



# *Safety Bulletin*

SB #03-11

November 2014

## Roadway / Highway Incident Safety

The Holiday Season officially begins with Thanksgiving and continues through New Year's Day. It is a time when we are busy celebrating with family and friends at parties and other events. The holiday season is one of the deadliest and most dangerous times of the year due to an increase in distracted and impaired driving. The risk to our members who are operating on roadway incidents is greatly increased during this time. Interstate highway response is especially dangerous around the Interstate 70/81 interchanges. Be particularly careful around service roads to shopping centers and mall entrances. We must maintain a high situational awareness on all roadways, especially in these areas.

### **Have a Roadway Incident Plan**

Have a plan when operating on roadways and make sure everyone is on the same page. We often see the following headlines: Firefighter struck and seriously injured by a distracted or impaired driver or firefighter killed on accident scene by a distracted or impaired driver. Roadway incident scenes are extremely dangerous and require situational awareness; you must assume that the other drivers cannot see you. Safety of the crew is everyone's responsibility, not just the officers. If you see something speak up; this might prevent a death or injury. Be sure that your apparatus is equipped with (at the least) ANSI Class 2 reflective safety vests for every riding position. Be sure that all roadway responders wear these reflective safety vests while operating on the scene of a roadway incident.

### **Safety Basics**

- Consider any moving vehicle a threat. Drivers have varying levels of capability and concentration. Until they have passed you, don't ignore them.
- Wear an approved safety reflective vest and helmet. Firefighter turnout gear, (that includes your coat) contains reflective materials that may help you be seen.
- Personnel exiting an emergency vehicle need to ensure that it is safe to do so. You must always watch for oncoming traffic and other hazards. Look before getting out of the vehicle.
- Create a safety zone to work in. Use fire apparatus as a shield from moving traffic until the last unit leaves.
- Give drivers early warning, by using traffic cones or flares to alert them that there is an emergency and they need to slow down.
- Light up the area as much as possible for scene safety. Light up shoulders, overpasses, bridges and incident work areas.
- Minimize the number of apparatus on the scene. When the scope of the incident has been assessed, place units in-service that are not needed.
- Stage apparatus off the road-way in a parking lot, or on an on-ramp until they are needed.

For additional information, training or support, please contact your department Safety Committee Representative or a County Incident Safety Officer. As always, Be Safe!!!