

	<b>Standard Operating Guideline: OPS 10</b>	
	Subject:	Inclement Weather Operations
	Effective Date:	December 1, 2012
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	Approval:	
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**PURPOSE:** Franklin County Public Safety shall assure that appropriate personnel and apparatus respond to calls for service at all times, with these special considerations during inclement weather, keeping in mind not only the safety of our citizens but of our first responders as well.

I. POLICY:

A. Two (2) basic categories will be used to define severe weather: Summer Storms and Winter Storms. "Summer" Storms can be present during any time of the year. The hazards associated with summer storms include lightning, flooding, high winds, heavy rain, hail, tropical storms, hurricanes and tornadoes. Extreme heat is not necessarily a part of "storms", however, it will be grouped here since it occurs in the summer months. Winter Storms only present a problem when freezing occurs. Snow, Ice, Freezing Rain, and extreme cold are the dangers presented here.

1. Summer Storms:

The following are precautions necessary for each element of a summer storm:

a. Lightning:

1. Check the distance of lightning in the following manner: When you see a lightning bolt, count how many seconds elapse until you hear thunder. One (1) second equals 1/5 mile or five (5) seconds equals one (1) mile.
2. Avoid use of ground or aerial ladders if a storm is approaching or has very recently passed.
3. Lightning can be present far ahead or behind storm clouds. As soon as lightning is seen within five (5) miles, remove persons from aerial or ground ladders. Lower the aerial if at all possible.

4. When storm conditions are present, the aerial operator must make sure that personnel stay a safe distance from the apparatus. They should either be fully inside the apparatus or a minimum of 10 feet away. If tools are being gathered from the truck, it should be done with great haste, and only if necessary.
5. If lightning is within five (5) miles, roof operations should be discontinued and personnel removed from the roof. Personnel or equipment should not be gathered close to trees, utility poles, or other tall objects.
6. Seek shelter inside a building or inside the cab of the apparatus.

b. Flooding:

1. The most common hazard with flooding is poor driving conditions. During flood conditions, plan a route to the emergency scene that will avoid low-lying areas.
2. Reduce the speed of the apparatus on wet roads or suspected wet roads. The engine retarder should be set to the "off" setting if roads are wet.
3. If water is covering the road, the engine retarder should be turned off. Driving or wading through deep water should be avoided.
4. Do not drive through water if any of the following are present:
  - i. Depth greater than 2' or above the exhaust pipe-Strong Current.
  - ii. Unknown road location or condition-Large debris in the water.
  - iii. Personnel operating near flooded creeks must use extra caution. Do not go near areas that have a risk of falls into water. If you must work on slopes above water use a tether line, wear a personal floatation device and have a person monitor your movements. Refer to the SOG dealing with Swift Water Rescue for further instruction related to flooding.

c. High Wind:

1. During windy conditions, avoid driving near trees if possible. Be prepared for limbs or power lines to fall into the roadway.
2. As you drive, scan for objects that may blow into your path.
3. Decrease your speed and concentrate on controlling your vehicle, since wind can cause sudden changes in vehicle direction.
4. When on scene, survey for trees, power lines or other objects that may cause problems from the wind.
5. Do not park near trees or power lines.
6. Personnel should use head and eye protection when exposed to high wind.

d. Heavy Rain:

1. The most common hazard with heavy rain is poor driving conditions.
2. Decrease your vehicle speed as much as necessary to allow adequate visibility and to prevent hydroplaning.
3. Be prepared for flooded areas and obstacles in the road.
4. Use the same precautions as for flooding.
5. Keep headlights on low beam, and turn off white warning lights on the front of the apparatus.
6. Apparatus operators shall turn off the Jake Brake when operating on wet roads.

e. Hail:

1. The only way to stay safe from hail is to stay in quarters if at all possible.
2. Command officers should reduce response to unconfirmed emergencies such as alarms until the storms have passed. If you must go out, take the following precautions:
  - i. Drive slowly, since hail build-up will decrease traction and falling hail may damage your windshield.
  - ii. Always wear head protection during hailstorms to prevent injury.
  - iii. Keep in mind that hail is an indicator of a storm that is very likely to produce a tornado.

f. Tornadoes:

1. If a tornado warning is issued during a fire incident, all fire/EMS personnel should be notified immediately.
2. The Incident Commander (IC) shall obtain periodic weather reports as to the location of the storm.
3. If a funnel cloud is tracking toward an area, all crews shall immediately find an area of shelter and prepare to go there.
4. A person should be appointed to monitor the sky for the funnel cloud, and notify all units by radio if it is spotted.
5. Any units not on scene or not in use should return to the station and seek shelter.
6. If a fire call is dispatched during a tornado warning, all apparatus should remain in quarters unless the call is of a very serious nature. If the run is a confirmed fire or rescue, normal response procedure should be used, unless modified by the on duty Operations Captain, the District Chief/Captain or a higher authority.
7. All crews shall use extreme caution while responding, and be prepared to find immediate shelter.

