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## **DRIVER TRAINING**

### **Vehicles Department**

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First of all, THANK YOU for all that you do at Hoboken Volunteer Ambulance Corps. We are very happy to have you as a prospective driver.

This document covers topics that will help you in driver training. It has been adapted from previous versions worked on by Kevin Chamard, Chris Monroy and others.

### **INTRODUCTION, RESPONSIBILITIES AND GOALS**

As a driver, You are responsible for the safety of the crew, the patient and others including family members, police officers and paramedics. A previous Vehicles department adopted a motto - "Slow is smooth, smooth is fast" for this guide. Keep this in the back of your mind with the goal of getting through the shift safely while providing excellent patient care.

Before reaching out to schedule your road training with an FTO, you should know where each piece of equipment is located in the different ambulances of our fleet. As you are about to get a more important place in the team, we want to make sure that you are ready for the task.

Reach out with any questions or issues!

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### **GENERAL DRIVING POLICIES**

- Follow the rig rotation on the whiteboard in the garage
- Perform a rig check and feel free to reach out to the vehicles department with any issues
- Make sure to carry a D-1 radio
- Ambulances are to be parked inside and on a shoreline when not in use
- Use a spotter when backing up
- When leaving the city to get gas, make sure the crew chief informs HPD
- Make sure your vehicle is clean at end of shift
- no open food or drink in the vehicle and no vaping or smoking

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- no loose items on the dashboard (boxes of gloves, food items, etc)
  - Follow traffic rules - especially when using lights and sirens
  - Report any damage or incidents

Most of our rigs are state certified (921 is not). If an inspector sees loose items on the dashboard that is an example of a finable offense. Keep the rig clean and items secured.

## **BEGINNING OF THE SHIFT/PREPARATION**

Here you will make sure the vehicle is ready for your shift, meaning it is clean and safe to operate. In what condition are the safety organs/equipments? Is everything secured? Is the vehicle clean? Is the truck adjusted to me?

It all starts when you enter the building, by checking the rig rotation board. It gives you information on the truck you will be in. Now you're heading upstairs, where you will grab a tablet for your driver checklist and the D-1 radio assigned to your vehicle.

In order to do an accurate driver check, you will need to start the vehicle. If it's already outside, keys are on the white board by the stairs. If it's inside, the keys should be by the white board. Get in, set seat and mirrors to your preferences, buckle your seatbelt. How to properly start the vehicle: put the key in ignition, wait for the dashboard lights to turn OFF. When the lights are OFF, start the engine. You can now safely exit the bay, with your headlights and emergency lights ON. Make your way out the garage gently, by making sure no pedestrians are on the sidewalk and traffic is clear for you to exit, look in both directions as traffic is unpredictable and a bike or skateboard may come in the wrong way. Now that you are safely parked outside and the vehicle is in "SECURITY MODE", you can start your DRIVER CHECKLIST.

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## **RESPONDING TO CALL**

With the adrenaline rushing through your body while responding to a call, you still need to use caution and keep perfect control of your vehicle in any situation. Your driving skills will be challenged by the environment. SAFETY is a key word when operating a 14000 Lbs. moving vehicle. Your lights and siren will help you navigate through traffic but the Law still applies to you, you might be declared responsible for accident that you may cause while responding or transporting. Lights and sirens are not waiver of liability. You are in charge of this vehicle, if you think it is unsafe to go through a crowded intersection, then do not do it...

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## Response types

Hoboken dispatch does not use response codes but sometimes use phrases that give the response type. For example - they might instruct us to “check one out” at a location. This is typically a non-urgent response.

An urgent response uses lights and sirens, the non-urgent does not.

A quick conversation with your crew chief can confirm the response type. This might change en route, so be ready for that.

Stay within the speed limit. The vast majority of calls are within a few miles of the hospital. An increase of speed might shave a few minutes off the trip but it greatly increases the possibility of an accident. FEMA recently published a study which is worth a read.

- <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/blog/nhtsa-publishes-data-on-ground-ambulance-crashes>

Important reminder, we need to follow the same laws as any civilian vehicle. We don't have the exemptions that FD or PD enjoy.

