



## MEDICAL CALL RESPONSE SOG

### SCOPE

This guideline shall apply to all members of the Stoney Point Fire Department and shall be adhered to by all members.

### PURPOSE

Purpose: This SOG outlines safe procedures and operating guidelines for SPFD medical response by firefighters, firefighter/EMTs, and EMTs (B, I and P). The SOG provides guidelines for patient care, vehicle operations and safety, and scene safety procedures.

### DEFINITIONS

**STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE (SOG)** - Documents that help establish how an organization will operate and how its members are expected to carry out specific duties outlined in general terms.

### GUIDELINES

#### **Emergency Medical Response**

Purpose: This SOG outlines safe procedures and operating guidelines for SPFD medical response by firefighters, firefighter/EMTs, and EMTs (B, I and P). The SOG provides guidelines for patient care, vehicle operations and safety, and scene safety procedures.

#### **Patient Care/EMS Operations**

Department EMS personnel will follow applicable Cumberland County EMS Protocols related to the incident encountered.

When in doubt, EMTs will contact Medical Control via radio or telephone.

If contact cannot be made (e.g., due to weather, telephone or power failure), EMTs will use the most applicable protocol and good common sense.

All EMTs will pass the annual protocol test to continue functioning.

All EMTs will maintain sufficient CONED hours to continue functioning.

**Portable radios will be carried at all times when EMTs are away from their vehicles.**

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**Belligerent/unruly patients:**

- EMTs encountering patients of this nature will exit the scene by the most expedient, safe means.
- SO/FPD will be requested.
- EMTs will remain in a safe area until the scene is secured by law enforcement.

**Expended medical supplies will be replaced from Medical Unit stocks prior to terminating command.**

ICS will be used at all medical incidents.

**Medical reports will be proof read by the shift officer prior to filing.**

**Helicopters**

- The senior EMT on scene may place the helicopter on standby.
- Helicopter response authority resides with the senior paramedic/paramedic supervisor on duty.
- Additional resources (engine/ladder/rescue company) will be requested to set up the helicopter landing strip (HLZ). (See helicopter operations SOG 5G.003 Landing Zones for more info)

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**Seatbelt Use**

All persons driving or riding in Department vehicles shall be seated in approved riding positions with seatbelts or safety restraints fastened at all times when the vehicle is in motion.

The driver shall not begin vehicle movement until all passengers are seated and properly secured. All passengers shall remain seated and secured as long as the vehicle is in motion. Seatbelts shall not be loosened or released while enroute to dress or don equipment.

Members shall not attempt to mount or dismount from a moving vehicle under any circumstances. The exception to this requirement is when SPFD EMTs ride EMS Ambulances to assist paramedics and must assist in patient care.

**Responding to Emergencies**

Responding to emergency incidents does not in any manner reduce the responsibility to operate vehicles safely. While prompt response to emergency incidents is an organizational priority, safety is always a higher priority. The responding units must arrive safely at the location where they are needed before they can deliver the required services. Unsafe operation of an



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emergency vehicle creates an unacceptable risk to Department members, to the public, and to the individuals who are in need of assistance.

The motor vehicle laws of the State of North Carolina grant specific allowances and exemptions to emergency vehicles, when they are responding to emergency incidents and using the required warning devices. These provisions only apply to officially recognized emergency vehicles, while they are responding to emergency incidents in compliance with all of the applicable laws and regulations.

Notwithstanding such allowances and exemptions, the driver of the emergency vehicle is required to operate responsibly at all times. **The emergency vehicle driver has a duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all other persons and property.**

The use of warning lights and audible warning devices does not automatically grant the right-of-way to an emergency vehicle. These devices are intended to make other drivers aware of the presence of an emergency vehicle. Other drivers are required to yield the right-of way to an emergency vehicle; however, they cannot be expected to yield the right-of-way if they do not see or are not aware of the emergency vehicle.

The emergency vehicle driver must never assume that another vehicle will yield the right-of-way; it is always the emergency vehicle driver's responsibility to ensure that the other driver has yielded the right-of-way. The emergency vehicle driver is responsible for operating in a safe and prudent manner, recognizing that other drivers could be distracted, inattentive, or simply uncooperative. The emergency vehicle driver is not permitted to employ aggressive driving techniques to force another driver to yield the right-of-way.

