

# Alive on Arrival

## Tips for Safe Emergency Vehicle Operations

A Training Program Prepared

by

The New York State  
Association of Safety Officers



April 2021

*Be Alert. Be Safe.*

[www.nysaso.org](http://www.nysaso.org)

## INTRODUCTION

Recently, the fire and emergency services has experienced several injuries and near-misses of responders operating in and around highway and traffic incidents. To address this threat, the New York State Association of Safety Officers has developed the following presentation packet based on information developed by the US Fire Administration.

The PowerPoint® slides, teaching syllabus and accompanying student handouts supports an informal safety discussion or formal training drill facilitated by training officers, company commanders and department leadership from fire, rescue and EMS agencies.

The program is designed with few “bells and whistles” allowing the addition of department logos and department-specific standard operating procedures.

It is not the intent to change any departmental policies or procedures. Rather, the programs intent is to refresh commonly accepted, safe practices to ensure the safety and well-being of all responders who operate within, near or at highway and traffic incidents.

### **Disclaimer**

All local laws, Standard Operating Procedures, Standard Operating Guidelines take precedence. The Incident Commander has the ultimate authority to manage and direct all on-scene operations including all safety efforts. Every situation is different – requiring the adherence to established policies, rules, common sense and good judgment, which is paramount to the safety of all concerned.



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**FACILITATOR SYLLABUS**

**GOAL:**

The goal of this program is to reduce accidents and injuries to first responders while operating, riding on or directing emergency vehicles.

**OBJECTIVES:** Following this program members will be refreshed;

1. on safe methods and procedures operating emergency vehicles;
2. practices to safely ride on apparatus and emergency vehicles; and
3. procedures to appropriately direct apparatus.

**REFERENCES:**

- a. United States Fire Administration
- b. National Fire Protection Association

**FACILITATOR NOTES**

- The program can be delivered in 1-2 hours, typically paced at a slide per 4 minutes.
- All documents are unlocked PowerPoint® and MS Word® files and will readily accept edits, insertions and added graphics should you wish to customize for departmental purposes.
- The program, while intended to be delivered in a formal classroom setting can accommodate an informal “hot-wash” discussion or broken into short, periodic “reminders” or posters.
- Handouts can be reproduced without limitations. The New York State Association of Safety Officers, requests that credit (logo) remains on all handout and/or shared documents.
- For a poster of this program, contact the USFA at:  
[https://www.usfa.fema.gov/operations/ops\\_vehicle.html](https://www.usfa.fema.gov/operations/ops_vehicle.html)



## **Alive on Arrival Tips for Safe Emergency Vehicle Operations**

### **PURPOSE**

This program is based on information released by the US Fire Administration and is intended to provide the training officer, station officer or other facilitator(s) who wish to reduce injuries and deaths to first responders simple, straightforward safety tips related to emergency vehicle operations.

### **IDEAS HOW THE INFORMATION CAN BE USED**

This file and the associated PowerPoint presentation can be used in a number of ways:

- As a stand-alone training session or sessions formally or informally.
- Broken into separate sessions addressing specific aspects of operating, riding in or directing emergency vehicles.
- As a refresher to those who respond to scenes or stations in privately owned vehicles (POVs).
- Presented as safety messages to develop discussions with groups.
- Used in the development or updating of departmental policies and guidelines.

### **CLASS INTRODUCTION**

1. Facilitator introduces him/herself and reviews the goal and objectives of the program while sharing statistics focusing on emergency vehicle near-misses or accidents.
2. It is important to be cognizant of policies and/or procedures established by the department and state that the tips and ideas included in this program does not supersede or change those policies/procedures.
3. Where appropriate, it is important to mention and/or stress the importance of established state laws and the responsibilities and authorities that on-scene incident commanders and/or the Chief of Department holds so as not to cause misunderstandings or cause for negative outcomes.

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4. Facilitator asks for questions or clarification and sets breaks and related rules.
5. Facilitator may choose to read or introduce the following to open up the class: “Recently, the fire and emergency services has experienced several member injuries and near-misses operating in and around highway incidents. To address this threat to responders, the New York State Association of Safety Officers has developed the following presentation based on information from the US Fire Administration.”

