

Guidelines and Constraints Update

Created by:	Ken Smathers	Issue Date:	May 5, 2008
Revision Contact:	ksmathers@mfaems.org	Review Period:	Ends May 15, 2008
Implementation:	This guideline shall be implemented immediately allowing the crews to provide input and advice up until the review period end date. Upon completion of the review period, the standard will be revised and published for 10 days. During the revision phase crews will continue to follow this guideline. After the revision period, the guideline will be published and be fully implemented on May 31, 2008.		

Subject

Unit Operation

Purpose

To drive in a safe manner for the protection of the citizens of Marble Falls Area Community and surrounding areas and promote safety

Standard

Personnel will operate any Company vehicle with due regard to safety. All laws will be followed and all precautions will be considered.

- The use of cellular phones will be limited. If at all possible the passenger will use the radio, cellular phone, and other distracting devices. In such cases that the driver must operate these devices it must be of limited use and in the safest manner possible while dealing with issues directly related to the patient.
- Seatbelts will be utilized. All passengers with the exception of the attendant are to be advised and are required to use seatbelts.
- During Emergency response personnel will continue through school zone with lights and sirens activated, but will not exceed the posted speed limit for that area at that time. The crew responding will have the option to limit siren usage in order to reduce the attraction of children. The use of the siren will not be optional in school zones on major pathways or highways.

Scope

All Marble Falls Area Personnel

Definitions: N/A

Procedure

Upon entering a school zone, the crew will continue to run emergency with lights and siren activated, but will not exceed the posted speed limit. If school zone lights are flashing then the posted reduced speed is the maximum speed that vehicle may travel. If school zone lights are not flashing then the normal speed limit applies and will not be exceeded.

For those areas with “only” times listed on a sign and no blinking light, the same rules apply as if there was a light. When responding emergency through city, state, or federal parks the posted speed limit is not to be exceeded.

Unit Operation

NON-EMERGENCY designates operation of unit without use of emergency lights/siren,

EMERGENCY designates operation of unit using emergency lights/siren and air horn under emergency conditions. MFAEMS personnel are authorized to drive unit under emergency conditions when:

- a) En route to a designated emergency call,
- b) Crew determines that the patient's condition is unstable, or
- c) Communications or on-duty command gives expressed authorization.

Personnel operating unit under emergency conditions may exercise privileges set forth in Art. 2, Sec. 24 of the Texas Uniform Traffic Act, including:

- Park or stand in restricted areas.
- Exceed maximum speed limits so long as life and property are not endangered and never in excess of 10 mph above posted speed limits in urban areas and 20 mph above posted speed limits on rural highways and interstates. Driving conditions, terrain, and overall safety dictate the safest maximum speed. In addition, cities and towns may regulate, by ordinance, the speed of any emergency unit within their jurisdiction.
- Not proceed at any speed, regardless of posted limits, greater than is reasonable under the conditions.
- Approaching, visualizing, coming to a complete stop, and assuring that all lanes are clear before proceeding cautiously through red lights, stop and yield signs.
- Disregard regulations governing direction of movement or turning in a specified direction, where safe to do so. Personnel are not to drive against traffic flow on a one-way street unless it is the only prudent way to get to an emergency scene.
- The driver should always consider the environment when exercising these rights, including weather conditions, traffic load, pedestrians and existing hazards.
- No provision relieves the driver from the duty of regard for the safety of all persons, or protects the driver from the consequences of reckless operation of the Unit.
- Headlights will be used at all times.
- All personnel will utilize the practices and principles of safe emergency driving.
- Upon arrival on scene, the Unit will be parked in such a manner as protect the patients and MFAEMS personnel, while not unnecessarily posing a hazard or impeding traffic.

Passing

- Passing should be done on the left, especially in areas around intersections. This is regardless of openings and access.

Backing the Ambulance

- Backing of the ambulance should be avoided whenever possible. Where backing is unavoidable, a spotter or an assistant outside the vehicle should be used. Backers should avoid standing in the road or where hazards exist. Alternatives to having backer exit vehicle onto roadway should be used, examples are pulling up with passenger side to curb or pulling onto apron to allow backer to exit the vehicle.
- In addition, a spotter should be used when vehicles must negotiate forward turns with restrictive side clearances and where height clearances are uncertain. Under circumstances where there is only a driver, the driver should attempt to utilize any available emergency services personnel to act as spotters. Where no personnel are available to assist, the driver survey of the space around all four sides of the vehicle to determine if any obstructions are present before proceeding to move the ambulance.
- Spotters are never permitted to ride the tailboard while the vehicle is in motion. The spotter should be in a visible safe zone positioning him/herself ten (10) to fifteen (15) feet at the left rear of the ambulance.
- All doors should be shut before moving the vehicle.

- The vehicle should not be backed until the spotter is in position in the safe zone and has communicated his/her approval to begin backing by way of a hand signal, and voice, when possible. Spotters should remain visible to the driver in the safe zone. Anytime the driver loses sight of the spotter, the vehicle should be stopped immediately and placed into PARK until the spotter is again visible and the communication to continue backing is processed. It should be done very slowly and cautiously.
- The driver's window should be opened to allow for easier verbal communication from the backer.
- Backer should stand where ambulance should be aimed at as long as driver is able to see backer from mirrors unless hazards exist where backer may need adjust location.
- Hand signals should use clear movements located at chin to chest area. If at any time driver is unclear of backers signal, vehicle should be stopped until intentions are clear.
- Note if an accident happens this will be a reviewable event.

General Rules for Drivers and Spotters

1. Never be in a rush when backing or parking.
2. Do not start to back or park when unsure of the area or surface consistency.
3. When it is dark outside use the side and rear spotlights when backing to light the area.
4. Backup alarms must be functional.

Standard Signals for Spotters

1. Straight Back – One or two hands with palms toward face, waving back.
2. Turn – Both arms pointing the same direction with index fingers extended.
3. Stop – Arms crossed with hands in fists. Be sure to reinforce the signal by yelling the stop order loud enough so the driver can hear.
4. Night Backing – Signals are the same. The spotter should assure that the spotlights on the rear of the ambulance are turned on before allowing the vehicle to be backed. A flashlight maybe carried but at no time will it be directed towards the mirrors.

Accidents

- All accidents, no matter how minor should be reported to on duty command. This will include a verbal notification as well as a written accident report form sent to HR, Support Services, Commander and the on duty Lieutenant or on-duty command.
- On scene documentation of accidents with private property will be handled as follows:
 - Check you and your partner's condition. Seek medical attention if necessary.
 - Check condition of any loaded patients.
 - Check condition of any other persons involved in accident.
 - Determine safety of scene, move vehicles out of roadway if possible.
 - Contact law enforcement.
 - Contact on duty supervisor or Commander.
 - Obtain second party information if available, vehicle type and license, etc.
 - Contact wrecker service, may use law enforcement for help with this.
 - Obtain pictures of scene if possible, if not create a quick and accurate sketch.
 - Fill out accident report form, as soon as possible.

Attachments: None