

Operating Guideline # 517

Response on Closed Roads

October 9, 2019



PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Operating Guideline (OG) is to establish guidelines to protect personnel responding to alarms on roads that have been closed.

GUIDELINE:

Apparatus Response:

1. The Highway Traffic Act permits fire department apparatus to use roads that have been closed to traffic, however special care must be taken by EVO's when operating on closed roads. The reason for the road closure (weather, roadway damage, etc.) may make operations on the roadway inherently dangerous. Before responding on closed roads, EVO's shall determine the reason for the closure before proceeding. Under ideal conditions (good road, good visibility and dry pavement) the maximum permitted speed will be the posted limit. Under conditions of poor weather, poor visibility or questionable road integrity the maximum permitted speed shall be 30 km/h. Special care must be taken to ensure that the response takes place in a safe, controlled manner.

Personal Vehicle Response:

2. The Highway Traffic Act has been amended to permit firefighters to use roads that have been closed, when responding to emergencies. The same considerations as those of Apparatus Response must be followed. Additionally, the exemption only applies to firefighters responding. Once the emergency is over, firefighters' personal vehicles may not be driven upon the closed roads. To drive a vehicle on a closed road when prohibited results in the suspension of automobile insurance and will make firefighters open to charges by police under the HTA. Consideration must be made for pooling personnel into responding personal vehicles so as to limit the number of vehicles at the scene and to limit the number of personal vehicles that will have to be abandoned at the scene until the road is re-opened.

RESPONSIBILITY:

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

REFERENCES:

Highway Traffic Act