

***PURPOSE***

In the course of responding to an emergency, traffic conditions and the incident location may dictate the need for emergency vehicles to travel in opposing lanes of traffic or against the flow of traffic on one-way streets.

OBJECTIVE

This guideline is intended to provide personnel with a proper and safe course of action when it is necessary to operate a responding emergency vehicle in opposing lanes of traffic or against the flow of traffic on a one-way street.

SCOPE

All Personnel

GENERAL

Operating emergency vehicles in opposing traffic lanes or against the normal flow of traffic on a one-way street is extremely hazardous under all conditions. Emergency vehicle operators shall only take these courses of action while responding to an emergency and shall make maximum use of all visual and audible warning devices when executing this maneuver. Travel in opposing lanes and against the normal flow of traffic should only be considered under exceptional circumstances when there is no alternate route of travel.

TRAVEL IN OPPOSING LANES OF TRAFFIC

When an emergency vehicle must travel in an opposing traffic lane, or in an opposing turn lane to maneuver around slow moving or stopped traffic, the emergency vehicle shall not exceed 15 miles-per-hour, at a maximum. Actual speed should depend on the road, traffic, and weather conditions. This speed limit shall not apply when law enforcement has closed opposing traffic lanes for the travel of emergency vehicles at an incident or special event.

When approaching a controlled intersection (traffic lights or stop signs) in an opposing traffic lane or turn lane, the emergency vehicle shall come to a full stop before entering the intersection, even if the traffic light is green in the direction of travel.

TRAVEL IN OPPOSING DIRECTION ON ONE-WAY STREET

Operating emergency vehicles against the normal flow of traffic is extremely hazardous under all conditions and should only be considered under exceptional circumstances when there is no alternate route of travel.

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. The emergency vehicle must come to a full stop before entering any intersection while traveling in an opposing direction.