

Union County Standard Operating Guidelines  
**Special Operations**

**Special Operations, SOG 4.14**

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**ROADWAY OPERATIONS**

1. Intent and Purpose

To address basic safety operational procedures and environmental conditions unique to driving, roadway/highway response, and scene management.

2. Safety guidelines

- a. All responses shall emphasize that the safe arrival of emergency apparatus to the incident scene is the first priority.
- b. All personnel must wear safety belts anytime a vehicle is in motion. Drivers shall not move fire apparatus until all persons on the vehicle are seated and secured with seat belts in approved riding positions. Standing or riding on any exposed position shall be specifically prohibited. The only exception to this rule is a grassfighter, with the lone occupant properly restrained with an approved device AND ONLY when engaged in active wildland fire suppression efforts at very low speeds.
- c. Seat Belts shall not be released or loosened for any purpose while the vehicle is in motion, including the donning of respiratory protection equipment or protective clothing.
- 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. Fire apparatus shall be operated only by members who have successfully completed an approved driver training program commensurate with the type of apparatus the member will operate or by trainee drivers who are under the supervision of a qualified driver. The driver of the vehicle shall possess a valid driver's license.
- f. Fire apparatus shall be operated in compliance with all applicable traffic laws, including special provisions pertaining to emergency vehicles.
- g. Drivers of the apparatus shall be directly responsible for the safe and prudent operation of the vehicles under all conditions. When the driver is under the direct supervision of an officer, that officer shall also assume responsibility for the driver's actions.

Union County Standard Operating Guidelines  
**Special Operations**

- h. Drivers shall proceed thru intersections only when the driver can account for all lanes of traffic in the intersection.
  - i. During emergency response or non-emergency travel, drivers of emergency apparatus shall come to a complete stop at all unguarded railroad grade crossings and ensure that it is safe to proceed before crossing the railroad track(s). Drivers shall use caution when approaching and crossing any guarded railroad grade crossing.
  - j. Crews shall use emergency warning lights while responding to emergency calls and while on scene. Amber light bars (if equipped) should also be used in conjunction with warning lights.
  - k. When operating at night be aware of head lights and scene lights that may mask responders who are working on the road regardless of whether they are using reflective gear. Avoid shining white lights into oncoming traffic. Approaching traffic will be effectively blinded if the white light is directed at them. Consider turning headlights off and leaving marker lights and emergency lights turned on. Scene wash downs should be performed in light from as high as possible with the light shining down on the scene from above.
  - l. Crew must wear ANSI Class 2 or 3 (reflective vest or jacket) while working on scenes. **This shall not interfere with usage of SCBA and PPE.**
  - m. Crews shall deploy cones and/or reflective signage behind the scene in a manner directing vehicles towards an open lane of traffic. Cones and/or reflective signaage should also be placed 300-500 feet beyond equipment on scene. When operating near a hill, cones and/or reflective signage should also be placed on the crest of, and 300-500 feet beyond crest of the hill in a manner directing traffic into an open lane (s).
  - n. Crews should remain vigilant at all times during roadway incidents in relation to traffic and secondary crashes.
  - o. Crews should (if safety and adequate manpower exist) assist in directing traffic until law enforcement arrives.
  - p. Fire Department personnel must maintain communication with on-scene law enforcement. Crews should work with law enforcement requests and concerns provided such actions will not compromise firefighter safety or violate policy
3. Scene Procedures  
**EMS Call:** EMS calls occurring on roadways will require a Squad or Medic and when available an Engine / Rescue company to respond along with law enforcement. The medic should proceed to a location near the vehicle or scene being cognizant of

Union County Standard Operating Guidelines  
**Special Operations**

hazards. Engine / Rescue companies shall hold an angled position to protect crew members and EMS vehicle, blocking the roadway if necessary, until the medic clears the scene.

**Vehicle Fires:** Vehicle fires will require the response of an Engine / Rescue company along with law enforcement. The Engine Company shall be placed at an angle a safe distance from the vehicle, blocking as many lanes of traffic as needed for safe scene work. Crews should note smoke conditions when deciding on appropriate lane closures. Staff vehicle and/or law enforcement shall hold a safe position.

**Vehicle Crash:** Vehicle crashes will require the response of a medic and engine / rescue company along with law enforcement, requesting additional resources as needed or as more information becomes available. The medic will position itself in an area with good access to the scene, mindful of hazards. The engine / rescue company will position at an angle blocking as many lanes of traffic as needed for safe scene work. The engine / rescue company should also attempt to position in a manner to facilitate extrication operations. Additional companies shall be positioned in accordance with IC direction.

**Grass Fires and Wash Downs:** Grass fires and wash downs will require the response of a grass truck and / or an engine company. The grass truck / engine company shall be placed or operated in an area most appropriate for extinguishment of fire or wash down operations. Traffic may be blocked if necessary. Smoke conditions from fire may require road closures.

**Hazmat Incidents:** Hazmat incidents shall require the response of as least two engine / rescue companies and a medic as well as law enforcement. Additional resources may be requested by the IC. Crew should stage a safe area away from unknown materials and shall block traffic until material can be identified and / or spill contained. All spills of a reportable quantity will require EPA notification and possible response. Vehicles should be placed at angles blocking the required lanes of traffic.

**EMS Helicopters:** In the event an EMS Helicopter is requested to land on roadway the road must be shut down. If landing zone is on a divided highway both directions of traffic must be shut down while aircraft is landing and taking off.

**Prolonged Scene Times:** Anytime the roadway is (or anticipated to be) closed more than 2 hours, as a result of prolonged operations, barricades shall be requested and placed by the appropriate agency (i.e. county/city road department).