



# OGLETHORPE COUNTY FIRE RESCUE STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES/GUIDELINES

**TITLE: Roadway Operations**

**SECTION/TOPIC: Emergency Operations**

**ISSUE DATE: March 8, 2023**

These SOPs/SOGs are based on FEMA guidelines FA-197

## 1.0 SCOPE

- 1.1 This guideline is applicable to all firefighters operating in or near moving traffic.
  - 1.1.1 This applies to any incident within 25 yards of a highway or roadway where traffic is present.

## 2.0 PURPOSE:

- 2.1 Personnel operating in or near moving traffic should always be aware of the following:
  - 2.1.1 Every roadway emergency scene exposes personnel to risks associated with motorists whose driving abilities vary.
  - 2.1.2 Motorists may be vision impaired, under the influence of alcohol and or drugs, or have medical conditions that affect their judgment or abilities.
  - 2.1.3 Motorists may be inexperienced and or driving without a valid driver's license.
  - 2.1.4 Approaching motorists will often be looking at the emergency scene and not the roadway in front of them.
  - 2.1.5 Additionally, motorists may be distracted due to the use of cell phones, listening to loud music, or conversing with passengers.
  - 2.1.6 Speeds of approaching vehicles will range from that of a creeping pace, to well beyond the posted speed limit.
  - 2.1.7 Driver visibility may be reduced due to inclement weather, terrain and or other obstructions.
  - 2.1.8 Driver reaction time increases significantly in relation to the driver's visibility, therefore, night-time operations in or near moving traffic are particularly hazardous to personnel.

## 3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

- 3.1 Traffic movement should be inhibited as little as practicable.
  - 3.1.1 Provisions should be made for the safe operation of incident management vehicles, particularly in high-speed, high-volume roadways.
- 3.2 Each person assuming temporary traffic control should receive appropriate training in safe traffic control practices.

## 4.0 APPARATUS AND EMERGENCY VEHICLE POSITIONING

- 4.1 Objectives of emergency vehicle positioning when operating in or near moving traffic are:
  - 4.1.1 Establish an initial block with the first arriving emergency vehicle in a position to protect the scene, patients, and emergency personnel.

- 4.1.1.1 Initial apparatus placement should provide a work area protected from at least one direction of approaching traffic.
  - 4.1.1.2 Apparatus should block to the left or block to the right to create a physical barrier between the scene and approaching traffic.
  - 4.1.1.3 Apparatus placement should serve to slow approaching motorists and redirect them around the scene.
  - 4.1.1.4 Additional apparatus should block at least one additional traffic lane above what is already obstructed by the involved vehicle(s).
  - 4.1.1.5 When practical, apparatus should be positioned to protect the pump operator position from being exposed to approaching traffic.
- 4.1.2 Apparatus placement should protect the emergency scene, establish a work zone of sufficient size to include all damaged vehicles, roadway debris, the patient triage and treatment area, the extrication work area, personnel and tool staging areas, and the ambulance loading zone.
- 4.1.3 Law enforcement vehicles should be utilized to assist in directing the flow of moving traffic
- 4.1.4 Command shall stage unneeded emergency vehicles off the roadway or return these units to service whenever possible.
- 4.2 At intersections, or where the incident is near the middle lane of the roadway, two or more sides of the incident will need to be protected.
  - 4.2.1 Blocking to create the protected work zone must be prioritized, starting with the upstream most critical or highest traffic volume flow to the upstream least critical traffic flow.
  - 4.2.2 When a charged hose-line may be placed in operation, the engine or truck company should block in a manner that the pump panel is down stream, on the opposite side of on-coming traffic
- 4.3 When indicated, command should work with law enforcement to request additional resources such as:
  - 4.3.1 GA Department of Transportation
  - 4.3.2 County Road Department
  - 4.3.3 Additional law enforcement

## 5.0 PERSONNEL SAFETY

- 5.1 All personnel should take the following steps to protect themselves and others at the incident scene:
  - 5.1.1 Personnel should never turn their back to approaching traffic.
  - 5.1.2 High visibility reflective vests shall be worn during all roadway operations, except during actual firefighting activities.
  - 5.1.3 Structural firefighting helmets shall be worn during all roadway operations.
  - 5.1.4 Full structural protective clothing, including reflective vests, shall be worn at all extrication operations.
  - 5.1.5 Always maintain an acute awareness of the high risk of working in or near moving traffic

- 5.1.5.1 Never trust moving traffic!
- 5.1.5.2 Always look before you move!
- 5.1.5.3 Always keep an eye on the moving traffic!
- 5.1.6 All personnel must exit and enter their units with extreme caution, remaining alert to moving traffic at all times.
  - 5.1.6.1 When walking around fire apparatus or emergency vehicles, be alert to proximity to moving traffic.
- 5.1.7 Stop at the corner of the unit, check for traffic, and then proceed along the unit remaining as close to the emergency vehicle as possible.
- 5.1.8 Maintain a “reduced profile” when moving through any area where a minimum buffer zone condition exists.