Driving Procedure

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All BestCare vehicles will be operated safely, prudently, and with courtesy at all times.

Seat Belts

All BestCare individuals shall be properly seat belted all times the vehicle transmission is engaged or the vehicle is in motion. When a family member of a patient is accompanying the patient, they must ride in the front passenger seat with the driver and be seat belted all times the vehicle transmission is engaged or the vehicle is in motion.

All vehicles shall be operated in compliance with New Hampshire Revised Statutes.

Emergency Driving

All Code 3 responses shall be governed by the rules and exceptions listed in New Hampshire Revised Statutes.

When responding, EMERGENCY warning lights must be on and sirens must be sounded to warn drivers of other vehicles, as required by the revised New Hampshire Statutes. It is also requested that the white side scene lights are activated to give just that extra chance of being seen.

The use of sirens and warning lights does not automatically give the right-of-way to the emergency vehicle. These devices simply request the right-of-way from other drivers, based on their awareness of the emergency vehicle presence. Emergency vehicle drivers must make every possible effort to make their presence and intended actions known to other drivers. Drivers must always drive professionally and defensively in order to be prepared for the unexpected and inappropriate actions of others.

BestCare Ambulance Service Inc. vehicles traveling ~ the posted speed limit incur an additional
liability to the safety of others, as speed limits are designed for passenger vehicles and not heavy slow handling ambulances. For this reason, speeds over 10 mph over the posted speed limits are considered past the ambulance's safe driving capabilities.

Under less favorable conditions, the posted speed limit is the absolute maximum permissible. Less favorable conditions include but are not limited to: heavy traffic, limited visibility, poor road surface (washboard, potholes, wet, icy, snow covered, etc.).

Come to a complete stop when approaching a school bus stopped for the purpose of picking up or dropping off pupils.

Intersections present the greatest potential danger to emergency vehicles. When approaching and crossing an intersection with the right-of-way drivers shall not exceed the posted speed limit.

When emergency vehicles must use oncoming traffic lanes to approach controlled intersections, (traffic light or stop sign) they must account for all traffic lanes, by attempting to make eye contact with drivers of vehicles, before proceeding through the intersection at a speed allowing for subsequent stop. This includes occasions when the emergency vehicle has green traffic lights.

When approaching a negative right-of-way intersection {an intersection that presents a red light or stop sign on your direction) the vehicle shall come to a complete stop and may proceed only when the driver can account for traffic, by attempting to make eye contact with drivers of vehicles, in all lanes yielding the right-of-way.

When the negative right-of-way intersection is visibly unoccupied and there is no traffic approaching the intersection, the emergency vehicle may slow to a safe speed (allowing for subsequent stops) as they proceed through the intersection. Be careful in some areas though because a green light for the other lane is interpreted by motorists to mean "Let's hit 60". Experience has shown these vehicles fly through these intersections and no one would have time to react.

"Emergency Response" is authorized only in conjunction with emergency incidents. Unnecessary emergency response shall be avoided.

During an emergency response, ambulances should avoid passing other emergency vehicles. If passing of other emergency vehicles is necessary, permission must be obtained through radio communications.

**Emergency lights**
**Normal operations**

After powering up the ambulance, you need to turn on the power to the rear of the ambulance. To do this, flip the first switch on the bottom row marked “master”, forward (the switch with the lightning bolt). This is the procedure to power up the ambulance during normal operations.

**Emergency operations (Code 3 response) Lights and sirens**

After the ambulance has been powered up using the normal operations procedure, you will need to turn on the emergency lights for “Code 3 Response”.

The master switch (the switch with the triangles) on the top row needs to be kept in the “on” position at all times, whether you are running the lights or not.