While responding in an emergency mode, drivers are required to make their presence evident using audible and visual warning devices. Emergency vehicle drivers should also endeavor to make their intentions as clear as possible and their vehicles as visible as possible to other drivers.

### **Traffic Laws – Emergency Vehicles**

SPFD has established the following policies that apply to members who are driving Department vehicles in an emergency response mode.

Warning lights and audible warning devices shall be used when the rescue vehicles are responding in an emergency mode. Both warning lights and audible devices must be operated in order to meet the legal definition of an emergency vehicle.

Warning lights shall be used at all times when Department vehicles are operating in an emergency response mode. Audible warning devices (siren and/or horn) shall be used as necessary to warn other drivers and pedestrians of the approach of an emergency vehicle and

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request the right-of-way. Audible warning devices shall be used in moderation when they are not required to provide warning (light traffic or open road situations).

Audible warning devices shall not be used when a vehicle is operating in a non-emergency mode.

Warning lights shall be used when the Department vehicle is maneuvering or stopped in a location where it creates a traffic hazard.

### Speed Limitations

The driver shall never exceed a speed that is safe and prudent, based on road and weather conditions, due regard for other drivers and citizens, and other circumstances, including the design and capabilities of the vehicle. The posted speed limit may be exceeded only when the required warning devices are in use and when weather, traffic, and road conditions are favorable. The posted speed limit shall not be exceeded under any other conditions.

- The maximum speed for any Department rescue vehicle, under favorable conditions, may exceed the posted speed limit.
- When conditions are unfavorable, actual speed shall be determined by the conditions.
- The posted advisory speed for a curve shall be considered the maximum allowable speed under all conditions, regardless of response condition.

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### Intersection Navigation Policy

The Department's rescue vehicles shall come to a full stop before entering a negative right-of-way intersection (red light, flashing red light, or stop sign), blind intersection, or any intersection where hazards are present and/or the driver cannot account for all oncoming traffic lanes. The rescue vehicle shall not enter the intersection until all approaching traffic has yielded the right-of-way and it is safe to proceed. The emergency vehicle driver shall ensure that all approaching vehicles in all lanes have yielded the right-of-way before advancing.

**Eye to eye contact will be made with drivers in opposing lanes of traffic to ensure they see you.**

If necessary, due to traffic conditions or visual obstructions, the rescue vehicle driver shall cross the intersection in stages, treating each lane as a separate intersection. The driver shall stop the vehicle, as necessary, to ensure that each lane may be crossed safely



When passing through an intersection where the emergency vehicle has the right-of-way, by virtue of a green light in the direction of travel and/or a stop signal (stop sign) for cross-traffic, the emergency vehicle shall not exceed the posted speed limit. Emergency vehicle drivers should not assume that oncoming/opposing traffic has stopped, even when facing a green signal

or "clear" route; emergency vehicle drivers must visually confirm that oncoming/opposing traffic is stopped while approaching any intersection, and be prepared to stop immediately, if necessary.

### **Travelling in Opposing Traffic Lanes**

Operating emergency vehicles in opposing traffic lanes is extremely hazardous under all conditions and should only be considered under exceptional circumstances (i.e., if there is no alternate route of travel).

When approaching a controlled intersection (traffic lights or stop signs) in an opposing traffic lane or center turn lane, the emergency vehicle shall come to a full stop before entering the intersection, even if the traffic light is green in the direction of travel.

### **Travel in an Opposing Direction**

Operating rescue vehicles against the normal flow of traffic is extremely hazardous under all conditions and should only be considered under exceptional circumstances (i.e., if there is no alternate route of travel).

Travel against the normal direction of traffic flow on a one-way street shall be limited to short distances. Rescue vehicle drivers must proceed slowly and with extreme caution in these situations.

The rescue vehicle must come to a full stop before entering an intersection while travelling in an opposing direction.

