

JOINT OPERATIONAL POLICY	
Title	Emergency Vehicle Response Driving
Purpose	To provide the conditions under which emergency vehicles are required to be driven when responding to an incident to ensure the safety of emergency service personnel, all road users and the community.
Scope	<p>This policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covers the driving of emergency vehicles as defined in the <i>Road Safety Road Rules 2017</i> by emergency service personnel. • Describes the conditions of whom and when an emergency vehicle can be operated and defines Emergency Vehicle Status (EVS). • Is limited to agencies who operate or control an emergency vehicle as specified in the <i>Road Safety Road Rules 2017</i> with the exclusion of Ambulance Victoria, Defence Force and Air Services Australia. • Covers emergency response driving and does not cover general driving of emergency vehicles. • Emergency vehicle provisions as specified in the <i>Road Safety Road Rules 2017</i> do not apply to private vehicles owned by emergency service personnel.
Policy Content	<p>The content of this policy includes;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emergency Vehicle Status 2. Emergency Vehicles 3. Warning Devices 4. Road Rule Exemptions 5. Exception to exemptions 6. Speed Limits 7. GVM or dimension limits 8. Alcohol, Drugs and Medications 9. Phones, Radios, Data Terminals and other handheld devices 10. Seatbelts 11. Probationary licence holders 12. Driver Endorsements 13. Multiple vehicle response 14. Downgrading from Code 1 Emergency Response Status 15. Collisions

<p>Applicable Agencies</p>	<p>This policy applies to the following agency personnel;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFA • DELWP • EMV • FRV • VICSES • Shepparton Search and Rescue • Echuca/Moama Search and Rescue
<p>Responsibilities</p>	<p>Emergency response vehicle driving can be one of the most dangerous activities performed by emergency service personnel.</p> <p>All drivers have a responsibility to the community to ensure the emergency vehicle is driven safely.</p> <p>Drivers are responsible for their actions and need to be able to justify that their action/s are reasonable and careful. This includes taking into consideration all hazards and associated risks with traffic and environmental conditions.</p> <p>Drivers shall continually perform a dynamic risk assessment and drive according to identified risks taking into account the likelihood and consequences of their actions.</p>
<p>Definitions</p>	<p>The following definitions apply to this policy:</p> <p>Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) The amount of alcohol present in the bloodstream.</p> <p>Code 1 Emergency Response Driving, stopping and parking in accordance with Road Safety Rules 2017; in accordance with Rule 306 and 307 (road rule exemptions). This generally is in response to a time critical incident.</p> <p>Code 3 Response Driving under normal driving conditions obeying the Road Safety Rules 2017. This is generally in response to a routine event.</p> <p>Collision An incident involving a motor vehicle whereby any person is killed or injured; or animal under the charge of a person is killed or injured, or property is damaged or destroyed.</p> <p>Crew Leader Crew Leader / OIC is the person designated to have responsibility for the management of the crew.</p> <p>Drugs Prescribed or illicit substance when consumed or used by a person, deprives that person (temporarily or permanently) of any of their normal mental or physical faculties.</p>

**Dynamic Risk Assessment (DRA)**

The continuous assessment and control of risk in the rapidly changing circumstances of an operational incident. DRA is an intuitive thought process and is typically not recorded.

Emergency vehicle

A “fit for purpose” emergency response vehicle operated by or on behalf of and under the control of—

- the Fire Rescue Victoria
- the Country Fire Authority

A fire service unit under the control of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

A “fit for purpose” emergency response vehicle under the control of —

- Echuca/ Moama Search and Rescue
- Emergency Management Commissioner
- Shepparton Search and Rescue
- Victoria State Emergency Service

Emergency Vehicle Status (EVS)

The EVS determines the driving conditions under which emergency vehicles respond to an incident.

Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM)

GVM means the maximum loaded mass of the vehicle:

(a) as specified by the vehicle's manufacturer or

(b) as specified by VicRoads if :

- the manufacturer has not specified the maximum loaded mass; or
- the manufacturer cannot be identified; or
- the vehicle has been modified to the extent that the manufacturer's specification is no longer appropriate.

