudent and reasonable, considering the increase possibility for the need to stop suddenly.

PASSING ON THE RIGHT – Passing vehicles on the right is a potentially dangerous maneuver that shall be avoided whenever possible.