

Standard Operating Procedures Manual
City of Poquoson Fire and Rescue



**City of Poquoson
Fire and Rescue**

830 Poquoson Ave.
Poquoson, VA 23662
757-868-3510
F757-868-3514

SPECIAL OPERATIONS

SOP#: SO 6.00

Title: Severe Weather Vehicle
Operation

Effective Date: 01/01/2009

Revised Date: 01/01/2009



Fire Chief's Signature



City Manager's Signature

**SEVERE WEATHER VEHICLE
OPERATIONS**

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for emergency and nonemergency response of Fire Department personnel and vehicles/apparatus during severe weather events.

This SOP is not all-inclusive and cannot encompass all situations that may be encountered.

II. POLICY

The geographical location of the City of Poquoson renders it vulnerable to severe weather events to include high winds, storm surge and flash flooding. As a severe weather event approaches and conditions begin to deteriorate, emergency response will become increasingly dangerous and, at some point, impossible to continue. The City must consider the effects of rising water and tropical storm force winds on its vehicles/apparatus, personnel and infrastructure. The effect of the debris that high winds generate must also be taken into consideration.

IMPORTANT: KEEP BAY DOORS, STATION DOORS, AND WINDOWS CLOSED AND SECURE IN THE PRESENCE OF HIGH WIND SPEEDS TO REDUCE RISK OF INJURY TO EMPLOYEES AND DAMAGE TO APPARATUS AND BUILDING.

Once sustained wind speed reaches 45 miles per hour, a risk assessment will be conducted. Based on information received, the Fire Department Command Staff and the City's Senior Management Team will make a decision regarding continued emergency response. The Senior Management Team includes the City Manager and/or the Assistant City Manager (s), the Police Chief and/or the Police Captain, the Fire Chief and/or the Deputy Fire Chief, the Coordinator of Emergency Management and/or the Deputy Coordinator.

Once sustained wind speeds reach 60 miles per hour and with the authorization of the Fire Chief/Senior Management Team, all emergency and non-emergency responses will cease.

The assessment will rely on data available from (1) the National Weather Service, (2) local historical storm data, and (3) input from field personnel.

The decision to cease emergency and non-emergency responses will be based upon conditions in the city. The effects of the severe weather may be, but is not limited to:

- High winds (45-60 mph)
- Heavy rains
- Obstructed roads
- Flooding Streets (water at running boards or higher)
- Poor Visibility
- Flying debris
- Downed power lines
- Tide Cycle

III. RESPONSIBILITIES

The City's Senior Management Team will decide when emergency responses will be terminated.

Supervisors shall ensure Department personnel operate emergency response vehicles in accordance with this SOP.

Drivers of emergency response vehicles shall operate in accordance with this SOP.

IV. PROCEDURES

Once emergency and non-emergency responses have been terminated, dispatchers will maintain a record of all requests for response and establish a priority response list.

In the event that communication systems become inoperable, Shift Supervisors and Company Officers should use their best judgment to determine when to cease operations using the guidelines in this SOP.

Upon receipt of orders to cease operations, units will complete current assignments as quickly as safety permits and return to their stations.

All stations will be notified when conditions are such that responses can resume. In the event that communication systems are inoperable, supervisors will determine when conditions are safe to resume responses.