So:

- NO SPEEDING
- NO 'WRONG WAY' DRIVING
- DO NOT PASS A SCHOOL BUS WHEN STOP SIGN AND FLASHING RED LIGHTS ARE ACTIVATED
- DO NOT CROSS RAILROAD TRACKS WHEN RED LIGHT IS ACTIVATED

## ON SCENE

*Arriving on-scene, ask yourself a few questions: - “Is my crew safe to exit the vehicle?” - “Is my vehicle far enough away from hazards (fire, spills, traffic, etc)?” - “Do I have a clear path of egress when leaving the scene?”*

You have safely parked your vehicle at the scene, you first engage the “SECURITY MODE”. By doing so, you allow the truck to keep deliver power, for the AC or heat system, the lights, etc,... In addition, switch the emergency lights from primary to secondary.

You can now tell your crew what door to use to exit and if it is safe to do so.

**Crew safety is paramount. Remember when you park on the left side of a street the crew risks getting out of the rig into the flow of traffic. Make sure it is safe and if not tell the crew to wait or go out the back doors... Also watch for bikes or scooters in the bike lane**

If you're in a high traffic area, or near construction, remind your crew to wear PPE, if there is not enough, observers stay in a safe area, which at this time, should be the vehicle. If you are blocking traffic, ask

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your crew chief to advise Hoboken PD. The driver is responsible for the carrying devices, make sure you check with your crew chief what equipment is needed. You should already know how to set it up and use it, if not, get in touch with the Training Department. Assist your crew chief with whatever task is assigned to you.

Before leaving the scene, make sure the crew didn't forget anything or anyone. Secure all the equipment back in place, and assist with securing patient's family member or belongings in a proper manner. Make sure everyone is properly seated and secured before moving, ask your crew chief or the ALS providers if you can start making your way. Talk to your crew chief about the hospital destination and the type of response needed.

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## **TRANSPORT**

Everybody is safe and secured in the truck, for now... But you're about to start moving. And while you're trying to achieve your mission: "bringing everybody to the destination in a safe manner", others are trying to achieve theirs. the crew chief is monitoring the patient, ALS providers are trying to set an IV line, Police Officers are praying for the patient not to become combative again, and observers are possibly questioning their life choices...

Once again a response type will be indicated by your crew chief.

### **Commonly used hospitals**

- **Hoboken UMC:** 308 Willow Avenue, Hoboken, NJ 07030
  - Ambulance bay located in 4th Street
- **Jersey City MC:** 355 Grand Street, Jersey City, NJ 07302
  - Ambulance bay entrance by Monmouth Street
- **Christ Hospital:** 176 Palisade Avenue, Jersey City, NJ 07306
  - Ambulance entrance located across from Laidlaw Avenue
- **Palisades Hospital:** 7600 River Road, North Bergen, NJ 07047
  - Ambulance bay located on the North side of the building (door code \*5911)

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## **AT DESTINATION**

Make sure you allow enough space for other vehicles to park, you are not the only EMS provider around. It would be considered good practice to turn off the engine when in the ambulance bay. However, Your crew might need the lights while waiting for you to meet them at the rear of the vehicle, so we'll leave that at your own discretion. While waiting for triage, you can help by registering the patient. You will also help to transfer the patient to the hospital bed or seat. When transfer of care is being done by the crew chief, you can properly dispose of dirty linens and get clean ones, if available. It might seem obvious but, do not place them on the soiled stretcher.

- Before considering going back in service:

You should clean all the equipment that was in contact with the patient during the call. Was the patient seated on the bench? Wipe it, don't forget the seatbelts. - Did you use the stairchair or Reeves to carry your patient? Wipe it, don't forget the handles. - Was your patient contagious? Decontaminate everything following the correct protocol. - Get rid of trash in proper containers while at the hospital. Use caution when leaving the hospital, ask your crew chief to check for blind spots.

## **BACK IN SERVICE**

Were you able to accomplish those tasks? What is the status on fuel? Communicate your needs with your crew chief. If you are approaching half of fuel tank, you should head to the gas station. You shouldn't have less than half tank as you don't know what could be your next call. It could be a long transport for a MOS, or a fire standby that might last for hours. You also want to make sure the tank is full for the next crew if you're coming close the end of your shift. If you are heading back to HVAC building, follow the Bay Parking Procedure to safely back up the truck in the bay, and plug it to the shoreline.

