

## **NORTH BERRIEN FIRE RESCUE DEPARTMENT**

**Category: Apparatus & Driving**

**Issued: 2010, 01 Updated:**

**Title: Railroad Crossings**

## **OPERATIONAL POLICIES**

**Policy: 09-208**

**Issued By: F/C Spiegel**

### **PURPOSE**

When responding to an emergency North Berrien Fire Rescue Department apparatus are expected to stop at railroad crossings when the gates are down and the signal lights are activated. Exceptions may be made there is an emergency where life safety is jeopardized and crossing safely can be accomplished.

### **SAFETY CONCERN**

Apparatus generally should not cross railroad tracks with signal lights activated and/or gates lowered. If the first due unit may be able to assist in minimizing a true emergency, extreme caution should be exercised when crossing the tracks and the guideline SHALL be followed.

### **GUIDELINE**

When driving North Berrien Fire Rescue Department vehicles, it is important to make sure that you do not stop on the tracks. Always leave enough room in front of the vehicle for you to get across the tracks or the gates to lower if needed. When waiting in traffic, always leave enough room between vehicles to maneuver if dispatched to an emergency incident while in traffic.

#### **Crossing tracks when signals are activated**

The law prohibits the crossing of a grade level set of tracks while the gates are lowering or are in the down position, and/or the signals are activated. Consider choosing an alternative route to the call. If you are stopped by an activated railroad signal crossing, notify dispatch of the delay and when you clear the crossing. If an emergency vehicle must cross an activated signal, the guideline SHALL be followed and only when the emergency situation dictates that such crossing is required for the first in units where their arrival is critical.

- The railroad crossing must be insured safe. Before entering the crossing area, contact must be made with the train engineer and the train is not in a position where the emergency vehicle or personnel are in danger of being struck by the train. At times, the switching of cars causes the signals to activate and the gates to drop while the train will not be crossing the intersection. You may determine this by direct communication with the train engineer or to the train dispatch center.
- Upon confirmation with engineer/train dispatch, a firefighter MUST walk out on the railroad crossing, confirm the safety of the emergency vehicle passage and direct the driver\operator across the railroad crossing. Be aware of double tracks- look both ways!
- The driver operator will not stop on the tracks and will cross completely to the other side and clear of the crossing before stopping for the spotter to get back on the vehicle.

#### **Crossing un-improved grade level railroad crossings**

An un-improved railroad crossing (rural crossing) provides no warning to the driver of train traffic. Crossing an un-improved railroad crossing requires the vehicle operator to make visual and audible confirmation that the tracks are clear in both directions. This may require a spotter to get out of the vehicle and assure that there is no hazard before crossing.