8. Personnel in the station during a tornado warning should seek shelter in the interior of the building, away from windows or loose objects.
9. Personnel on apparatus should don their turnout gear.
10. If a funnel cloud is imminent, the apparatus should stop. Each person should find a ditch or low lying area and lay in it face down until the funnel cloud passes.

g. Extreme Heat:

1. During periods of extreme heat the personnel should pre-hydrate. This means drinking as much water as possible over a period of time before an incident. When crews go into rehab at an incident each person should drink as much water as possible to replenish lost fluids. Avoid drinking soft drinks or caffeinated drinks. Sports drinks or water with lemon juice are highly recommended.
2. Whenever there is a working fire during extreme heat, the IC shall secure extra staff to spread out the workload.
3. Crews should be rotated through rehab more often to allow them time to cool down.
4. Rehab should be set up in a shady, breezy area. Do not rely on truck air conditioners to cool personnel.
5. A person should be appointed to supervise rehab. This person shall have minimal training of EMT or FF1. Their duties shall include: Liaison with EMS to check firefighters, assist firefighters in cooling down and changing air cylinders, secure drinks, account for all crews in rehab.
6. Crews should shed turnout gear as soon as it is no longer needed.
7. All personnel should be alert for signs and symptoms of heat stress.

2. Winter Storms:

The following are precautions necessary for each element of a winter storm:

1. Winter storms are usually insignificant until the temperature drops below 20 degrees F for an extended period of time.
2. Personnel should be prepared for winter work by dressing in layers before responding to calls.
3. Care should be used on slick surfaces to avoid falling. Each station officer shall make sure that entrances to the station are kept clean and clear.
4. It is recommended that each emergency vehicle carry a container of ice-melt to scatter on high traffic areas of the scene. Oil-Dry can then be scattered to improve traction.
5. Tire chains/cables shall be applied at the discretion of the station officers. Apparatus drivers shall turn off the Jake Brake when driving on icy or slick roads. Drivers shall avoid quick starts or

- stops, and reduce travel speed. The top speed for apparatus with tire chains should not exceed 35 mph.
6. When the temperature stays below 20 degrees F for longer than one day, pump discharges shall be drained.
  7. Apparatus should not be washed if the temperature is below 20 degrees F.
  8. If an apparatus is used as a service vehicle during extremely cold weather, the pump, booster reel and piping must be fully drained.
  9. At the scene, the following should be taken to deal with extreme cold weather:
    - i. Apparatus drivers should keep their cab warm for the returning crew.
    - ii. Apparatus not being used to pump shall have their pumps engaged, and circulate water through their tank at idle.
    - iii. Avoid flowing water on walking or driving surfaces.
    - iv. Assign a person to clean off snow covered walkways and driveways especially if they are on a hill.
    - v. Keep water flowing through hose lines until they are taken up.
    - vi. If master streams are in use, put a tarp over the truck cabs that may become ice covered.
    - vii. If aerial master streams are in use, exercise the aerial periodically to prevent ice buildup.
    - viii. Operate the aerial fully retracted if possible. Drain the aerial waterway as soon as it is shut down.
    - ix. Avoid climbing on an ice covered ladder.
    - x. Do not lay tools down where they may become covered by snow, or freeze to the ground.
    - xi. Personnel in rehab should try to become dry and avoid becoming sweaty.
    - xii. Turn out gear shall be left on unless it can be placed in a well-heated area while not being worn.

B. Inclement Weather Response shall be activated by Franklin County Public Safety Operations Captain. Notification of all fire and rescue personnel, career and volunteer, will be through dispatch by means of an all page announcing the activation of the inclement weather response guidelines.

1. During this activation, response will be altered as below:
  - a. Dispatch will contact captain 1 if a truck is not en-route before notifying second due. This will prevent multiple vehicles from being on the road due to delayed response.
  - b. Responding units will respond with due regard to limited roadside and yielding area for other vehicles. No sirens will be utilized during the active inclement weather response.

- C. Inclement Weather Response shall be de-activated by Franklin County Public Safety Operations Captain. Notification of all fire and rescue personnel, career and volunteer, will be through dispatch by means of an all page announcing the de-activation of the inclement weather response guidelines.