Vehicle

Transportation, including motor vehicle, trailer, motorcycle or bicycle.

POLICY

1. Emergency Vehicle Status

1.1. The conditions under which an emergency vehicle responds to an incident is classified into the following statuses:

1.1.1. Code 1 Emergency Response – Driving, stopping and parking in accordance with Road Safety Rules 2017; in accordance with Rule 306 and 307 (road rule exemptions). This generally in response to a time critical incident.

1.1.2. Code 3 Response – Driving under normal driving conditions obeying the Road Safety Road Rules 2017. This is generally in response to a non-urgent or routine event.

1.2 Each agency will determine the Emergency Vehicle Status according to individual agency procedures.

2. Emergency Vehicles – Code 1 Emergency Response

2.1. All emergency vehicles intended to be utilised for Code 1 Emergency Response driving are required to be fitted with warning devices as approved by each agency.

3. Warning Devices – Code 1 Emergency Response

3.1. All drivers of emergency vehicles responding under Code 1 Emergency Response status are to comply with the following:

3.1.1. Red and/or blue flashing beacons or lights to be used at all times.

3.1.2. Sirens should be used when there is a risk to road users or where the driver requires another vehicle to give way.

3.1.3. The use of supplementary warning devices such as air horns and 'rumbler' type devices are permitted providing they do not prevent road users from hearing the siren.

4. Road Rule Exemptions

4.1. Road Safety Road Rule 306 (2017)

A provision of these Rules does not apply to the driver of an emergency vehicle if:

(a) in the circumstances —

(i) the driver is taking reasonable care; and

(ii) it is reasonable that the rule should not apply; and

(b) if the vehicle is a motor vehicle that is moving — the vehicle is displaying a blue or red flashing light or sounding an alarm.

4.2. Road Safety Road Rule 307 (2017)

(1) A provision of Part 12 (restrictions on stopping and parking) does not apply to the driver of a police vehicle, emergency vehicle, enforcement vehicle or escort vehicle if, in the circumstances —

(a) the driver is taking reasonable care; and

(b) it is reasonable that the provision should not apply.



5. Exception to exemptions

5.1. Drivers of emergency vehicles and emergency personnel are NOT exempt from the offence provisions in the *Road Safety Act 1986* and the *Crimes Act 1958*.

These offences may include but not limited to:

- Careless driving
- Dangerous driving
- Offences involving alcohol and other drugs
- Causing injury or serious injury intentionally or recklessly
- Conduct endangering life or persons
- Negligently causing serious injury
- Culpable driving causing death
- Dangerous driving causing death or serious injury.

5.2. Although considered exemptions, the following road rules shall be complied with at all times:

5.2.1. Rule 79A - Approaching a stationary or slow-moving police vehicle, emergency vehicle, enforcement vehicle or escort vehicle that is displaying a flashing blue, red or magenta light (whether or not it is also displaying other lights).

5.2.2. Rule 80 – Stopping at Children’s Crossing

5.2.3. Rule 81 – Giving way at Pedestrian Crossing

5.2.4. Rule 82 – Overtaking or passing a vehicle at a children’s or pedestrian crossing

5.2.5. Rule 123 – Entering a level crossing when a train or tram is approaching.

5.3. Although considered exemptions, drivers shall comply with posted speed limits when:

5.3.1. Driving in school zones,

5.3.2. Passing stationary trams and buses, or

5.3.3. Where road work speed limits apply.

6. Speed Limits – Code 1 Emergency Response

6.1. During a Code 1 Emergency Response, emergency vehicles shall be driven in accordance with own agency procedures where they exist.

6.2. During a Code 1 Emergency Response, emergency vehicles shall be driven at a speed that is appropriate for the capability, training and the physical state of the driver, vehicle specifications, and consideration to other road users, environmental and road conditions.

6.3. During a Code 1 Emergency Response, emergency vehicles shall be driven at speed that enables the vehicle to give way and, if necessary, avoid a collision.

