

# Egg Harbor Fire Department and First Responders Standard Operating Guideline

**Subject:** Vehicle Placement In or Near Moving Traffic

**SOG 903**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this guideline is to provide a method to help insure safe scene operations by establishing an equipment parking and placement plan for public safety vehicles in or near moving traffic.

**Scope:** This procedure applies to all members of the Egg Harbor Fire Department.

## **Guideline:**

### **A. Overview**

This procedure identifies parking practices for Fire Department apparatus and vehicles that will provide maximum protection and safety for personnel operating in or near moving vehicle traffic. It also identifies several approaches for individual practices to keep firefighters safe while exposed to the hazardous environment created by moving traffic. It shall be the policy of the Fire Department to position apparatus and other emergency vehicles at any incident on a street, road, highway or expressway in a manner that best protects the incident scene and the work area. Such positioning shall afford protection to fire department personnel, law enforcement officers, tow service operators and the motoring public from the hazards of working in or near moving traffic. All personnel should understand and appreciate the high risk that personnel are exposed to when operating in or near moving vehicle traffic. Responders should always operate within a protected environment at any roadway incident. Always consider moving vehicles as a threat to your safety. At every vehicle-related emergency scene, personnel are exposed to passing motorists of various driving abilities. Approaching, motorists will often be looking at the scene and not the roadway in front of them. Assume that all approaching traffic is out to get you until proven otherwise. Night time and inclement weather incidents requiring personnel to work in or near moving traffic are particularly hazardous. Visibility is reduced and driver reaction time to hazards in the roadway is slowed.

### **B. Terminology**

The following terms shall be used during incident operations, post-incident analysis, and training activities related to working in or near moving traffic.

**1. Advance Warning** - notification procedures that advise approaching motorists to transition from normal driving status to that required by the temporary emergency traffic control measures ahead of them. Usually provide by law enforcement agencies.

- 2. Block** - positioning a fire department apparatus on an angle to the lanes of traffic creating a physical barrier between upstream traffic and the work area. Includes block to the right or block to the left.
- 3. Buffer Zone** - the distance or space between personnel and vehicles in the protected work zone and nearby moving traffic.
- 4. Downstream**- the direction that traffic is moving as it travels away from the incident scene.
- 5. Shadow**- the protected work area at a vehicle-related roadway incident is shielded by the block from apparatus and other emergency vehicles.
- 6. Taper**- the action of merging several lanes of moving traffic into fewer moving lanes.
- 7. Temporary Work Zone**- the physical area of a roadway within which emergency personnel perform their fire, EMS and rescue tasks at a vehicle-related incident.
- 8. Transition Zone**- the lanes of a roadway within which approaching motorists change their speed and position to comply with the traffic control measures established at an incident scene.
- 9. Upstream**- the direction that traffic is traveling from as the vehicles approach the incident scene.

### **C. Scene Safety Issues**

All emergency personnel are at great risk of injury or death while operating in or near moving traffic. There are several specific tactical procedures that should be taken to protect all crew members and emergency service personnel at the incident scene including;

1. Never trust approaching traffic.
2. Avoid turning your back to approaching traffic
3. Establish an initial block with the first arriving emergency vehicle or fire apparatus.
4. Wear full protective clothing plus Hi-Visibility Vests in compliance with EHFDF SOG 211.
5. Turn off all sources of vision impairment to approaching motorists at nighttime incidents including vehicle headlights and spotlights and use extreme care when establishing scene lighting.
6. Use fire apparatus and police vehicles to initially redirect the flow of moving traffic.
7. Use traffic cones and/or cones illuminated by flares where appropriate for sustained highway incident traffic control and direction.

### **D. Apparatus and Emergency Vehicle Positioning**

Listed below are issues addressing Safe Parking of apparatus and emergency vehicles when operating in or near moving traffic.

1. Always position first-arriving apparatus to protect the scene, patients, and emergency personnel. Initial apparatus placement should provide a work area protected from traffic approaching in at least one direction.
  - a. Angle apparatus on the roadway to create a physical barrier between the crash scene and approaching traffic. Direct the steering wheels in a direction that if the apparatus were to be struck, the roll would be directed away from the initial incident site and workers in that area.
  - b. Allow apparatus placement to slow approaching motorists and redirect them around the scene.
  - c. Use fire apparatus to block at least one additional traffic lane more than that already obstructed by the crashed vehicle(s).
  - d. When practical, position apparatus in such a manner to protect the pump operator position from being exposed to approaching traffic.
2. Positioning of large apparatus must create a safe parking area for EMS units and other fire vehicles. Operating personnel, equipment and patients should be kept within the shadow created by the blocking apparatus at all times.
3. When blocking with apparatus to protect the emergency scene, establish a sufficient size work zone that includes all damaged vehicles, roadway debris, The area must be protected so that the patient triage and treatment area, the extrication work area, personnel and tool staging area and the EMS Medical Unit loading zone.
4. EMS Units should be positioned within the protected work area with their rear patient loading door area angled away from the nearest lanes of moving traffic.
5. Command shall stage unneeded emergency vehicles off the roadway or return these units to service whenever possible.
6. At all intersections or where the incident may be near the middle lane of the roadway, two or more sides of the incident will need to be protected.
  - a. Sheriff vehicles must be strategically positioned to expand the initial safe work zone for traffic approaching from opposing directions. The goal is to effectively block all exposed sides of the work zone. The blocking of the work zone must be prioritized, from the most critical or highest traffic volume flow to the least critical traffic direction.
  - b. For first arriving engine companies where a charged hose line may be needed, block so that the pump panel is downstream, on the opposite side of on-coming traffic. This will protect the pump operator.

c. At intersection incidents, consider requesting assistance from sheriff department. Provide specific directions to the Deputy of your traffic control needs. Ensure that sheriff vehicles are parked in a position and location that provides additional protection of the scene.

7. Traffic cones shall be deployed from the rear of the blocking apparatus toward approaching traffic to increase the advance warning provided for approaching motorists. Cones identify and only suggest the transition and tapering actions that are required of the approaching motorist.

8. Personnel shall place cones and flares and retrieve cones while facing oncoming traffic.

9. Traffic cones shall be deployed at 15 foot intervals upstream of the blocking apparatus with the furthest traffic cone approximately 100 feet upstream to allow adequate advance warning to drivers.

10. Additional traffic cones may be placed by law enforcement units to extend the advance warning area for approaching motorists.

11. Command shall assure emergency lighting does not interfere with the oncoming traffics vision.

12. At residential medical emergencies, Medic Units should park at the nearest curb to the residence or in the driveway for safe patient loading whenever possible.

### **E. Personnel Safety**

Listed below are safety issues for individuals when operating in or near moving vehicle traffic. Always maintain an acute awareness of the high risk of working in or near moving traffic. They are out to get you!

1. Never trust moving traffic.

2. Always look before you move!

3. Keep an eye on moving traffic.

4. Avoid turning your back to moving traffic.

5. Always attempt to exit emergency vehicles from the protected shadow side away from oncoming traffic.

6. If you must enter or exit from the oncoming traffic side of the vehicles, use extreme caution.

7. All members responding to an incident on a public roadway shall, at all times, wear a Hi-Visibility Vest in compliance with EHFSD SOG 211 in addition to any PPE to needed to complete their assigned duty.

8. All staff personnel must wear at minimum their helmet and Hi-Visibility Vest while on the scene of an incident on the public roadway.

9. When moving around apparatus, Stop at the corner of the unit, observe traffic, and then proceed along the unit remaining as close to vehicle as possible. Maintain a reduced profile when moving through any area where a minimum buffer zone condition exists.

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