

## EMERGENCY SIGNALING DEVICES IN DHS VEHICLES

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### I. Purpose

This Management Directive (MD) establishes Department of Homeland Security (DHS) policy for the use of audio and visual emergency signaling devices in DHS owned or leased motor vehicles. It also sets forth the procedure for obtaining DHS Office of Security authorization for emergency signaling devices used by DHS employees other than Law Enforcement, Fire, or Emergency Medical Services (EMS) employees.

### II. Scope

This MD applies to all DHS employees.

### III. Authorities

Title 41, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 102-34, "Motor Vehicle Management," (2005).

### IV. Definitions

- A. **Components**: All the entities that directly report to the Office of the Secretary, which includes the Secretary, Counselors and their staff, Deputy Secretary and his or her staff, and Chief of Staff and his or her staff.
- B. **Emergency Signaling Devices**: All devices used to warn other drivers of an emergency vehicle's approach, including horns, whistles, bells, lights, and sirens.
- C. **Emergency Vehicle Operations Course (EVOC)**: A course designed to enhance safe vehicle operation by stressing theory and principles of defensive driving in both emergency and non-emergency situations. The class does not teach the student to drive, but rather to explain how emergency driving differs from non-emergency driving.

D. **Fire or Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Vehicle**: A motor vehicle primarily operated by Fire or EMS personnel and routinely used to respond to fires and medical emergencies.

E. **Law Enforcement Vehicle**: A motor vehicle, primarily operated by law enforcement personnel of agencies of the federal government, and used for the purpose of law enforcement activities including, but not limited to, pursuit, apprehension, patrol, transport, or surveillance of people engaged or potentially engaged in unlawful activities.

F. **Motor Vehicle**: Any vehicle, self-propelled or drawn by mechanical power, designed and operated principally for highway transportation of property or passengers.

## V. Responsibilities

A. The **Under Secretary for Management** has Department-wide responsibility for ensuring DHS compliance with this MD.

B. The **Director, Office of Asset Management (OAM)** has responsibility for monitoring Component compliance with this MD.

C. The **Chief Security Officer** has responsibility for approving the installation of emergency signaling devices when required by this MD.

D. **Heads of Components** are responsible for:

1. Submitting requests for equipping non-Law Enforcement, Fire, or EMS vehicles with emergency signaling devices to the DHS Office of Security;

2. Ensuring that authorized employees are adequately trained to operate vehicles with emergency signaling devices through successful completion of an appropriate EVOC;

3. Ensuring that employees entrusted with the use of emergency signaling devices in government-owned or leased motor vehicles are aware of their responsibility for the exercise of due care for the safety of others when using those devices; and

4. Maintaining records of employees with authority to use emergency signaling devices that reflect their successful completion of EVOC training.

## VI. Policy and Procedures

A. ***General.*** DHS Employees shall only use emergency signaling devices when required for the safe execution of their official duties in circumstances where the need to protect the public safety or other employees requires increased visibility for vehicle operation.

B. ***Vehicles that may be equipped with emergency signaling devices:***

1. Only motor vehicles authorized in accordance with this MD shall be equipped with emergency signaling devices. Each Component shall equip only those vehicles necessary to meet its legitimate needs for emergency response capabilities. The installation of emergency signaling devices in a vehicle does not by itself constitute authority for their use.

2. Law Enforcement, Fire, and EMS vehicles are authorized to have emergency signaling devices.

3. Other vehicles may have emergency signaling devices only with approval of the DHS Office of Security. Requests for such approval will be submitted by the Component head or designee, in writing, to the DHS Office of Security and will include:

a. The category of vehicles for which authorization is sought (for example, "FEMA emergency response vehicles").

b. A detailed justification for why the vehicles require emergency signaling devices.

4. In areas other than under exclusive federal jurisdiction, Components should consider state and local law and regulations regarding the installation and use of emergency signaling devices. Components should seek guidance from the Office of the General Counsel as well as state and local authorities to ensure, to the extent possible, use consistent with applicable laws and regulations.

C. ***Personnel who may operate vehicles equipped with emergency signaling devices:***

1. Only authorized DHS employees, as determined pursuant to the below criteria, may operate a DHS vehicle with emergency signaling devices in use.

2. Sworn Law Enforcement Officers, Fire, and EMS personnel who have satisfied their component's EVOC training requirement are authorized to use emergency signaling devices in their vehicles. For purposes of this MD, the term "sworn law enforcement officer" includes all Coast Guard military and civilian personnel qualified to exercise the authority of 14 U.S.C. § 89 or § 95, or 46 U.S.C. § 70117.
3. EVOC instructors and student drivers are authorized to use emergency signaling devices as part of their EVOC training.
4. All other employees must have authorization from the DHS Office of Security and have completed an appropriate EVOC prior to using emergency signaling devices. Requests for such approval will be submitted by the Component head or designee, in writing, to the DHS Office of Security and will include:
  - a. The name and title of the employee from whom authorization is sought or the category of employee for which authorization is sought (for example, "FEMA Urban Search and Rescue vehicle drivers").
  - b. The anticipated situations which might require emergency response and the frequency with which these situations might occur.
  - c. A detailed justification for why the category of employee requires the use of emergency signaling devices.
  - d. A description of the EVOC training that the Component deems to be appropriate for the category of employee, and a statement acknowledging that all such employees will complete the EVOC training prior to using emergency signaling devices.
5. This MD does not authorize DHS employees to use such devices in privately owned vehicles.
6. Employees operating vehicles equipped with emergency signaling devices are responsible for their appropriate use and operation with due regard for the safety of others when such devices are in use.
7. Use of emergency signaling devices without due care or in an improper or illegal manner is considered improper use of a motor vehicle and may result in adverse personnel actions including removal as well as individual legal liability for the user.

D. **Training.** Prior to operating emergency signaling devices, employees must successfully complete an appropriate EVOC course of instruction. The Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) will establish standards for EVOC training with the assistance of DHS stakeholders and with concurrence from the DHS Office of Security. The standards will be provided to the respective stakeholders and the DHS Office of Security no later than six (6) months from the publication date of this MD.

E. **Retroactive effect.** Vehicles and employees that do not meet the requirements of this MD must meet the requirements within twelve (12) months of the publication date of this MD.

## **VII. Questions**

Address any questions or concerns regarding this MD to the DHS Office of Security.

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## EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATIONS COURSE (EVOC) TRAINING PROGRAM

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>STANDARD</b>
<b>LEGAL</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Training in operator legal and procedural responsibilities and liabilities when operating a vehicle in the emergency mode under State vehicle traffic codes.</li><li>2. Training in operator "Due Regard" responsibilities and parent agency policy and procedural requirements.</li></ol>
<b>EMERGENCY RESPONSE / EQUIPMENT</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Training in the effectiveness of both emergency lights and sirens.</li><li>2. Training addressing the limitations and differences between braking systems as well as techniques recommended.</li><li>3. Training in proper steering techniques.</li><li>4. Training in performing safety inspections of critical vehicle components.</li></ol>
<b>SKID CONTROL</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Training in recognition of skid hazards and avoidance.</li><li>2. Training in skid recovery techniques.</li></ol>
<b>EVASIVE</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Training in the techniques of obstacle avoidance.</li><li>2. Training in the effect of changes in environment on vehicle maneuvering.</li><li>3. Training in the vehicle's required overhead clearances.</li></ol>