### **Passing Traffic in an Emergency Vehicle**

When overtaking traffic that is moving in the same direction, the rescue vehicle driver shall give other drivers an opportunity to yield the right-of-way before passing. If it is necessary to pass a vehicle that has not yielded the right-of-way, the rescue vehicle shall provide as wide a clearance as possible.

Department rescue vehicles shall not overtake another emergency vehicle that is travelling in the same direction unless the driver of the lead vehicle has indicated that the other may pass. A following vehicle may contact a leading vehicle by radio to request permission to pass.

### **Railroad Crossing Policy**

The rescue vehicle shall come to a full stop at unguarded railway grade crossings. Caution shall be exercised at grade crossings where warning lights and/or gates are provided.

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Rescue vehicle drivers should become familiar with the specific characteristics of the rail lines in their area.

Warning devices and crossing gates are generally reliable, but can fail due to the harsh conditions to which they are exposed—these devices are designed to fail in the “safe” mode.

when approaching a grade crossing with lowered gates and/or active lights and no apparent rail traffic, the rescue vehicle shall come to a full stop prior to the crossing; before proceeding, the rescue vehicle driver shall visually confirm that no train or other rail vehicle is approaching on the tracks. Complete confirmation may require that members physically dismount the vehicle to visually check the tracks.

### Stopped School Bus

The rescue vehicle shall not pass a school bus that has stopped with red lights flashing to load or *discharge passengers*, *unless the bus driver clearly signals that it is safe to pass*.

When clearly signaled by the bus driver that it is safe to pass a stopped school bus, the rescue vehicle shall proceed slowly and with extreme caution past the school bus; all members must be vigilant for children while approaching and passing the bus. The rescue vehicle driver must be prepared to stop immediately while approaching, passing, and leaving the area in which the school bus is stopped.

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### Law Enforcement Directions

The rescue vehicle shall comply with the directions of a sworn law enforcement officer, including a signal to stop.

Law enforcement officials may also direct the specific positioning, or repositioning, of rescue vehicles on an incident scene to maintain traffic flow, reduce bottlenecks, enhance scene safety, and prevent secondary collisions. Compliance with such direction is generally required of emergency vehicle drivers and their supervisors or chiefs; **if a difference of opinion regarding scene safety arises, it should be raised in a cooperative fashion with the ranking law enforcement officer on the scene.**

### Aggressive Driving

Rescue vehicles must be operated with due regard for the safety of civilian traffic at all times, and under all circumstances; the elimination of aggressive driving techniques is also critical for protecting the safety of other crew members assigned to the vehicle.



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## Maneuvering at an Incident Scene

Drivers shall exercise extreme caution while maneuvering rescue vehicles at an incident scene; other drivers and pedestrians may be distracted or preoccupied by events and a variety of hazards (e.g., downed or low-hanging wires, limited visibility, hazardous materials, etc.) may be encountered. Vehicles shall be moved slowly and cautiously, with spotters assigned to guide the driver in tight situations.

## Emergency Vehicle Drivers

### Basic Driver Training

A. Basic driver training shall be completed before a member is authorized to drive any rescue vehicle. The Department shall ensure that the individual is properly licensed and insured, and has the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to operate a vehicle safely. The initial driver training program shall include:

1. The Department's Emergency Vehicle Operator's Course
2. North Carolina Emergency Vehicle Driver Course (EVD)
3. Demonstration of basic understanding of all applicable NC Motor Vehicle laws and Department Emergency Vehicle Operations Policies as they apply to rescue vehicle operations
4. Basic vehicle dynamics
5. Inspection and maintenance procedures
6. Over-the-road evaluation

B. The Department shall periodically review the performance of each member who is authorized to drive Department vehicles. The authorization to drive may be suspended or revoked as a result of such reviews and/or additional training may be required to maintain driving status. **Members, who repeatedly fail to comply with driving policies and procedures or violate traffic laws while driving Department vehicles, will be re-evaluated or disciplined, if necessary.**

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### Driving Record Review

A. The Department shall obtain and review a copy of the member's motor vehicle record from the State of North Carolina Motor Vehicles prior to allowing an individual beginning driver training. Each authorized driver's Motor Vehicle Record shall be reviewed periodically (at intervals of three years or less, with annual reviews recommended) to ensure that the individual maintains safe driving habits.

