



# Carroll County Department of Fire & EMS Standard Operating Procedure

## DOCUMENT DETAILS

<b>Standard Operating Procedure: 6.04</b>	<b>Effective Date: January 1, 2025</b>
<b>Subject: Emergency Vehicle Operations</b>	<b>Section: Health &amp; Safety</b>
<b>Authorized: Deputy Chief Paul Supko</b>	<b>Revision Date: March 19, 2025</b>

**Applicability:**      ☒ Volunteer      ☐ Career

## I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the safe and efficient response of emergency vehicles operated by the Carroll County Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services (CCDFEMS). These guidelines are intended to ensure the safety of the public, emergency personnel, and property during emergency responses. This policy applies to all drivers, career or volunteer operating apparatus insured by Carroll County.

## II. DEFINITIONS

**Emergency Vehicle Operator (EVO)** - Any career or volunteer member authorized to operate emergency vehicles.

**Fire Apparatus Driver Operator (FADO)** - Promoted member of the Department of Fire & EMS whose job description is to operate heavy apparatus such as engines, ladder trucks, tankers, and rescue squads.

## III. PROCEDURES

### A. Emergency Vehicle Operations:

1. All emergency vehicle operators must adhere to Maryland State laws and regulations regarding emergency vehicle operation.
2. Emergency vehicles shall use audible and visual warning devices (sirens and lights) when responding to emergencies.
3. All personnel in an emergency vehicle in motion must wear seatbelts, unless ACTIVELY participating in patient care.

### B. Driver Training and Certification:

1. All emergency vehicle operators must undergo regular training and certification in emergency vehicle operations.

2. Fire Apparatus Driver Operators (FADOs) must meet the following requirements:
  - a. Possess a minimum of a Class B commercial or non-commercial driver's license.
  - b. Maintain a current Department of Transportation (DOT) medical card.
3. Operators must renew certifications as required by the CCDFEMS training schedule.
4. Any person driving a piece of county-owned apparatus must have completed and submitted the "County Driver Authorization" form.

C. Speed, Traffic Laws, Intersections, and Traffic Signals:

1. Emergency vehicle operators must obey posted speed limits and traffic laws.
2. When approaching a controlled intersection (red or yellow traffic light, stop sign, or yield sign), emergency vehicles must follow state laws and use caution to ensure the intersection is clear before proceeding.
3. When approaching a green traffic light or an intersection where the EVO has the right of way, they must slow down, use caution, and ensure control of the intersection before continuing.
4. Emergency vehicle operators may exceed the posted speed limit with due regard when responding to emergencies, provided that it is safe to do so, and traffic conditions permit.

D. Right-of-Way:

1. Maryland law states that emergency vehicles must request the right of way rather than automatically having it.
2. Emergency vehicles are granted special privileges but must use audible and visual signals to alert other drivers. Other road users are then required by law to yield the right of way.
3. Operators must yield to pedestrians, cyclists, and other motorists when safe to do so.
4. Emergency vehicles must yield to school buses with stop signs out and lights flashing, in accordance with state laws.

E. Passing and Overtaking:

1. Emergency vehicles may pass other vehicles when safe and necessary to proceed to the emergency scene.
2. A responding emergency vehicle may not overtake another responding emergency vehicle unless the "lead" vehicle states it is safe to do so.

F. Vehicle Positioning:

1. Emergency vehicles should position themselves to provide the safest route for responding and arriving units.
2. Vehicles should not block intersections, driveways, or other emergency vehicle access points.

#### G. Using a Spotter:

1. When operating emergency vehicles in reverse, operators must use a designated spotter when available.
2. There are times when a spotter may not be used, such as:
  - a. When a unit is driver only.
  - b. When the ambulance crew is engaged in patient care and no other assistance is available.
  - c. When conditions exist that would place the spotter in harm's way.
3. The designated spotter must be a qualified individual who is trained in guiding the vehicle safely. (Completion of EVOC Course or local online training program)
4. Operators must communicate effectively with the spotter using hand signals or verbal instructions.
5. The spotter must maintain visual contact with the operator and provide guidance to ensure safe maneuvers.
6. When spotting a vehicle, the spotter should wear or an approved roadway safety personal protective equipment (PPE) such as a safety vest.
7. It is also suggested that spotters should utilize a flashlight in low light conditions to enhance visibility during maneuvers

#### H. Communications:

1. Operators must always maintain communication with dispatch during emergency responses.
2. Any delays or incidents must be reported promptly to dispatch.

