

<b>7004.04</b>	<b>Safe Driving Standard Operating Procedure</b>	
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*This procedure is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. The procedure should not be construed as creating a higher duty of care, in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party civil claims against employees. A violation of this procedure, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department for non-judicial administrative action in accordance with the laws governing employee discipline.*

**Related Policies:** 200.05, 213.01, 305.01-.05, NFPA 1002, 1451, 1500.

**Applicable HI Statutes:** HI Rev Stat § 291C-26 (2013), Hawaii County Code § 24-173

### **I. PURPOSE**

To ensure safe arrival of personnel and fire apparatus to the incident scene.

To establish procedures for the safe operation of all emergency vehicles and apparatus.

### **II. APPLICABILITY**

The driver of any vehicle has a legal responsibility for its safe and prudent operation at all times.

When the driver is under direct supervision of an officer, the officer may be held responsible for the driver's actions.

All members shall comply with this policy

### **III. AUTHORIZED EMERGENCY VEHICLES, HI REV STAT § 291C-26 (2013)**

Note: This is the law as written in the Hawai'i Revised Statutes. All personnel shall know and abide by the law, and the following "Section IV, Safe Driving Procedures" of the Hawai'i Fire Department which meets and exceeds HI REV STAT § 291C-26 in the interest of public safety.

1. The driver of an authorized emergency vehicle, when responding to an emergency call or when in the pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of the law or when responding to but not upon returning from a fire alarm and vehicles used by police officers while in the performance of a police function, may exercise the privileges set forth in this section, but subject to the conditions herein stated.
2. The driver of an authorized emergency vehicle may:
  - a. Park or stand irrespective of the provisions of this chapter;
  - b. Proceed past a red or stop signal or stop sign, but only after slowing down as may be necessary for safe operation;
  - c. Exceed the maximum speed limits so long as the driver does not endanger life or property;
  - d. Disregard regulations governing direction of movement or turning in specified directions;
  - e. Drive on the shoulder and median of roadways; and
  - f. Drive in controlled-access roadways, highways, and facilities.
3. The exemptions granted in subsection B. to an authorized emergency vehicle shall apply only when the vehicle is making use of authorized audible and visual signals, except as otherwise provided by county ordinance. This subsection shall not apply to police vehicles.

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4. The foregoing provisions shall not relieve the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons, nor shall those provisions protect the driver from the consequences of the driver's reckless disregard for the safety of others. [L 1971, c 150, pt of §1; gen ch 1985; am L 2002, c 93, §1; am L 2003, c 112, §2]

### IV. SAFE DRIVING PROCEDURES

1. Seat Belts:
  - a. All persons riding in department vehicles shall be seated and belted securely by seat belts, any time the vehicle is in motion.
  - b. Standing or riding on tail steps, sidesteps, running boards, fully enclosed personnel areas, or in any other exposed position shall be prohibited at all times.
  - c. Seat belts shall not be released or loosened for any purpose while the vehicle is in motion.
  - d. Members actively performing necessary emergency medical care while the vehicle is in motion shall be secured to the vehicle by a seat belt, or by a vehicle safety harness designed for occupant restraint, to the extent consistent with the effective provision of such emergency medical care.
  - e. Members shall notify the driver when their seatbelt is fastened prior to moving the vehicle.
2. Emergency Warning Devices
  - a. Emergency lights should be used only when responding to and operating at the scene of an emergency.
  - b. The use of identification lights or non-emergency warning lights such as amber flashers on the rear of apparatus may be appropriate, when parked for emergency scene operations. Refer to Traffic Incident Management SOP 7004.03.
  - c. Audible warning devices:
    - i. Driver shall not exceed posted speed limits if audible warning devices are not in use.
    - ii. Change siren cadence no less than 200 feet from intersections.
    - iii. 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 request the right-of-way.
    - iv. Audible warning devices may be used in moderation when they are not required to provide warning (light traffic or open road situations). Refer to above Section III, C for exemptions of HI Rev Stat § 291C-26
3. Speed
  - a. Speed through business districts shall not exceed the posted speed limit under dry road conditions and clear visibility.
  - b. Speed through schools zones shall not exceed the posted speed limit under dry road conditions and clear visibility.
  - c. When conditions are unfavorable, the posted speed limit shall not be exceeded and actual speed shall be determined by the conditions.

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- d. The posted advisory speed for a curve shall be considered the maximum allowable speed under all conditions, regardless of response condition.
- e. Backing of vehicles shall not exceed 5 miles per hour.
4. Intersection Approach
  - a. All emergency response vehicles operating under emergency conditions (lights and sirens) shall come to a complete stop at all signed (stop sign) intersections and lighted intersections (when approaching with a red light showing). Ensure all other traffic movement has stopped or is clear before proceeding through the intersection.
  - b. All vehicle operators shall approach intersections at all times with awareness of vehicle and pedestrian traffic regardless if right of way is presumed.
  - c. Vehicle operators shall avoid proceeding through intersections under the yellow or caution signal and when approaching lighted intersections anticipate signal changes.
  - d. Negative right-of-way intersections:
    - i. Definition: When the driver cannot account for visible traffic in the lanes of traffic in an intersection.
    - ii. When approaching a negative right-of-way intersection (red light, stop sign or yield), the apparatus should not exceed 15 mph.
    - iii. Vehicle shall be brought to a complete stop.
    - iv. Scan the intersection for possible passing options (pass on left, wait, etc.)
    - v. Avoid using the opposing lane of traffic if at all possible.
5. School and Passenger Busses
  - a. All emergency response vehicles operating under emergency and non-emergency conditions shall come to a complete stop when encountering school or passenger buses that are stopped and loading or unloading passengers.
  - b. Emergency vehicle operators shall proceed to maneuver around buses only after the passenger movement has stopped, and the bus driver/operator has turned off all signal/warning lighting indicating safe to proceed.
  - c. When driving around said bus, vehicle operators shall proceed cautiously and be aware for any unanticipated passenger or pedestrian movement.
6. Pedestrian Crosswalks
  - a. The emergency vehicle shall not exceed the posted speed limit when approaching a pedestrian crosswalk.
  - b. If the crosswalk is occupied, the emergency vehicle shall slow down and be prepared to stop if the pedestrian does not yield the right-of-way.
7. Law enforcement Directions
  - a. Vehicle shall be brought to a complete stop at the direction of a law enforcement officer.
  - b. Law enforcement officials may also direct the specific positioning, or repositioning, of emergency vehicles on an incident scene to maintain traffic flow, reduce bottlenecks, enhance scene safety, and prevent secondary collisions. If a difference of opinion regarding scene safety or emergency operations arises, it should be raised in a respectful fashion with the ranking law enforcement officer on the scene.

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- c. When conducting interagency emergency scene operations where fire apparatus, law enforcement vehicles, and others are maneuvering, the plan shall be clearly communicated between all drivers and spotters involved.
- 8. Travel in an Opposing Direction
  - a. Operating emergency 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).
  - b. Travel against the normal direction of traffic flow on a one-way street shall be limited to short distances. Emergency vehicle drivers must proceed slowly and with extreme caution in these situations.
  - c. The driver shall bring the vehicle to a full stop before entering an intersection while traveling in an opposing direction.