### **SLIDES**

1. **Title: Alive on Arrival**
2. **Seventy percent of all firetruck accidents happen during emergency response.**
3. **Incidents involving rollovers made up 66% of all fatal firetruck accidents.**
4. **The New York State Association of Safety Officers has developed the following presentation based on information from the US Fire Administration.**
5. **Disclaimer: All local laws, Standard Operating Procedures, and Guidelines take precedence. The Incident Commander has the ultimate authority to manage and direct all on-scene operations including all safety efforts. Every situation is different – requiring the adherence to established policies, rules, common sense and good judgment, which is paramount to the safety of all concerned.**



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- 6. Special Note: Many of the following safety tips apply directly to those who respond in their Private Owned Vehicle (POV).**
- 7. Recently, the fire and emergency services has experienced several member injuries and near-misses operating in and around highway incidents. To address this threat to responders, the New York State Association of Safety Officers has developed the following presentation based on information from the US Fire Administration.**
- 8. If you are an emergency vehicle operator, keep yourself safe by following these important tips:**
  - Drive carefully and never assume other vehicles see you.
  - Slower means safer. Don't drive faster than the posted speed and drive even slower when road conditions or visibility are poor.
- 9. If you are an emergency vehicle operator, keep yourself safe by following these important tips:**
  - Always stop at intersections. Drive through intersections and railroad crossings only after coming to a complete stop. Be prepared to stop, even when you have the right of way.
  - If you approach an unguarded railroad crossing, listen for an oncoming train by lowering your windows and turning off radios, fans and wipers, until it is safe to proceed.
- 10. If you are an emergency vehicle operator, keep yourself safe by following these important tips:**
  - Park safely. Park your vehicle away from hazardous areas, such as downed electrical lines, falling debris, flames, toxic gases and smoke.



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- 11. If you are an emergency vehicle operator, keep yourself safe by following these important tips:**
  - If you park on a roadway, make sure your vehicle can be seen by oncoming traffic by using the correct emergency warning lights. Do not blind oncoming traffic with your headlights, spotlights or scene lighting — turn off lights that can blind other drivers when you are parked, especially at night.
  
- 12. If you are an emergency vehicle operator, keep yourself safe by following these important tips:**
  - Always use the parking brake and appropriately chock the wheels of parked emergency vehicles.
  
  - Do not move your vehicle until you and all passengers are safely seated and are wearing seat belts; every passenger needs to have a seat belt. If your vehicle does not have them for every passenger, they need to be installed.
  
- 13. If you are an emergency vehicle operator, keep yourself safe by following these important tips:**
  - Make sure your vehicle is completely stopped before anyone unbuckles their seat belt and exits.
  
  - Always use a spotter when backing up your vehicle.
  
  - Never drive if you are under the influence of medications, drugs or alcohol, or if you are tired.



## Alive on Arrival Tips for Safe Emergency Vehicle Operations

- 14. If you are an emergency vehicle passenger, keep yourself safe by following these important tips:**
- Put on your protective clothing before getting into the vehicle.
  - Always wear a seat belt.
  - Never ride on the exterior tail board or side running boards.
- 15. If you are an emergency vehicle passenger, keep yourself safe by following these important tips:**
- Make sure the vehicle has come to a complete stop before you unbuckle your seatbelt and never try to jump onto or from a moving vehicle.
  - Make sure all tools and equipment in passenger and patient treatment compartments are secured before the vehicle moves.
- 16. If you are an emergency vehicle passenger, keep yourself safe by following these important tips:**
- Look before you exit. Watch for oncoming traffic, downed wires and other hazards.
  - Never board an emergency vehicle as a responder under the influence of medications, drugs or alcohol.





## Alive on Arrival Tips for Safe Emergency Vehicle Operations

17. **If you are working the scene, keep yourself safe by following these important tips:**
  - Always wear your certified high-visibility American National Safety Institute (ANSI) 207, *High Visibility Public Safety Vests*, standard traffic vest.
  - Use Department of Transportation (DOT)-approved orange traffic cones — at least 28 inches in height, with retro-reflective collars.
  
18. **If you are working the scene, keep yourself safe by following these important tips:**
  - Use retro-reflective coral DOT-approved signs stating “EMERGENCY SCENE AHEAD” to warn drivers.
  - Use illuminated warning devices, such as flares or arrow boards, to channel moving traffic away from the incident scene.
  
19. **If you are working the scene, keep yourself safe by following these important tips:**
  - If you are a spotter for a backing vehicle, always be aware of its direction and location. Never turn your back on a vehicle headed in your direction.
  
20. **As The Officer In Charge:** You are responsible for safe and prudent operations of all the emergency vehicle and for the safety of all passengers in the vehicle.



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**STUDENT HANDOUTS**

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- Make sure your vehicle is completely stopped before anyone unbuckles their seat belt and exits.
- Always use a spotter when backing up your vehicle.
- Never drive if you are under the influence of medications, drugs or alcohol, or if you are tired.
- Put on your protective clothing before getting into the vehicle.
- Always wear a seat belt.
- Never ride on the exterior tail board or side running boards.
- Make sure the vehicle has come to a complete stop before you unbuckle your seatbelt and never try to jump onto or from a moving vehicle.
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**If you are an emergency vehicle passenger, keep yourself safe by following these important tips:**

- Put on your protective clothing before getting into the vehicle.
- Always wear a seat belt.
- Never ride on the exterior tail board or side running boards.
- Make sure the vehicle has come to a complete stop before you unbuckle your seatbelt and never try to jump onto or from a moving vehicle.
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