

JULY FIRE CHIEFS MESSAGE FROM UFRA

Many Fire Chiefs have been developing various Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG) or Rules and By-laws to address specific issues they face in their department. With the second leading cause of fire fighter line of duty deaths each year being motor vehicle accidents, the International Association of Fire Chiefs ([IAFC](#)) is promoting several areas of focus for Fire/EMS Safety Week. One suggestion is the following:

Initiate an emergency vehicle policy, to include:

1. Always buckle up.

With 12 firefighters losing their lives in 2007 in motor vehicle crashes because they weren't wearing seat belts, it's imperative that the fire and emergency service continues to focus on seat belt safety. How many traffic accidents has your department responded to and found one or more passengers had died due to not wearing their seatbelt? This year, the IAFC and the IAFF are strongly encouraging all fire departments and members to review their mandatory seat belt policy, or establish such a policy if one doesn't exist. Fire departments, fire officers and fire fighters must establish a long-term commitment to vehicle safety and the safety of department members.

2. Always stop at red lights and stop signs.

Intersections are one of the most dangerous areas a fire apparatus can be at any time. The vehicle should always come to a full stop before entering any negative right-of way intersection—those with traffic lights, flashing lights or stop/yield signs, blind intersections and any intersection where hazards are present or where the driver and company officer cannot account for all oncoming traffic lanes. This policy has been a requirement of NFPA 1500 for over 20 years and has been adopted by a large number of fire departments. Again, the IAFC and the IAFF are strongly encouraging all fire departments and members to review their mandatory policy on stopping at intersections, or establish such a policy if one doesn't exist, during Safety Health and Survival Week.

3. Always drive at speed limits and defensively.

Fire-apparatus drivers should never exceed the posted or locally established speed limit. The mere seconds saved in the actual response does not justify taking unnecessary driving risks. We encourage you to use Safety, Health and Survival Week to review or establish internal policies in your department to ensure that they reflect the law and this position.

The Bottom Line:

**Buckle up,
stop at all intersections
and obey the speed limit!**

Visit www.iafc.org/safetyweek for [new planning materials](#) and [resources](#) developed by the IAFC Safety, Health and Survival Section and the IAFF Division of Occupational Health, Safety and Medicine.

Basically, each Fire Chief should be familiar with the Utah Code Annotated, sections UCA 41-6a-208, 41-6a-212 and 41-6a-1601 through 1625 which address Emergency vehicles. The department SOP or SOG should address each subject in accordance with State law, and may include references to the verbiage of these UCA sections. Each fire fighter needs to be familiar with the exemptions and privileges of the law when responding in an emergency apparatus. The law provides exemptions for emergency response, but ultimately advises "the privileges granted under this section do not relieve the operator of an authorized emergency vehicle of the duty to act as a reasonably prudent emergency vehicle operator in like circumstances." So please help your people keep safe and reduce the liability for you and your fire department.