B. **An individual who has been charged with an offense that could result in a suspension or revocation of his or her driver's license shall notify the Chief within 48 hours.** The individual may be suspended from driving emergency vehicles pending judgment, depending on the circumstances and existing department policy. Such charges shall include:

1. Driving while intoxicated or under the influence of drugs
2. Negligent homicide or gross negligence
3. Aggravated assault with a motor vehicle
4. Reckless driving
5. Leaving the scene of an accident

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### Accident Reporting & Investigation

This section provides a standard system to report and investigate all Department vehicular accidents and near misses (Department or personal). (A near miss incident is defined as an incident in which no property damage and no personal injury occurred, but where, given a slight shift in time, position, or other circumstances, damage or injury would or may have occurred.)

**All Department vehicular accidents shall be reported to the Chief immediately.**

- The report should include the following:
  1. Unit ID or Apparatus Number
  2. Exact accident location
  3. An indication for need for additional medical assistance (e.g., BLS, ALS, etc...)
  4. An estimate of the extent and nature of the injuries and vehicle damage
  5. Indication on whether the vehicle is drivable
  6. Indication of need for cover assignment

### While at the accident scene:

1. Initiate appropriate medical care





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2. Do not discuss the incident with anyone other than fire and police representatives
  3. Do not move your vehicle unless it is creating a traffic hazard
  4. If you must move your vehicle, chalk the position of your tires prior to moving.
  5. Obtain witness names and contact information
  6. Remain at the scene until the police and fire representatives have completed their investigation

**All Department vehicle accidents will be investigated.** The process will include the following:

1. Fact Finding Review
2. Separate interviews with the driver, all crew members, and accident witnesses
3. Notes recorded at each interview
4. Contact Information recorded at each interview
5. Department members involved in the incident should be isolated from the general public, the other parties involved in the incident, and the media.
6. Members may be placed on Administrative Leave or directed to take a leave of absence during the initial investigative process.
7. The investigating officer should attempt to collect the following:
  - A. Photographs/Video of the incident
  - B. Police Report
  - C. Name and badge of investigating Police Officer
  - D. Names and contact information for all parties involved (including witnesses)
  - E. Applicable Department Accident Reports/Forms

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### **Safety Benchmarks**

All emergency personnel are at great risk of injury or death while operating in or near moving traffic. There are several specific tactical procedures that should be taken to protect all crew members and emergency service personnel at the incident scene including:

1. Never trust approaching traffic
2. Avoid turning your back to approaching traffic
3. Establish an initial "block" with the first arriving emergency vehicle or fire apparatus
4. Always wear structural protective helmet



5. Always wear the Class III or Public Safety highway safety vest at all vehicle-related emergencies or when working in or near a roadway
6. Turn off all sources of vision impairment to approaching motorists at night time incidents including vehicle headlights and spotlights
7. Use fire apparatus and police vehicles to initially redirect the flow of moving traffic
8. Establish advance warning and adequate transition area traffic control measures upstream of incident to reduce travel speeds of approaching motorists
9. Use traffic cones and/or cones illuminated by flares where appropriate for sustained highway incident traffic control and direction
10. Establish a Department member assigned to the "Flagger" function to monitor approaching traffic and activate an emergency signal if the actions of a motorist do not conform to established traffic control measures in place at the highway scene

#### **Apparatus and Emergency Vehicle Benchmarks**

- Listed below are benchmarks for Safe Parking of apparatus and emergency vehicles when operating in or near moving traffic.
  1. Always position first-arriving apparatus to protect the scene, patients, and emergency personnel.
  2. Initial apparatus placement should provide a work area protected from traffic approaching in at least one direction.
  3. Angle apparatus on the roadway with a "block to the left" or a "block to the right" to create a physical barrier between the crash scene and approaching traffic.
  4. Allow apparatus placement to slow approaching motorists and redirect them around the scene.
  5. Use fire apparatus to block at least one additional traffic lane more than that already obstructed by the crashed vehicle(s).
  6. When practical, position apparatus in such a manner to protect the pump operator position from being exposed to approaching traffic.
  7. Positioning of large apparatus must create a safe parking area for EMS units and other fire vehicles. Operating personnel, equipment, and patients should be kept within the "shadow" created by the blocking apparatus at all times.
  8. When blocking with apparatus to protect the emergency scene, establish a sufficient size work zone that includes all damaged vehicles, roadway debris, the patient triage and treatment area, the extrication work area, personnel and tool staging area, and the ambulance loading zone.

