

Operating Guideline # 513

Green Light Response

October 9, 2019



**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this Operating Guideline (OG) is to establish guidelines for the effective and efficient use of a flashing green light by personnel when responding to emergencies in their private vehicles.

**ISSUE/RATIONALE:**

In Ontario, the Highway Traffic Act permits the use of a green flashing light in the private vehicle of a volunteer firefighter who is responding to an emergency in his or her community. The operator of a vehicle equipped with such a light must be aware that all the other provisions of the Highway Traffic Act apply to the operation of the vehicle (i.e. - speed limits, use of seatbelts, observance of speed limits, traffic signals, stop signs etc.). Importantly, once the green light has been activated in a privately owned vehicle, the operation of the vehicle is now subject to MORE scrutiny by members of the driving public, and so extra care must be taken to ensure that all driving attributes are safe and courteous in respect of other lawful users of the road.

**GUIDELINE:**

- 1) The Fire Chief may grant the use of a green flashing light in the firefighter’s personal vehicle(s) subject to the following conditions:
  - a) Firefighters authorized for green-light response must be members in good standing status with the department.
  - b) Green-light response is only permitted within the boundaries of the Township of Muskoka Lakes, No green light response is authorized to or from neighbouring municipalities unless this department is responding for mutual aid to that municipality.
  - c) The use of a green light does not allow for any breach of normal driving rules and laws as defined under the Ontario Highway Traffic Act. It is merely a request to other motorists for them to give up their right-of-way to the firefighter’s vehicle.
  - d) The use of four-way flashers is to mark a slow moving or stopped vehicle on the roadway. As such, the use of four-way flashers in vehicles responding to emergency incidents is prohibited.
  - e) Upon arrival at a scene, the green light shall be turned off. Should the firefighter’s vehicle be parked in an area of hazard, the four-way flashers should be activated.
- 2) The Fire Chief has the sole discretion to authorize or terminate the firefighter’s use of a green light.

**RESPONSIBILITY:**

It is the responsibility of all Emergency Operations Division staff to comply with the provisions of this Operating Guideline.

**REFERENCES:**

- Highway Traffic Act
- OG 826 – Responding in Privately Owned Vehicles