



Scarborough Fire Department

Scarborough, Maine



Standard Operating Guidelines

Book:	Emergency Operations
Chapter:	Alarm & Response Procedures
Subject:	3015 – Emergency Response Codes
Revision Date:	6/9/2008 revised 2/4/2016, 12/30/2017
Approved by:	<i>B. Michael Thurlow</i>

PURPOSE

To establish guidelines for emergency response codes that apparatus operators use when responding to a variety of incidents to minimize the potential for accident or injury to members of the department or the public.

POLICY

The Scarborough Fire Department is called upon to respond to a wide variety of calls for service. Some of those are of an urgent nature, and require an expedient response that must be conducted as safely as possible within Maine State Law and other sections of these SOP's. In many cases the call for service can and should be handled in a non-emergency response mode. Often a code 3 response is more dangerous than the incident to which the apparatus has been dispatched. The driver of the apparatus is ultimately responsible for the safety of that apparatus and the crew. The decision of which code response to use rests with the driver using the procedures listed below:

DEFINITIONS

- A. **Code 1** – This code will be the response of apparatus and call responders without the use of emergency lights and siren. Respond with the normal flow of traffic.
- B. **Code 3** – Use of emergency lights and siren responding to an emergency call or fire alarm in accordance with Maine State Law Title 29A and Department S.O.P.
- C. **IC** – Incident Commander.

PROCEDURES

- A. The first priority of all responding emergency vehicles is to arrive at the scene safely.
- B. The emergency vehicle operator shall choose the response code when dispatched to a call. Selection of the response code shall be determined based on the nature and severity of the incident, weather and traffic conditions, time of day, and in accordance with Maine State Law Title 29A and Department SOPs.
- C. The operator may upgrade or downgrade the response code based on information received while enroute to the scene. The operator will inform dispatch of a code response change enroute to a call.
- D. A Code 1 response will be used on all non emergency and non life threatening responses i.e. EMS calls where the EMD protocols do not recommend an engine assist, investigations (including odors or smoke in the area), service calls (including checking alarm systems or devices, checking burning permits, and box service), mulch fires, elevator calls, assisting the public or the police department, bomb scares, coverage calls and any other non-emergency and non-life threatening situation. These calls may be upgraded to Code 3 should further information warrant the need.
- E. In those cases where a multi apparatus response has been initiated but then the dispatcher receives updated information such as a report from the scene that an alarm was caused by burnt food, all responding apparatus with the exception of the first due piece, shall reduce to a Code 1 response. The first due unit may respond Code 3 if necessary to verify the report and assume command of the incident.
- F. Upon arrival of the first unit and establishment of an Incident Commander, that IC shall investigate the situation and initiate an appropriate code response change to other responding apparatus as appropriate for the situation.
- G. When the IC downgrades a response to Code 1, he/she shall state on the radio “..have the units respond Code 1”. Avoid any reference to slowing down or routine response. The responding units shall acknowledge they copy the Code 1 response request.
- H. The driver may activate emergency lights for the limited purpose of warning motorists when entering or exiting the fire house on a Code 1 call.
- I. The driver of the first due apparatus or ambulance responding to an incident may intermittently activate the TOMAR pre-emption system while responding code 1 to improve traffic flow through busy intersections to ensure first unit arrival at an incident is accomplished in a timely fashion.
- J. Once on scene or when operating in a dangerous location, such as hydrant shoveling, the driver may operate emergency lights as necessary to properly identify the apparatus for visibility and safety reasons.

RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of all drivers of fire department apparatus in the Town of Scarborough to adhere to this policy at all times.

REFERENCES

- A. Maine State Law, MRS 29A
- B. N.F.P.A. 1002, 4.3.1