



# Stamford Fire Department

## 201 E McHarg

### Stamford, Texas 79553

#### **Subject: POV RESPONSES TO EMERGENCIES**

Revised: 3-6-09

#### **Purpose**

There are two modes for proceeding to calls: Response mode (Code 3) or Enroute mode (Code 1). **Response mode** is used when a member or apparatus is responding with lights (and sirens for apparatus); this is considered an emergency response mode. **Enroute mode** is used when lights (and sirens) are not required; non-emergency response mode. Enroute mode is used in situations such as non-emergency investigations, when units are downgraded by the incident commander or officer on scene, or when going to cover the station when SFD apparatus are out of our area.

#### **TRAFFIC LAWS AND USE OF LIGHTS**

When responding, in personal vehicle, in answer to an emergency call, either to the firehouse to respond one of the apparatus, or to the scene, members may respond using red lights in accordance to Texas Laws Sec 547.305 (see below)(and sirens for apparatus) unless otherwise instructed. When responding to the firehouse for standby, members shall be enroute (Code 1) non-emergency. Members shall always abide by Texas State Laws Sec 546.001(see below) when responding using red lights. **Members responding in private vehicles shall obey all normal traffic laws when responding in emergency mode.** Members responding in private vehicles shall not use red lights unless they are in the SFD response area or when Jones County dispatches us out of our area. Only lights as outlined under for private vehicles of SFD members are permitted Sec 547.702. See this statute below for details.

Whether responding in SFD apparatus or personal vehicles, care and caution shall be exercised at all times. Safety and strict adherence to Texas Statutes shall be the rule. A red flashing light on a member's private vehicle **does not permit** this vehicle to break any traffic law. It only represents a **request** to other motorists to yield to your vehicle.

#### **Yielding to Emergency Vehicles**

In accordance with SFD policies, private vehicles (including those of volunteer firefighters) must yield right of way to emergency vehicles operating in the emergency mode.



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## DESTINATION

Driver(s) who are further away from the location of the call than member(s), who are responding to scene, shall respond to the station to respond a SFD vehicle or to standby. One or two members may be required to standby at station depending on nature of incident. All other members shall respond directly to the scene. Firefighters responding to stand by will respond Code 1 (no red lights) if one SFD unit has already responded from the station.

All responses and destinations shall be coordinated by radio by the officer in charge.

### Sec. 541.201. Vehicles.

In this subtitle:

- (1) **"Authorized emergency vehicle"** means:
  - (A) a fire department or police vehicle;
  - (B) a public or private ambulance operated by a person who has been issued a license by the Texas Department of Health;
  - (D) a private vehicle of a volunteer firefighter or a certified emergency medical services employee or volunteer when **responding to a fire alarm** or medical emergency;

### Sec. 545.365. Speed Limit Exception for Emergencies;

- (a) The regulation of the speed of a vehicle under this subchapter does not apply to:
  - (1) an authorized emergency vehicle responding to a call;
  - (2) a police patrol; or
  - (3) a physician or ambulance responding to an emergency call.
- (b) A municipality by ordinance may regulate the speed of:
  - (1) an ambulance;
  - (2) an emergency medical services vehicle; or
  - (3) an authorized vehicle operated by a blood or tissue bank.

### Sec. 545.408. Crossing Fire Hose.

An operator may not, without the consent of the fire department official in command, drive over an unprotected hose of a fire department if the hose is on a street or private driveway and is intended for use at a fire or alarm of fire.



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## Sec. 546.001. Permissible Conduct.

In operating an authorized emergency vehicle the operator may:

- (1) **park or stand**, irrespective of another provision of this subtitle;
- (2) **proceed past a red or stop signal or stop sign**, after slowing as necessary for safe operation;
- (3) exceed a maximum **speed** limit, except as provided by an ordinance adopted under Section 545.365, as long as the operator does not endanger life or property; and
- (4) disregard a regulation governing the direction of **movement or turning** in specified directions.

## Sec. 546.002. When Conduct Permissible.

- (b) Section 546.001 applies only when the operator is:
- (1) responding to an emergency call;
  - (2) pursuing an actual or suspected violator of the law;
  - (3) responding to but not returning from a fire alarm;
  - (4) directing or diverting traffic for public safety purposes;

## Sec. 546.003. Audible or Visual Signals Required.

Except as provided by Section 546.004, the operator of an authorized emergency vehicle engaging in conduct permitted by Section 546.001 shall use, at the discretion of the operator in accordance with policies of the department or the local government that employs the operator, audible or visual signals that meet the pertinent requirements of Sections 547.305 and 547.702.

## Sec. 546.004. Exceptions to Signal Requirement.

- (a) A **volunteer fire fighter** who operates a private vehicle as an **authorized emergency vehicle** may engage in conduct permitted by Section 546.001 only when the fire fighter is using visual signals meeting the pertinent requirements of Sections 547.305 and 547.702.
- (b) An authorized emergency vehicle that is operated as a police vehicle is not required to be equipped with or display a red light visible from the front of the vehicle.

## Sec. 546.005. Duty of Care.

**This chapter does not relieve the operator of an authorized emergency vehicle from:**



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- (1) the duty to operate the vehicle with appropriate regard for the safety of all persons; or
- (2) the consequences of reckless disregard for the safety of others.

**Sec. 547.305. Restrictions on Use of Lights.**

- (b) Except as expressly authorized by law, a person may not operate or move equipment or a vehicle, other than a police vehicle, with a lamp or device that displays a red light visible from directly in front of the center of the equipment or vehicle.
- (c) A person may not operate a motor vehicle equipped with a **red, white, or blue** beacon, flashing, or alternating light unless the equipment is:
  - (1) used as specifically authorized by this chapter; or
  - (2) a running lamp, headlamp, tail lamp, backup lamp, or turn signal lamp that is used as authorized by law.
- (d) A vehicle may be equipped with alternately flashing lighting equipment described by Section 547.701 or 547.702 only if the vehicle is:
  - (1) a school bus;
  - (2) an **authorized emergency vehicle**;

**Sec. 547.702. Additional Equipment Requirements for Authorized Emergency Vehicles.**

- (b) The operator of an **authorized emergency vehicle** shall use the siren, whistle, or bell when necessary to warn other vehicle operators or pedestrians of the approach of the emergency vehicle.
- (c) **Except** as provided by this section, an **authorized emergency vehicle** shall be equipped with signal lamps that:
  - (1) ...mounted high and wide: ...
  - (2) ...four alternately flashing red lights,...
  - (3) emit a light...
- (d) A private vehicle operated by a **volunteer firefighter** responding to a fire alarm or a medical emergency may, **but is not required to**, be equipped with signal lamps that comply with the requirements of Subsection (c).
- (e) A private vehicle operated by a **volunteer firefighter** responding to a fire alarm or a medical emergency may be equipped with a signal lamp that is temporarily attached to the vehicle roof and flashes a red light visible at a distance of at least 500 feet in normal sunlight.