The three switches to the right of the master switch (pri/sec, light bar, headlt flasher) run the emergency lights. These are to be kept in the “off” or middle position when not in use. To turn them on, simply push them up to the “on” position. The siren/horn switch is to be kept in the “on” position so the siren can be operated by using the horn on the steering wheel. Aux 1 and Aux 2 are not used. In the bottom row, the left flood, right flood, and rear flood switches need to be flipped to the “on” position when you are running with emergency lights. The backup alarm switch is left as is. Do not disengage the back up alarm, as it warns people when you are backing up the ambulance.
When running lights and sirens (code 3 response) the siren the selector dial on the siren panel needs to be switched to the “HF” position. This stands for “Hands free”, which means you can use the horn on the steering wheel and not have to take your hands off the steering wheel while driving. To use the HF/ horn to turn the siren on and off or switch siren types do the following:
For Wail tap the horn once
For Yelp tap the horn again.
(Do not use “T3” because drivers do not hear it as well as wail or yelp.)
To turn it off using the horn, tap the horn twice, rapidly.
You will notice a button on the siren panel labeled “horn. This button activates the Electronic Horn sound.
When you are not using the siren, the selector dial needs to be left in the “PA” position

Hanging in the cab of the ambulance, between the driver and passenger seats is the Air horn pull cord. This is to be utilized in addition to the siren. The air horn is activated by pulling down on the cord. Utilize it when approaching and passing through intersections or other situations as needed.

**Parking at Hospitals**
Always park in the designated parking areas at hospitals. An exception is Speare Memorial Hospital where we park under the canopy in inclement weather. Always shut off ambulances and secure the vehicles. Even in winter do not leave ambulances running as it can infiltrate the hospital with diesel fumes and irritate the staff, reflecting poorly on BestCare. Leave that for the other services to do.

**On Scene Driving**
When stopped at the scene of an incident, vehicles should be placed to protect personnel who may be working in the street and warning lights shall be used to make approaching traffic aware of the incident. At night, vehicle mounted flood lights and other lights available shall be used to
illuminate the scene. Headlights of ambulances pointed against traffic shall be turned off to avoid "blinding" oncoming drivers. Utilize spotlights or traffic cones to direct traffic around the scene.

If it is not necessary to park vehicles in or near traffic lanes, the vehicle should be pulled off the road to parking lots, curbs, etc., when possible.

**Responding "with traffic" and normal driving**

All BestCare Ambulance Service Inc. employees are required to use seat belts at all times when operating a company vehicle equipped with seat belts. Anyone riding as a passenger in a BestCare Ambulance Service Inc. vehicle is also required to use seat belts. The ambulance crew shall confirm that all personnel and riders are on board, properly attired, with seat belts on, before the ambulance is permitted to move.

All personnel shall ride only in regular seats provided with seat belts. Riding on tail boards or other exposed positions is not permitted on any vehicle.

All personnel are encouraged to reduce the chances for damage and or injury by establishing safe driving operating habits. These habits include but are not limited to:

- Designated drivers shall be the only personnel authorized to move the ambulance.
- All personnel shall advise the driver anytime that equipment is removed from the ambulance.
- Designated drivers shall perform a "360 degree walk around check" of the ambulance prior to moving vehicle; items to be checked include closed compartments, securely mounted cots and equipment, obstruction blocking vehicle movement, etc.
- Designated drivers shall maintain adequate "traffic cushion" while in route to ensure readiness at all times; 20-30 feet cushion when stopped in traffic for use as an avenue for escape, etc.

**Backing**

Drivers shall avoid backing whenever possible. If there is any doubt whether an obstruction may be present the driver shall dismount and walk completely around the ambulance and inspect the area before backing. Whenever possible the driver shall back to the visible side (left side). If at all possible, utilize partner to guide ambulance back when backing is difficult or there are obstacles present.

**Garage doors**

The garage doors to the shop will be fully opened prior to exiting the ambulance bay and prior to backing ambulance into the garage. This is to happen at all times. The garage doors are not to be used as an employee exit/entrance unless they are already open. Employees should utilize the employee entrance when garage doors are not open.
The employee will press the remote garage door control. Employee will verify Door is completely open by visualizing in rear view Mirror prior to backing.
Prior to departure from the shop on a call. The employee will press the remote garage door control.
**Drive-thru**

Drivers shall be aware of overhead obstacles at all times. The height of the ambulance is “8 feet 11 inches”. Be observant of restaurant drive-thru heights. It is best to avoid a drive-thru if possible, but if you do go through one, make sure you are aware of the height.

