EMERGENCY DRIVING AND
USE OF WARNING DEVICES POLICY

Document No. SOP2014-001
File No. 12/931 (D14/5607)
Date issued 16 April 2014
Contents Policy Statement Emergency Driving & Use of Warning Devices
Author Branch Operations
Branch Contact 9320.7607
Division Operations
Summary The purpose of this policy is to outline the correct use of warning devices for all operational staff.
Applies to All NSW Ambulance operational staff
Review Date 1 April 2016
Previous Reference SOP2012-018
Status Active
Approved by Chief Executive
Related Documents Australian Road Rules Part 19 Rule 306 – Exemptions for Drivers of Emergency Vehicles
Roads & Traffic Authority Vehicle Standards Information 10.366 Cat No. 45070588 Rev. 4.1
SOP2013-015 Self Responding to Incidents Policy
NSW Work Health and Safety Act 2011

Revision History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version (Circular #)</th>
<th>Amendment notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 April 2014 (SOP2014-001)</td>
<td>Endorsed by Chief Executive. Updating of SOP to make requirement of using warning devices (lights / sirens) as AND / OR + examples of when one or the other might be used as opposed to both. Change to recognise that an Operational Manager can instigate a response to an incident but must advise the Control Centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 September 2012 (SOP2012-018)</td>
<td>Endorsed by Chief Executive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compliance with this policy directive is mandatory
Emergency Driving & Use of Warning Devices

This policy has been updated to minimise risk to operational personnel and the Public and to ensure legal compliance under Road Traffic Act 1909 No. 5 and The Australian Road Rules 2008 whilst engaged in emergency response driving.

NSW Ambulance personnel driving a NSW Ambulance vehicle under emergency response conditions can claim exemptions in certain circumstances. Specifically the driver must be able to prove, in the circumstances:

1. they were taking reasonable care; and
2. it was reasonable that the rule should not apply; and
3. If the vehicle is a motor vehicle that is moving - the vehicle is displaying a blue or red flashing light or sounding an alarm.

The Australian Road Rules refer to the driver of any emergency vehicle, where it is expedient and safe to do so, may:

a) Drive in any direction on part of a public street or overtake or pass on either side of another vehicle, but only with due care
b) Stop, leave standing or park the emergency vehicle at any time or place
c) Exceed the speeds prescribed by the Traffic Act 1909 No. 5 only when safe to do so

While driving a NSW Ambulance vehicle under emergency response conditions, the driver shall:

- Be solely responsible for the vehicle and afford maximum safety of its occupants and any other road users, at all times.
- Comply with requirements of the Traffic Act 1909 No. 5 and Australian Road Rules 2008.
- Drive at a speed and manner appropriate to traffic, road and prevailing weather conditions.
- Drive in a professional manner at all times.
- Not proceed through a railway or tram crossing when the warning signals are in operation unless directed to do so by an authorised person.
- Wear a seat belt at all times. Seat belts must be worn at all times in the rear patient compartment unless immediate lifesaving intervention is required.
- Not enter an intersection or junction that is controlled by a traffic sign, light or other road marking, at a speed where the driver cannot stop the vehicle in order to avoid a crash or causing a crash.
- On approach to a traffic light controlled intersection faced with a red light, the driver must slow down and stop if necessary until all other traffic has completely stopped. Once all other traffic has stopped, and it is safe to do so, enter and proceed through the intersection with caution.
- Particular care must be exercised when transiting through school zones as the unpredictability of children; especially at the sight of an emergency vehicle approaching is heightened.

All emergency responses require the use of flashing lights and/or sirens as follows:

- Category One response
  - NSW Ambulance personnel who drive a vehicle under emergency response conditions shall use all safety equipment provided by NSW Ambulance for that purpose; including lights and/or sirens.
  - Blue or red flashing lights shall be activated at the commencement of all emergency drives.
  - Blue or red flashing lights shall remain active when parked at the emergency scene, unless parked in a position that affords maximum safety without the need to display the lights.
• Where the highest clinical level paramedic responsible for the patient decides that the patient’s condition warrants the use of emergency driving procedures during transfer. (This decision must be communicated to the control centre immediately)

• A crew decision to upgrade the response in order to expedite to a location as described in SOP2013-014 for priority 2 incidents (This decision must be communicated to the control centre immediately)

• The siren should be considered on the approach to any hazard, in particular
  o Physical hazards such as junctions, roundabouts, bends or hill crests
  o Those created by the presence, position or movement of other road users

• Deactivation of the siren during an emergency drive should only be considered if the driver can justify reasonable cause to do so, there is no benefit to be gained from the use of the siren and there is no compromise to the safety of other road users.

• The drivers decision to use all warning devices will always be supported by NSW Ambulance should a complaint be received due to noise made when responding to an emergency

When exceeding the prescribed speed limit:
• Drive so that you are able to stop safely in the distance you can see to be clear
• Drive at a speed which is appropriate to the circumstances
• Remember if you double your speed you quadruple your stopping distance
• No emergency is so great as to justify an accident.

If involved in a collision, or by the presence of your vehicle on the road you are a causal factor in a crash, you must stop and give all possible assistance and the ‘required particulars’ to:
  a. any other driver (or that driver’s representative) involved in the crash; and
  b. any other person involved in the crash who is injured, or the person’s representative; and
  c. the owner of any property (including any vehicle) damaged in the crash (or the owner’s representative), unless, in the case of damage to a vehicle, the particulars are given to the driver of the other vehicle

In the event of an injury crash, the driver must also give the driver’s required particulars, within the required time, to a police officer: that is not more than 90 minutes after the crash, present himself or herself to a police officer at the scene of the crash or at a police station for the purpose of providing particulars of the crash and submitting to any requirement to undergo a test relating to the presence of alcohol or a drug in his or her blood or oral fluid.

It is an organisational mandate that no self-responding to incidents is to occur; however operational managers and on road supervisors may initiate a response within their geographic area of responsibility provided appropriate notification is given to the control centre so that a tasking record can be produced.