#### I. Immediate Actions – Post Accident

1. In the event of an accident involving an emergency vehicle, the following procedures shall be followed:
  - a. Immediately report the accident to dispatch and request appropriate assistance.
  - b. Ensure the safety of all parties involved and provide medical assistance if needed.
  - c. Document the accident scene with photographs and notes, including weather and road conditions.
  - d. Obtain witness statements and contact information.
  - e. Notify the on-duty Shift Commander (OPS101) of the incident. OPS 101 will notify the volunteer company Chief for all incidents involving apparatus assigned to their respective station.
  - f. A driver's status will be suspended immediately following an incident in which there is either a fatality, an injury treated away from the scene, or a vehicle is required to be towed. Members will be reinstated after a collaborative decision is made by the Shift Commander, Volunteer Fire Chief, and the DFEMS

Safety/Training Chief, or designee. This decision must be made as soon as possible following the incident.

- g. In any accident in which there is either a fatality, an injury treated away from the scene, or a vehicle is required to be towed or a suspicion of impairment, the operator shall be drug tested at Carroll Occupational Health (COH)/Frederick Health Employer Solutions (FHES).
  - i. If COH/FHES is closed, the emergency vehicle operator (EVO) shall be immediately placed out of service for testing and the on-duty Shift Commander shall contact the COH/FHES after-hours answering service to coordinate testing.
  - ii. If the EVO is to be transported to the hospital, COH/FHES shall be contacted and will send a technician to the hospital to obtain the sample.
  - iii. The on-duty Shift Commander or designee shall drive the EVO to the test.
  - iv. All personnel involved in the accident must submit to drug and alcohol testing as per CCDFEMS policy.
- h. Request the Carroll County Sheriff's Office to the scene for all in-county incidents. The appropriate local law enforcement agency shall be requested to the scene for all out of county incidents.
- i. A police report (with number) and exchange of information must occur for all incidents.
- j. A comprehensive accident report shall be completed by the vehicle operator and submitted to the appropriate supervisor within 24 hours of the incident. An Accident Report Form must be completed within 24 hours of the incident by the EVO involved and submitted to the Assistant Chief of Training.
- k. The accident report shall include details such as date, time, location, vehicle condition, injuries, damages, and any contributing factors.

J. Special Considerations:

- 1. Special caution should be exercised in adverse weather conditions, such as rain, snow, or fog.
- 2. Operators should be aware of road construction, detours, and other potential hazards that may affect response routes.

K. Disciplinary Action:

- 1. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including suspension, termination, or legal action, depending on the severity of the offense and its impact on public safety. Any disciplinary actions shall follow the CCDFEMS Disciplinary Policy.

#### **IV. RECISION**

This Standard Operating Procedure rescinds all directives regarding Emergency Vehicle Operations or similar content previously issued for personnel of the Carroll County Department of Fire & EMS.

#### **V. RELATED STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES / DOCUMENTS**

1. SOP 1.04 "DFEMS Staff Notifications"
2. SOP 4.06 "Structural Firefighting"
3. SOP 2.16 "Nicotine, Alcohol, and Controlled Substance Testing"
4. SOP 2.03 "Disciplinary Policy"
5. SOP 6.05 "Accident Review Committee"
6. Carroll County Government Vehicle Fleet Safety Policy
7. Maryland Transportation Code § 21-106

#### **VI. ATTACHMENTS**

1. COH/FHES After Hours Urine Drug Screen and Breath Alcohol Collection
2. Carroll County Government Vehicle Fleet Safety Policy
3. Authorization for Release of Driver's License Records and Driver's License Monitoring and Acknowledgement of Carroll County Government Vehicle Safety Guidelines
4. Pennsylvania driver information release form

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## **After Hours Urine Drug Screen and Breath Alcohol Collection**

### **Purpose**

Frederick Health Employer Solutions (FHES) will provide a Certified Professional Collector and Breath Alcohol Technician for Urine Drug Screen (UDS) and Breath Alcohol collection. This service is available following an accident or if an employee is found to need reasonable cause testing outside of FHES' normal hours of operation, which are Monday – Friday (7:00am – 5:00pm).

