

## **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.

## **Responsibility:**

- I. It shall be the responsibility of the department officers to implement the operating guideline.
- II. It shall be the responsibility of the department officers to train members in the application of this guideline.
- III. It shall be the responsibility of each member of the department to know, understand and use this guideline as it applies to the situation at hand. Each member will use good judgment in the use of this guideline.

## **Guideline:**

### **I. 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 varying 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.

Nighttime 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.

## II. 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 that 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.

## III. 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 NTFD SOG #34.
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.

#### **IV. 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. Police 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 “down stream”, on the opposite side of on-coming traffic. This will protect the pump operator.
  - c. At intersection incidents, consider requesting police response. Provide specific directions to the police officers your traffic control needs. Ensure that police 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.

## V. 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 NTFD SOG #34 in addition to any PPE to needed to complete their assigned duty.
8. All staff personnel and assigned student riders 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.

## VI. Freeway Response & Illustration 1

High-volume, limited access highways such as I-70 and I-270 pose some different problems for emergency responders. The Police Department and Department of Transportation (DOT) have a desire to keep the traffic moving on these high-volume thoroughfares. When in the judgment of IC, it becomes essential for the safety of operating personnel and the patients involved, any or all lanes, shoulders, and entry/exit ramps of these limited access highways can be completely shut down. This should be for as short a period of time as possible.

Vehicle placement procedures at limited-access, multi-lane roadway incidents will increase the scene safety for rescuers and patients.

- A. **First-arriving Suppression Company** shall establish an initial block of the lane(s) occupied by the damaged vehicle plus one additional traffic lane. The vehicle shall be positioned such that the operators’ panel will be on the opposite side of the oncoming traffic.
  1. This engine company will set up at least a minimum of 100' upstream to create a safety “shadow” on the accident scene. The position of this apparatus shall take into consideration all factors that limit sight distance of the approaching traffic including ambient lighting conditions, weather-related conditions, road conditions, design curves, bridges, hills and over- or underpasses and increase this distance accordingly.
  2. Traffic cones and/or cones illuminated by flares should be placed upstream of the apparatus by the driver/operator at the direction of the company officer.
  3. The engine company crew shall also be responsible for deploying a hand line for fire suppression, illumination of the scene, disconnection of batteries, assisting with EMS, and if needed, organizing the LZ for helicopter evacuation.
- B. **The Rescue companies** positioning should be just past the scene to facilitate rescue tool accessibility at the rear of that apparatus. Additional responsibilities are vehicle(s)

stabilization, extrication of victims, scene illumination (use extreme caution so as not to blind oncoming traffic), and EMS assistance as needed.

**C. The Medic units** should position themselves just downstream of the rescue. The vehicles should be positioned such that the victim loading doors are away from moving traffic.

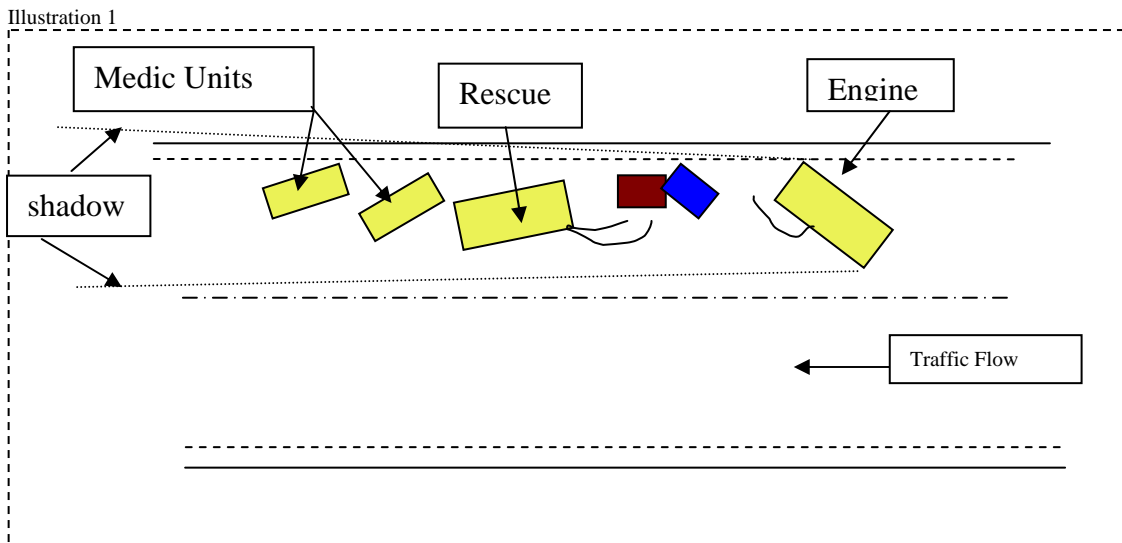
**D. The Battalion and all other vehicles** should be positioned upstream of the engine company thus providing additional protection to the scene and additional advance warning for approaching traffic.

- 1. Staging additional companies off the highway may be required. Medic Units may be brought onto the highway scene one or two at a time. An adequate size multi-patient loading area must be established

**E. Police Department vehicles** will be used to provide additional blocking of additional traffic lanes as needed. Medical Unit shall always be positioned within the safe work zone.

B. Command should establish a liaison with the Police Department as soon as possible to jointly coordinate a safe work zone and to determine how to most efficiently resolve the incident after all patients are removed and establish normal traffic flows.

**F. The termination of the incident** must be managed with the same aggressiveness as initial actions. Crews, apparatus, and equipment must be removed from the highway promptly, to reduce exposure to moving traffic and minimize traffic congestion.



Approved by the Assistant Chief / Date \_\_\_\_\_

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