**Accidents**

Any time that a BestCare Ambulance Service Inc. vehicle is involved in an accident, the driver shall:

Follow guidelines specified in [Motor Vehicle Accident Procedure](#).

**State Laws Governing Motor Vehicle Operations in NH**

**TITLE XXI**
MOTOR VEHICLES

CHAPTER 265
RULES OF THE ROAD

Obedience to and Effect of Traffic Laws

Section 265:8

265:8 Emergency Vehicles. –

I. A person driving an emergency vehicle, as defined in RSA 259:28, when responding to an emergency call or when in the pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of the law or when responding to but not upon returning from a fire alarm, may exercise the privileges set forth in this section, but subject to the conditions herein stated.

II. (a) The driver of an emergency vehicle may:

(1) Park or stand notwithstanding the provisions of Title XXI.

(2) Proceed past a red or stop signal or stop sign, but only after slowing down as may be necessary for safe operation.

(3) Exceed the maximum speed limits so long as he does not endanger life or property.

(4) Disregard rules governing direction of movement or turning in specified directions.

(b) Notwithstanding subparagraph II(a), any emergency vehicle approaching a school bus, which is stopped for the purpose of picking up or dropping off pupils, shall come to a complete stop before proceeding.

III. (a) The exemptions granted to an emergency vehicle in subparagraphs II(a)(1) and (3) shall apply only when such vehicle is making use of audible or visual emergency signals, or, in the case of a privately-owned vehicle being driven by a volunteer firefighter or other volunteer emergency personnel, when such vehicle is making use of audible or visual emergency signals, or when an emergency vehicle is in pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of the law.

(b) The exemptions granted to an emergency vehicle in subparagraphs II(a)(2) and (4) shall apply only when such vehicle is making use of both audible and visual emergency signals, or, in the case of a privately-owned vehicle being driven by a volunteer firefighter or other volunteer emergency personnel, when such vehicle is making use of both audible and visual emergency signals, or when an emergency vehicle is in pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of the law.

IV. Any person engaged in part-time law enforcement and who uses his own vehicle shall not display driving emergency lights when not on duty.

V. The provisions of RSA 265:8, II and III shall not relieve the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons, nor shall such provisions protect the driver from the consequences of his reckless disregard for the safety of others.

VI. A driver of a vehicle being driven on the ways of this state upon the approach from any direction of an emergency vehicle with the siren or flashing light in operation shall turn immediately as far as possible toward the right-hand side of the way and shall bring his vehicle to a standstill until such emergency vehicle has passed.

VII. Upon the immediate approach of an emergency vehicle making use of an audible or visual signal, every pedestrian shall yield the right-of-way to the authorized emergency vehicle. This paragraph shall not relieve the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons using the highway, nor from the duty to exercise due care to avoid colliding with any pedestrian.

265:33 Driving of Vehicles on Approach of Authorized Emergency Vehicles. – Upon the immediate approach of an authorized emergency vehicle making use of audible or visual signals or of a police vehicle properly and lawfully making use of an audible or visual signal, the driver of every other vehicle shall yield the right of way and shall immediately drive to a position parallel to, and as close as possible to, the right-hand edge or curb of the roadway clear of any intersection and shall stop and remain in such position until the authorized emergency vehicle has passed, except when otherwise directed by a police officer. This section shall not operate to relieve the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons using the way.


265:61 Speed Exception. – The speed limitations set forth in RSA 265:60 shall not apply to vehicles when driven with due regard for safety under the direction of the peace officers in the chase or apprehension of violators of the law or of persons charged with or suspected of any such violation, nor to fire department or fire patrol vehicles when traveling in response to a fire alarm, nor to public or private ambulances or other emergency vehicles when traveling in emergencies. This exemption shall not, however, protect the driver of any such vehicle from the consequences of a reckless disregard of the safety of others.
