

Falmouth Fire-EMS Operating Guideline

Incident Traffic Control

Objective:

To establish guidelines to familiarize fire department personnel in proper operations while operating at incidents or training on roadways. This guideline is meant to set management expectations for conducting operations on roadways.

General Information:

Maine State law establishes authority for trained and authorized emergency personnel to function as a “Public Safety Traffic Flagger” (PSTF). Falmouth Fire-EMS personnel who have received appropriate Bureau of Labor standards training are authorized by the Chief of the Department to function as PSTF’s by this SOG. PSTF personnel wearing the appropriate clothing as defined later have the authority to direct vehicular traffic and drivers are required to obey their instructions.

Guidelines:

General: Whenever practical personnel shall position apparatus clear of roadways when operating at emergency incidents, training or routine operations. When this is not feasible, drivers shall position apparatus to obstruct traffic as minimally as possible while still protecting personnel operating in the roadway. Especially on a divided highway, every effort shall be made to continue at least one lane of traffic flowing. Safety of responders and the driving public shall be the primary concerns.

Required PPE: All personnel functioning as PSTF’s are required to wear the following PPE; Class II Safety Vest with Turnout Coat.

Traffic Control Equipment: Each apparatus shall be equipped with a set of road cones.

General Safety Standards: In addition to proper PPE the following safety reminders and practices shall be followed;

- Maintain an acute awareness of the high risk of operating in or near moving traffic
- Exit and enter apparatus cabs as much as possible from the protected or shadow side of the vehicle
- When placing or retrieving traffic cones face and be alert to oncoming traffic
- Look in both directions before moving around traffic
- Stay in the protected or shadow area as much as possible and avoid the traffic side of apparatus

- Use special care when rounding the corners of apparatus to enter the unprotected side

General Traffic Control Plan: In order to improve safety for responders and the driving public the following describes the general goals and components of a standard traffic control plan.

- Provide advance warning to approaching drivers by the use of signs, flaggers and cones in the “Advance Warning Zone”.
- Direct traffic as appropriate to shift lanes around the Activity area by the use of apparatus, cones and flaggers in the “Transition Zone” and “Buffer Zone”.
- Provide a safe “Work Zone” for responders by the use of cones and apparatus.
- Provide for the return to normal traffic flow after passing the work zone by the possible use of cones in the “Termination Zone”.
- Attempt to place as few personnel as possible in the hazard area by the use of vehicles, cones, signs, barricades and other inanimate objects.

The intent is to adequately inform and direct drivers to maintain safety for all.

Types of Traffic Incidents: Traffic incidents may be classified as one of three types depending on the duration of expected traffic disruption. Traffic control measures expected will increase with each level.

- **Minor Traffic Incidents:** These are expected to disrupt traffic flow for under 30 minutes. Diversion of traffic to other lanes is not needed or only needed briefly
- **Intermediate Traffic Incidents:** These are expected to disrupt traffic flow for between 30 minutes and 2 hours. More significant traffic diversion is expected and may include a brief Detour.
- **Major Traffic Incident:** These are expected to disrupt traffic flow in excess of 2 hours. Major traffic diversion is expected and may involve a complete closing of the road with Detour.

Incident Specific Guidelines: The following are minimum traffic control efforts keyed to the above traffic incident types.

Minor Traffic Incidents: Apparatus shall be positioned to provide as little disruption to traffic flow as practical.

An engine or ladder shall be positioned in the Buffer Zone to block oncoming traffic and create a safe Work Zone. This vehicle may be placed at an angle to help direct traffic flow. The engine or ladder operator shall place cones extending

from the rear corner of the apparatus nearest the traffic toward oncoming traffic at an angle toward the curb to create a Transition Zone.

A **minimum of 5** cones placed at **15' intervals** shall be used to create this Transition Zone. On **divided highways** this cone spacing should be increased to **no more than 55'**.

Ambulance apparatus shall be placed downstream of the engine or ladder in the protected Work Zone. If the ambulance arrives prior to an engine or ladder it shall be placed initially as a block to create a Work Zone. Later arriving apparatus shall be placed upstream to extend the Work Zone and provide a block.

Cones should be used to help mark the parallel dividing line between the Work Zone and the traffic flow to reduce the possibility of traffic entering that area before reaching the Termination Zone.

Command may wish to place a PSTF at the furthest cone, at the start of the Transition Area, to provide advance warning and direction to approaching traffic.

The size and location of these assignments should be adjusted to meet the specific traffic flow issues and physical road conditions.

These guidelines may be changed or altered by the Fire Chief at any time.