

ROADWAY INCIDENTS

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Purpose: *It shall be the policy of the Okolona Fire District to position apparatus and other emergency vehicles at a vehicle-related incident on roadways in a manner that best protects the incident scene and the work area. Such positioning shall afford protection to emergency responders from the hazards of working in or near moving traffic.*

Procedure:

1. Definitions:

A. 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.

B. 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”.

C. Buffer Zone:

The distance or space between personnel and vehicles in the protected work zone and nearby moving traffic.

D. Downstream:

Traffic going away from the incident scene.

E. Flagger:

A fire department member assigned to monitor approaching traffic and activate an emergency signal if the actions of a motorist do not conform to established traffic control measures in place at the highway scene

F. Fog Lines:

Solid white painted lines that run parallel to the edge of the roadway. May also be referred to as “Edgelines”.

G. Shadow:

The protected work area at a vehicle-related roadway incident that is shielded by the block from apparatus and other emergency vehicles.

H. Taper:

The action of merging several lanes of moving traffic into fewer moving lanes.

I. 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.

J. 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.

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K. Upstream:

Traffic approaching the incident scene.

2. Never trust approaching traffic.
3. Avoid turning your back to approaching traffic. Before turning the blind corners created by apparatus, carefully look for approaching vehicles.
4. Establish an initial "block" with the first arriving emergency vehicle or fire apparatus. 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.
5. Always wear department provided high visibility reflective vests even if personal protective equipment is worn, except when self contained breathing apparatus is donned.
6. Turn off all sources of vision impairment to approaching motorists at nighttime incidents such as vehicle headlights and spotlights. On divided highways consider extinguishing emergency lights to avoid distracting drivers on the *opposite* side of the median.
7. When flood lights are used, ensure they are directed so as to avoid visual impairment to approaching motorists. If conditions are such that floodlights must be positioned in a manner that may impair approaching motorists, the Incident Commander should consider the halting of traffic flow.
8. Use fire apparatus and command vehicles to initially redirect the flow of moving traffic
9. Establish advance warning and adequate transition area traffic control measures upstream of incident to reduce travel speeds of approaching motorists through the use of "Emergency Scene Ahead" signage, traffic cones and flares when appropriate.
10. The Incident Commander should consider assigning a fire department member assigned to the "Flagger" function to monitor approaching traffic and activate an emergency signal (compressed air horn, such as a boat horn) if the actions of a motorist do not conform to established traffic control measures in place at the highway scene. When a flagger sounds the emergency signal, apparatus operators near pump panels shall also sound the apparatus air horns.
11. Angle apparatus on the roadway with a "block to the left" or a "block to the right" to create a physical barrier between the crash scene and approaching traffic. Turn wheels of vehicles in a manner to direct vehicle away from the personnel if it is struck.
12. Allow apparatus placement to slow and redirect, approaching motorists around the scene.
13. For roadways having more than one lane, use fire apparatus to block at least one additional traffic lane more than that already obstructed by the incident.
14. When practical, position apparatus in such a manner to protect the pump operator position from being exposed to approaching traffic.

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15. Positioning of large apparatus must create a safe parking area for fire and EMS units. Operating personnel, equipment and patients should be kept within the Temporary Work Zone created by the blocking apparatus.
16. When blocking with apparatus to protect the emergency scene, establish a sufficient size Temporary Work Zone.
17. Command shall stage unneeded emergency vehicles off the roadway or return these units to service whenever possible.
18. At all intersections or where the incident may be near the middle lane of the roadway, two or more sides of the incident may need to be protected.
19. Command vehicles must be strategically positioned to expand the initial safe work zone for traffic approaching from opposing directions so as to 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.
20. For first arriving engine or truck 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.
21. Coordinate all traffic control activities with responding police officers, providing specific instructions for the Temporary Work Zone protection.
22. 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.
23. Personnel shall place and retrieve cones and flares while facing oncoming traffic.
24. Traffic cones shall be deployed at 15 foot intervals upstream of the blocking apparatus with the furthest traffic cone approximately 75 feet upstream to allow adequate advance warning to drivers.
25. Lanes of traffic shall be identified numerically as “Lane 1”, “Lane 2”, etc., beginning from the right to the left when right and left are considered from the approaching motorist’s point of view. Typically, vehicles travel a lower speed in the lower number lanes. The Emergency Lanes are identified as “Right Emergency Lane” or Left Emergency Lane”.
26. When in the judgment of incident commander, it becomes essential for the safety of operating personnel and the patients involved, any or all lanes, shoulders, and entry/exit ramps of roadways may be completely shut down. This, however, should rarely occur and should be for as short a period of time as practical.
27. Elements of this procedure should also be considered by the incident commander for non-roadway incidents that nonetheless disrupt the flow of traffic and which could present a safety concern for firefighters who may be on the roadway.

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