6.4. Unless agency procedures exist the following speed limit restrictions apply:

6.4.1. Vehicles 4.5 tonnes or less shall not be driven at a speed that exceeds 20km/h above the posted speed limit.

6.4.2. Vehicles over 4.5 tonnes shall not be driven at a speed that exceeds

20km/h over the posted speed limit. Where the posted speed limit is 100km/h or more, a maximum speed of 110km/h applies, however, agencies may apply a maximum speed limit of 120km/h if operationally justified and is not in breach of vehicle / tyre manufacturer's specifications.

6.4.3. Trailers attached to emergency vehicles can be driven under Code 1 Emergency Response status; however shall not exceed the posted speed limit.

7. GVM or dimension limits

7.1. Drivers shall comply with posted mass or dimension limits unless exempted by state legislation or relevant authority.

8. Alcohol, Drugs and Medications

8.1. The driver of an emergency vehicle driven under Code 1 Emergency Response status, is required to have:

8.1.1. A zero (0.00) BAC level; and

8.1.2. Not be under the influence of a drug (prescribed or illicit) to such an extent as to be incapable of having proper control of the vehicle.

9. Phones, Radios, Data Terminals and other handheld devices

9.1. Whilst the vehicle is in motion, drivers should avoid using a radio, mobile phone, navigational device or data terminal unless operationally required while having due regard for the safe operation of the vehicle. Where possible, a passenger in the vehicle should operate these devices.

10. Seatbelts

10.1. Seatbelts shall be worn whilst driving at all times.

11. Probationary licence holders

11.1. The display of "P" plates on emergency vehicles will be determined by agency procedures in accordance with *Road Safety (Driver) Regulations 2009*.

12. Driver Endorsements

12.1. Drivers of emergency vehicles shall comply with all conditions on their licence.

12.2. Personnel with suspended, cancelled or disqualified licences are not permitted to drive an emergency vehicle.

12.3. Endorsement of personnel to drive an emergency vehicle under Code 1 Emergency Response status will be determined by each agency.

13. Multiple vehicle response

13.1. When multiple vehicles are responding to the same incident under Code 1 Emergency Response status, each agency will determine according to the identified risk, the safe and efficient number of vehicles responding under Code 1 Emergency Response status.

14. Downgrading from Code 1 Emergency Response Status

14.1. Drivers responding under Code 1 Emergency Response status may be downgraded to Code 3 response status or requested to return to vehicle home location where;

14.1.1. Advice is received from the communication centre that the incident no longer justifies a Code 1 Emergency Response.

14.1.2. Advice is received from the Incident Controller that on-coming vehicles are to downgrade or return.

15. Collisions

15.1. The driver of emergency vehicle involved in a collision shall:

15.1.1. Stop the vehicle and comply with all legislative requirements

15.1.2. As soon as possible, notify the Communication/Dispatch Centre of the collision.

15.1.3. Comply with agency requirements in relation to the reporting of vehicle collisions.





SAFETY

Emergency Personnel need to ensure that the protection and preservation of life is maintained at all times.

In the application of this policy the following safety considerations apply:

- Code 1 Emergency Response driving can be one of the most dangerous activities performed by emergency services. Dynamic Risk Assessment should be used by the driver whilst operating under EVS.
- Drivers of emergency vehicles are required to adopt a safety first approach when responding under Code 1 Emergency response status, giving consideration the capability and the physical state of the driver, vehicle specifications, and consideration to other road users, environmental and road conditions
- Fatigue management is an important consideration when driving emergency vehicles. Agency fatigue management guidelines should be followed at all times.

REFERENCE

Related Documents	Crimes Act 1958 Road Safety Act 1986 Road Safety Road Rules 2017 Road Safety (Drivers) Regulations 2009 Road Safety (General) Regulations 2009 Road Safety (Vehicles) Regulations 2009
Environment	N/A

REVIEW

Date Issue	1 July 2020
Date Effective	1 July 2020
Date to be Reviewed	October 2021
Date to Cease	

AUTHORITY

The Emergency Management Commissioner has issued this Policy under section 50 of the Emergency Management Act 2013.

Approved	Signature	Date
Andrew Crisp Emergency Management Commissioner		
Endorsed	Signature	Date
Garry Cook Acting Chief Officer, CFA		
Chris Hardman Chief Fire Officer, DELWP		
Ken Block Commissioner, FRV		
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