

Wales Center Volunteer Fire Co., Inc.

Standard Operating Procedure: Response Safety

The safe arrival and return of firefighters and emergency vehicles must be our first priority. Response safety begins long before we've been alerted and continues until all our vehicles and firefighters are back in quarters and in service.

The community depends on us and we depend on each other. Under no circumstance are members to respond to calls if under the influence of alcohol or any other substance which could affect their ability to perform in a safe manner.

VEHICLE INSPECTION and MAINTENANCE

1. All emergency vehicles will be inspected in accordance with the maintenance and safety checklist on the weekly inspection sheet. The Officer-in-Charge will notify a Chief if deficiencies are found.
2. Repairs will be made in a timely manner by competent individuals. If necessary, vehicles will be removed from service until repairs can be completed.
3. All emergency vehicles will pass an annual New York State safety inspection.

TRAINING

1. All emergency vehicle drivers must have a valid N.Y.S. drivers license and be at least eighteen years of age. Notify a Chief of suspensions, revocations, limitations, etc.
2. All emergency vehicle drivers will demonstrate their ability and be approved by a Chief or the Driver Trainer. Approval can be revoked for legitimate reasons.
3. All firefighters are encouraged to attend a recognized defensive driving course.

RECEIVING an ALARM

1. After being alerted, listen carefully for the type of call, location and special instructions. Firefighters will respond to the fire hall, never to the scene, for 911 hangups and known hazardous materials incidents.
2. Dress appropriately for weather and circumstances. wear or bring your turnout gear.

RESPONDING with PERSONAL VEHICLES

The way you drive reflects on the fire company, but if you are stopped for violating the law, you will suffer the consequences. You won't be able to help anyone if you become a victim, be calm and be careful. Always take into account the weather and road conditions, adjust your driving accordingly.

1. Firefighters must obey all vehicle and traffic laws (i.e. speed limits, seat belts, traffic signs and signals, school buses with flashing lights, road markings, etc.). A blue light does not entitle you to any special driving privileges. Motorists may yield the right of way, but are not legally obligated to do so. Obtain blue light authorization from the Chief.
2. Those living nearby should go to the fire hall, to respond with the equipment. Those responding to the scene should, whenever possible, travel past the fire hall to ensure all necessary equipment has responded.
3. Approach the fire hall cautiously, emergency vehicles may be exiting. You must yield the right of way. Park carefully and secure your vehicle.
4. Family members who have accompanied you can wait at the fire hall for your return. Non-family members cannot wait alone at the fire hall. A member must be present or other arrangements must be made.
5. If you drive to the scene, always consider possibly encountering dangerous situations. MVAs could involve fire, hazardous materials or wires down. EMS calls could be violent.
6. Upon arrival, survey the scene for safety. Park your vehicle safely out of the way on the same side of the road as the incident. This will ease traffic flow and reduce confusion. Often, we cause the traffic hazard.
7. If you take any further action, you must have on appropriate turnout gear.

- When responding to a call from out of the district, do not use your blue light until you are within our district or an adjacent district.

RESPONDING with EMERGENCY VEHICLES

True emergencies are situations with a high probability of death, serious injury, or significant property loss, in which actions by emergency vehicle operators may reduce the seriousness of the situation.

New York State Vehicle and Traffic Laws (V+T) accords drivers of emergency vehicles in emergency operations, certain privileges. However, their actions must not endanger life or property. Emergency vehicles must always be drive with due regard for the safety of all persons. Drivers are responsible for the consequences of their reckless disregard for the safety of others.

Emergency responses can be the most dangerous part of a call. Emergency operations demand more care, concentration and skill than normal driving. Confusion in the vehicle response causes unnecessary delay and added stress in an already stressful situation.

You have an obligation to your family, your fellow firefighters, their families, our patients, our community and every person you encounter, to drive in a safe, sane manner. Do no harm.

All calls, except drills and standbys, are emergencies until determined otherwise.

- When you arrive at the fire hall, write the location of the call on the chalkboard. Don appropriate turnout gear. Apparatus drivers may don gear upon arrival on location.
- Refer to the truck response listing. Emergency vehicles are to respond (unless otherwise instructed) according to the listing. You may contact a Chief or other unit on location to ask for instructions.
- Pull the vehicles out in the order they are listed, one at a time. Firefighters, as they arrive, are to man (with an appropriate crew) and respond with the first vehicle listed before another vehicle is pulled out.

TRUCK RESPONSE				
Unless Requested Otherwise				
Fire				
2	3	7	8	
MVC				
8	7	2		
EMS				
8	7			
Rescue				
8	7	7 ¹	2	
CO Alarm				
8	2			
Grass / Brush Fire				
2	3	7	7 ¹	8
MUTUAL AID				
Unless Requested Otherwise				
Fire – balance of the 1st alarm				
2	3	7	8	
All other fires				
2	7	7 ¹		
Standby				
3	7			

- Engine #2 and Engine #3 must wait until air pressure builds up to release the parking brake before being moved.
- Drivers and radio operators in Rescue #7 and Ambulance #8 will wear their seat belts. All others are encouraged to use seat belts. Smoking is not permitted.

6. No one rides on the back steps of responding or returning vehicles.
7. Lights and siren are for emergency use only, not for drills, standbys or returning. When instructed to respond with caution for any reason except weather or road conditions, respond normal traffic with headlights on, without using emergency lights and siren, obeying all traffic regulations.
8. Activate emergency lights (see above), check compartment open lights, and make sure passengers are ready before responding. Use extreme caution exiting from the fire hall onto Rt. 20A.
9. Emergency vehicles responding from the hall must all follow the same routes to avoid confusion. They will not respond over Woodchuck Rd., unless the call is on Woodchuck Rd., or they have been instructed to do so.
10. Adjust driving to weather conditions – firefighter's safety is our first priority.
11. When operating in emergency mode, never assume the right of way has been yielded. Emergency vehicles must have lights and siren activated, come to a complete stop, and make sure traffic has yielded, before proceeding through stop signs and traffic signals. When Fire Police are present, you may proceed with caution, as directed. All emergency vehicles must stop and check at ungated railroad crossings.
12. Emergency vehicles may not pass school buses displaying flashing red lights.
13. Whenever possible, have assistance backing up. Upon arrival at a scene, activate emergency lights if parked on the road and not already in use. Exercise caution exiting vehicles, especially if parked on the road. Chock the wheels of pumpers. A firefighter must stay with each vehicle to maintain radio contact.
14. When Ambulance #8 has responded to the scene of an EMS call, Rescue #7 is to respond to the scene if two or more members are at the hall.
15. Ambulance #8 may respond to MVCs with a crew of three (at least one EMT), instead of the usual crew of four. This allows for quicker response of Engine #2 and Rescue #7.
16. On ambulance transports, the EMS crew will determine the patient's status and illuminate the appropriate indicator light. A green patient light indicates non-emergency, the ambulance will be driven as normal traffic, with headlights on, without emergency lights and siren, obeying all traffic regulations.
17. Emergency lights are not used when returning. All traffic regulations must be obeyed.
18. When Ambulance #8 is unavailable, Rescue #7 is to respond to EMS calls.
19. We're not finished until all the vehicles and equipment are cleaned, fueled, restocked, back in place and ready to roll again. Make sure the Incident Report sheet is complete, including times and pertinent information. Note any equipment left at hospitals. This too is everyone's responsibility.

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