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9. Ambulances should be positioned within the protected work area with their rear patient loading door area angled away from the nearest lanes of moving traffic.
  10. Command shall stage unneeded emergency vehicles off the roadway or return these units to service whenever possible.

Personnel shall place cones and flares and retrieve cones while facing oncoming traffic.

Traffic cones shall be deployed at 15-foot intervals upstream of the blocking apparatus with the furthest traffic cone approximately 75 feet upstream to allow adequate advance warning to drivers

#### **Incident Command Benchmarks**

The initial-arriving company officer and/or the Incident Commander must complete critical benchmarks to ensure that a safe and protected work environment for emergency scene personnel is established and maintained including;

1. Ensure that the first-arriving apparatus establishes an initial block to create an initial safe work area.
2. Assign a parking location for all ambulances as well as late-arriving apparatus.
3. Lanes of traffic shall be identified numerically as "Lane 1", "Lane 2", etc., beginning from the right to the left when right and left are considered from the approaching motorist's point of view. Typically, vehicles travel a lower speed in the lower number lanes.
4. Directions "Right" and "Left" shall be as identified as from the approaching motorist's point of view left or right.
5. Instruct the driver of the ambulance to "block to the right" or "block to the left" as it is parked at the scene to position the rear patient loading area away from the closest lane of moving traffic.
6. Ensure that all ambulances on-scene are placed within the protected work area (shadow) of the larger apparatus.
7. Ensure that all patient loading into ambulances is done from within a protected work zone.
8. The initial company officer and/or Incident Commander must operate as the Scene Safety Officer until this assignment is delegated.

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9. Command shall ensure that traffic signal pre-emption strobe systems (Light Sticks) are turned OFF and that other emergency lighting remains ON.
  10. At residential medical emergencies, Command shall direct ambulances to park at the nearest curb to the residence for safe patient loading whenever possible.

### **Emergency Crew Personnel Benchmarks**

Listed below are benchmarks for safe actions of individual personnel when operating in or near moving vehicle traffic.

1. Always maintain an acute awareness of the high risk of working in or near moving traffic. Act as if they are out to get you!
2. Never trust moving traffic.
3. Always look before you move.
4. Always keep an eye on the moving traffic.
5. Avoid turning your back to moving traffic.
6. Personnel arriving in crew cabs of rescue/fire apparatus should exit and enter the ambulance from the protected 'shadow' side, away from moving traffic.
7. Officers, apparatus operators, crew members in apparatus with individual jump seat configurations and all ambulance personnel must exit and enter their units with extreme caution remaining alert to moving traffic at all times.
8. Class III or Public Safety vest and helmet must be donned prior to exiting the emergency vehicle.
9. Always look before opening doors and stepping out of apparatus or emergency vehicle into any moving traffic areas. When walking around fire apparatus or emergency vehicle, be alert to your proximity to moving traffic.
10. 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.
11. Placing flares, where safe to do so, adjacent to and in combination with traffic cones for night time operations greatly enhances scene safety. Where safe and appropriate to do so, place warning flares to slow and direct approaching traffic.
12. Ensure ambulances park within shadow of larger apparatus as directed
13. All patient loading into ambulances is done from within a protected work zone
14. Consider assigning firefighters as upstream "Spotter" as necessary for approaching traffic

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### **Night or Reduced Light Conditions**



- A. Turn OFF vehicle headlights
- B. Turn OFF traffic signal pre-emption strobes (if so equipped)
- C. Provide overall scene lighting
- D. All personnel in PPE with helmets
- E. Use law enforcement vehicles for additional blocking
- F. Stage additional companies off highway
- G. Establish liaison with law enforcement
- H. Terminate incident aggressively

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