### **Location**

FHES will perform these services after hours:

1. If the employee is admitted to the emergency room or hospital, FHES will go to that emergency room or hospital as long as it is within a 30-mile radius of a FHES clinic.
2. If the employee is at the employer's location and a company representative (supervisor, etc.) is also at the location.
3. At a designated after-hours collection site within the FHES service area.

### **Method**

FHES provides an after-hours answering service for clients to call to request a collection. The answering service will notify our on-call staff with information such as company name, contact name, employee location, employee name, and contact phone number for verification. Our assigned collector will call the company contact and verify the collection location and confirm our expected time of arrival.

**Answering Service Number: 1-800-480-8717**

## Carroll County Government VEHICLE FLEET SAFETY POLICY

### Policy

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure the safety of those individuals who drive county vehicles. Vehicle accidents are costly to the County, but more importantly, they may result in injury to you or others. It is the driver's responsibility to operate the vehicle in a safe manner and to drive defensively to prevent injuries and property damage. As such, the County endorses all applicable state motor vehicle regulations relating to driver responsibility. The County expects each driver to drive in a safe and courteous manner pursuant to the following safety rules. The attitude you take when behind the wheel is the single most important factor in driving safely.

### Driver Eligibility

- County vehicles are to be driven by authorized County employees only, except in emergencies, or in case of repair testing by a mechanic. Spouses and other family members are not authorized to drive the County vehicle.
  - Any employee who has a driver's license revoked or suspended shall immediately notify their supervisor, and discontinue operation of the county vehicle. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.
  - All accidents, regardless of severity, must be reported to the police and to Office of Risk Management. Failing to stop after an accident and/or failure to report an accident may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.
  - Drivers must immediately report all summonses received for moving violations during the operation of a company vehicle to their supervisor.
  - All CDL drivers must comply with all applicable D.O.T. regulations, including successful completion on medical, drug, and alcohol evaluations.
  - Motor Vehicle Records will be ordered periodically to assess employees' driving records. An unfavorable record will result in a loss of the privilege of driving a County vehicle.
- The following system will be used to determine eligibility to operate a County vehicle:

- **ALL TYPE 'A' VIOLATIONS (as defined below) WILL RESULT IN TERMINATION OF DRIVING PRIVILEGES FOR EMPLOYEES AND WILL DISQUALIFY ANY POTENTIAL DRIVER EMPLOYEES.**
- **ANY DRIVERS (EMPLOYEES OR APPLICANTS) SHOWING ONE OF THE FOLLOWING WILL BE RESTRICTED FROM DRIVING COMPANY VEHICLES:**
  - One (1) or more type 'A' Violations in the last 3 years
  - Three (3) or more type 'B' violations in the last 3 years
  - Any combination of accidents and type 'B' violations which equal Four (4) or more in the last 3 years.

#### **Type 'A' Violations:**

- Driving While Intoxicated
- Driving While Under the Influence of Drugs
- Negligent Homicide Arising out of the use of a Motor Vehicle (gross negligence)
- Operating During a period of Suspension or Revocation
- Using a Motor Vehicle for the commission of a Felony
- Aggravated Assault with a Motor Vehicle
- Operating a Motor Vehicle Without the Owners Authority (grand theft)
- Permitting an Unlicensed Person to Drive
- Reckless Driving
- Speed Contest (racing)
- Hit and Run (Bodily Injury or Property Damage)