## **END OF SHIFT**

If you took care of everything properly earlier and everything is clean and in order, you can now turn OFF your D-1 radio and put it back on the charging dock, make sure it is charging, Make sure you signed the duty book. Say goodbye to your crew and enjoy the rest of your day. If you are low on fuel or noticed anything wrong with the vehicle, alert the next crew, so they won't be surprised.

## **GENERAL SAFETY**

### **BLINDSPOTS & OVERHANG PHYSICS**

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While operating type 3 ambulances (boxes), you have to think about the overhang part at the rear of the vehicle. On a wide and clear road it is not much of a problem, but in Hoboken, where parking is a headache for everybody and you have to share those tight streets with bicycle, pedestrians and all the possible roadway users, it means a lot. It is crucial to understand this principle as it creates a great danger to anyone and everything in the vehicle's surroundings. The overhang is the part of your vehicle that is contained from your rear axle (pivot point of the vehicle) to the rear bumper. Anticipation is again the key in this maneuver, you want to make sure that no one approaches or stays in this area when you are about to turn. During the operation of your vehicle, you are about to make a turn. Every part of your truck located in front of the rear axle will move in the same direction you chose, everything on the overhang will swing in the opposite direction. If you are making a left turn, keep an eye on the passenger side rear corner of the vehicle, box and step. If you are making a right turn, keep an eye on the driver side rear corner of the vehicle, box and step. Remember to always check your surroundings/mirrors before changing lane, direction or pace.

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## **IMPORTANT OPERATIONAL NOTES**

### **SECURITY MODE**

#### **HOW TO ACTIVATE**

- SET VEHICLE TRANSMISSION IN PARK
- APPLY EMERGENCY/PARKING BRAKE (vehicle will idle high)
- PRESS SECURITY BUTTON (for 134-2/922) OR RED BUTTON (others)
- TURN THE KEY SAME AS IF YOU WANTED TO TURN THE TRUCK OFF AND REMOVE IT FROM IGNITION

#### **HOW TO DEACTIVATE**

- PUT THE KEY IN IGNITION AND TURN, SAME AS IF YOU WANTED TO START THE ENGINE
- DO NOT TOUCH ANYTHING BEFORE THIS STEP
- (134-2/922 ONLY: PRESS SECURITY BUTTON)
- APPLY PRESSURE ON BRAKE PEDAL
- WHILE APPLYING PRESSURE ON BRAKE PEDAL, RELEASE THE EMERGENCY/PARKING BRAKE
- THE VEHICLE IS NOW READY TO OPERATE

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## RETURN TO BASE BACKING UP PROCEDURE

- TURN EMERGENCY LIGHTS ON
- STOP IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE CROSSWALK (everybody out: 1 blocker with proper PPE + 1 spotter)
- PUT WINDOWS DOWN
- NO DISTRACTION (turn OFF music)
- OPEN THE GARAGE DOOR, MAKE SURE IT IS COMPLETELY OPEN
- START YOUR MANEUVER, DO NOT TURN OFF THE BACKUP ALARM
- MAKE SURE YOU CAN SEE YOUR SPOTTER IN YOUR MIRROR, IF NOT, STOP IMMEDIATELY

**SIREN OPERATION** Please take in consideration that regular vehicle operators in front of you, while stopped at a red light, are not equipped with the same visual or audible warning devices as you, so **do not force them through an intersection!** by blaring your siren as it is unsafe for them to proceed. Try to stay collected and professional, do not display your anger, it will not change the situation, just increase everybody's stress level. Remember, if an incident was to result from this situation, you may be considered responsible.

**IN CASE OF INCIDENT/ACCIDENT** Is there anybody injured? Call Hoboken PD right away, give your location, request additional resources if necessary. Treat injuries. Assess the damages on your vehicle. If there is no injury and the vehicle is safe to operate while you were responding to a call or transporting to the hospital and the vehicle is in condition to continue safely, take information and pictures of damages then advise Hoboken PD that you are resuming your response or transport. If there are injuries, or the vehicle is unsafe to operate, or you were not in response or transport, remain on scene. If the vehicle needs to be towed, call the Vehicles Officers, the 1st Lieutenant or the Captain. When back available or at the end of the shift, you and every member of your crew are to fill out an incident report form (QR Code on the bulletin board).

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## TRAINING INFO

Make sure your FTO fills out a Driver Training Feedback form (QR Code on the bulletin board).