#### **Type 'B' Violations**

- All Moving Violations not listed as type 'A' Violations

#### **Driver Safety Rules**

- The use of a county vehicle while under the influence of intoxicants and other drugs is forbidden and is sufficient cause for discipline, including dismissal.
- No driver shall operate a county vehicle when his/her ability to do so safely has been impaired by illness, fatigue, injury, or prescription medication.
- All drivers and passengers operating or riding in county vehicles must wear seat belts, even if air bags are available.
- No unauthorized personnel (e.g. Hitch-hikers) are allowed to ride in county vehicles.
- Drivers are responsible for the security of County vehicles assigned to them. The vehicle engine must be shut off, ignition keys removed, and vehicle doors locked whenever the vehicle is left unattended. If the vehicle is left with a parking attendant, only the ignition key is to be left.
- Head lights shall be used 1/2 hour after sunset and 1/2 hour before sunrise, or during inclement weather or at any time when a distance of 500 feet ahead of the vehicle cannot be seen clearly.
- All other state laws, local laws, or D.O.T. Motor Carrier Safety Regulations must be obeyed.
- The use of cellular phones when operating a county vehicle will be restricted to only those with hands-free devices. If a vehicle is not equipped with a hands free device, a cellular phone will not be used when driving.

### **Defensive Driving Rules**

- Drivers are required to maintain a safe following distance at all times. To estimate your following distance, pick a stationary object ahead of you. As the vehicle in front of you passes the object, begin counting 1001, 1002, 1003, etc. until you reach the same object. This counts the number of seconds between you and the vehicle ahead of you.
  - Drivers of passenger vehicles should keep a two-second interval between their vehicle and the vehicle immediately ahead. During slippery road conditions, the following distance should be increased to at least four-seconds.
  - Drivers of heavy trucks should keep a minimum of a three-second interval when not carrying cargo; and at least four-seconds when fully loaded. Following distance should also be increased when adverse conditions exist.
- Drivers must yield the right of way at all traffic control signals and signs requiring them to do so. Drivers should also be prepared to yield for safety's sake at any time. Pedestrians and bicycles in the roadway always have the right of way.
- Avoid driving in other driver's blind spots; attempt to maintain eye contact with the other driver, either directly or through mirrors.
- Drivers must honor posted speed limits. In adverse driving conditions, reduce speed to a safe operating speed that is consistent with the conditions of the road, weather, lighting, and volume of traffic. Tires can hydroplane on wet pavement at speeds as low as 40 MPH.
- Turn signals must be used to show where you are heading; while going into traffic and before every turn or lane change.
- When passing or changing lanes, view the entire vehicle in your rear view mirror before pulling back into that lane.
- Be alert of other vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists when approaching intersections. Never speed through an intersection on a caution light. Approach a stale green light with your foot poised over the brake to reduce your reaction time should it be necessary to stop. When the traffic light turns green, look both ways for oncoming traffic before proceeding.
- When waiting to make left turns, keep your wheels facing straight ahead. If rear-ended, you will not be pushed into the lane of oncoming traffic.
- When stopping behind another vehicle, leave enough space so you can see the rear wheels of the car in front. This allows room to go around the vehicle if necessary, and may prevent you from being pushed into the car in front of you if you are rear-ended.
- Avoid backing where possible, but when necessary, keep the distance traveled to a minimum and be particularly careful.
  - Check behind your vehicle. Operators of heavy trucks should walk around their vehicle before backing and/or have someone guide you.
  - Back to the driver's side. Do not back around a corner or into an area of no visibility.

### **What To Do In Case of An Accident**

In an attempt to minimize the results of an accident, the driver must prevent further damages or injuries and obtain all pertinent information and report it accurately.

- Call for medical aid if necessary.
- Secure accident scene -- pull onto shoulder or side of road, redirect traffic, set up road flares/reflectors, etc.
- Call the police. All accidents, regardless of severity, must be reported to the police. If the driver cannot get to phone, he should write a note giving location to a reliable appearing motorist and ask him to notify the police.
- Record names and addresses of driver, witnesses, and occupants of the other vehicles and any medical personnel who may arrive at the scene.
- Complete the form located in the LGIT Vehicle Accident Packet. Pertinent information to obtain includes:
  - license number of other drivers
  - insurance company names and policy numbers of other vehicles
  - make, year, model of other vehicles
  - date and time of accident
  - overall road and weather conditions
- Draw a diagram of the accident scene and note the street names and locations of traffic signs, signals, etc.
- Do not discuss the accident with anyone at the scene except the police. Do NOT accept any responsibility for the accident. DON'T argue with anyone.
- Provide the other party with your name, address, phone number, drivers license number, and insurance information.
- Immediately report the accident to Office of Risk Management. Provide a copy of the accident record and/or your written description of the accident to the Office of Risk Management ASAP.
- Cooperate fully with any follow-up from LGIT/ Risk Management claims personnel.

### **Vehicle Maintenance**

Proper vehicle maintenance is a basic element of any fleet safety program, not only to ensure a safe, road worthy vehicle, but also to avoid costly repair expenses and unexpected breakdowns.

- Registration and Inspection is the responsibility of the assigned driver.
  - Drivers of D.O.T. regulated vehicles are required to inspect their vehicle prior to usage, documenting and notifying the company mechanic of deficiencies found.

- In addition to inspections required by law for passenger vehicles, routine inspections of critical items, such as brakes, lights, tires, wipers, etc., must also be completed by drivers of passenger vehicles.
- The vehicle should be cleaned (interior & exterior) regularly to help maintain its good appearance for you and the County. A clean vehicle makes a good impression on customers.
- The vehicle manufacturer's maintenance schedule should be referenced and closely following regarding recommended maintenance intervals.

I acknowledge that the information contained in the Carroll County Government Vehicle Safety Policy has been reviewed with me and a copy of the policy and driver rules have been furnished to me. As a driver of a county vehicle, I understand that it is my responsibility to operate the vehicle in a safe manner and to drive defensively to prevent injuries and property damage.

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PRINT - EMPLOYEE'S NAME

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EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE

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DATE

---

REVIEWER'S SIGNATURE

---

DATE

(Sign and retain the original copy in the employee's file)

**(OPTIONAL)**

\*\*\*\* Discuss responsibilities for maintenance

- Who is responsible for scheduling repairs
- is prior approval required; if so, from whom
- Who is responsible for authorizing repairs & expenses

\*\*\*\* Discuss where to obtain service - both preventative maintenance and emergency repairs

\*\*\*\* Discuss any specific preventative maintenance requirements

(i.e. oil changes every 4,000 miles, engine tune-up when needed, winterizing requirements, windshield wipers replaced when needed, etc.)

\*\*\*\* Discuss type, care, and replacement of tires: specify type required, including snow tires, rotation & replacement schedule; and where to obtain new tires.

**Vehicle Expenses & Record Keeping (optional)**

\*\*\* Discuss any reporting or tracking of mileage required.

**Authorization for Release of Driver's License Records and Driver's License Monitoring  
and  
Acknowledgement of Carroll County Government Vehicle Safety Guidelines**

I \_\_\_\_\_ authorize the release of my driving record  
(Print Full Name)

to Carroll County Government. I understand my driving record will be monitored for the purpose of my employment, contractual or volunteer activities for Carroll County Government and/or Carroll County's Governmental Partners, and monitoring will end when the activity terminates.

I acknowledge I have received and reviewed Carroll County Government Vehicles Safety Guidelines. As an authorized driver of County vehicles, I understand that operating a County vehicle is a privilege and it is my responsibility to operate the vehicle in a safe manner and to drive defensively to prevent injuries and property damage.

**Driver's License Information**

Driver's License Issued by: Maryland Pennsylvania\* Other \_\_\_\_\_  
(Circle One) (Please Specify)

Driver's License#: \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_ CDL Driver: Yes No

\*PA drivers must sign PA release form

**Relationship with Carroll County Government**

(Circle One)

Fire/EMS County Employee or Volunteer Fire/EMS Station Employee or Volunteer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Primary Station Assignment

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Contract Period - if applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Supervisor-print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Supervisor Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Call the Office of Risk Management at 410-386-2082 with questions about driver's license records, monitoring or safety guidelines.

MESSSENGER NO.