



Rogers Fire Department Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Title:	Roadway Incident Safety		
Policy Number:	304	Volume:	Safety
Approved By:	Tom Jenkins	Last Reviewed:	December 2021
CFAI Reference:	7F.3	CAAS Reference:	202.02.01
Revision Summary:	Created – March 2009 Formatted – May 2012 Updated – January 2012 Updated – May 2012 Updated – January 2017 (Limited Access Highway Ops)		

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide information on the use of safety practices, traffic calming devices and operational deployment at incident scenes in and around the roadway.

POLICY

This policy clearly defines the operational practices for the department when operating on vehicular roadways. This procedure is designed to provide maximum protection and safety for personnel operating in or near moving vehicular traffic. Members shall always operate from a defensive posture on roadways. Moving traffic is an immediate threat to firefighter safety and shall be treated with caution. Incidents that may involve the use of this policy include car fires, motor vehicle accidents, medical emergencies, natural gas leaks near roadways, and even structural fires. Any incident that involves equipment, apparatus, or personnel operating near moving vehicular traffic should be considered applicable to this policy.

The following rules shall be used while operating at roadway incidents:

1. Never trust the motoring public.
2. Stage apparatus in a defensive posture to protect the incident scene.
3. All emergency personnel will use high visibility ANSI-compliant traffic vests.
4. Reduce the use of warning lights to block the right-of-way.
5. Use traffic cones and warning signs early.
6. Remove bystander/civilian vehicles from the roadway as soon as possible to reduce congestion.

Roadway Incident Operations

Roadway emergencies pose a high risk to emergency personnel because of the motoring public. It is the responsibility of local law enforcement to manage traffic; however the RFD will protect the incident scene and conduct necessary traffic measures in accordance with the most current version of the Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

The first arriving fire apparatus will position itself to protect the scene, patients and emergency personnel. This apparatus should block the immediate area to establish a physical barrier between the crash scene and approaching vehicular traffic.

Apparatus should be parked at an angle of 30 degrees away from the curb, upstream of any traffic incident. At a minimum at least one lane next to the incident lane should be closed when prudent to do so. Additional lanes of traffic may be closed, if needed. When possible, it is best to keep traffic moving to prevent additional accidents further upstream on the initial incident.

During some incidents it may become necessary to dispatch, or have dispatched, an additional fire company to take a blocking position further upstream to increase the warning time for oncoming traffic. During highway operations all hoselines deployed shall be pulled towards the protected zone from fire apparatus and not near vehicular traffic.

During daytime operations all emergency lights shall be left on to warn drivers. During nighttime operations, however, headlights should be turned off and warning lights should be reduced to just those necessary to properly warn oncoming traffic. Crews should exit from the non-traffic side of the apparatus whenever possible and should be diligent to close compartment and apparatus doors.

Traffic safety vests shall be utilized by all department members on a roadway incident scene. The only exception to this rule will be firefighters engaged in active firefighting activities. Bunker gear does not provide the same reflectivity or fluorescence as ANSI-compliant traffic safety vests.

Ambulances will not load patients or position themselves where the rear of the unit is open to traffic. Ambulances should never operate singly at roadway incident scenes.

Use of Traffic Warning Devices

The following traffic warning devices shall be provided on all fire companies:

1. Amber directional arrow
2. A minimum of five (5) 28" reflective traffic cones
3. A field deployable traffic sign with the message "Emergency Scene Ahead"

All of these items shall be deployed at all traffic incidents as soon as practical after arrival. It is the responsibility of the apparatus operator to properly stage the fire apparatus to block the right-of-way and distribute the traffic cones. Traffic cones should be placed and retrieved while facing oncoming traffic. Cones should be placed 300 feet upstream of the blocking apparatus to provide for adequate warning to drivers. Cones should be tapered in the direction in which traffic flow is to be directed and spaced approximately fifteen feet apart. The RFD shall only use a minimum of 28" upright traffic cones with dual reflective collars. All other cones will not be acceptable for use on apparatus for emergency scene purposes.

This traffic incident sign will be deployed at all roadway incidents.. The sign should be placed inside the tapered cone area near the beginning of the cones. It is the responsibility of the apparatus operator to deploy the sign after cones are successfully setup.

Scene Setup

The incident scene should be setup so that the rear of a fire apparatus is the first vehicle to be seen in the upstream lanes of the emergency incident. The incident should be framed with traffic cones so that adequate protection can be provided for responders. Law enforcement officers investigating the scene and ambulances should park in the protected zone downstream of the fire apparatus and within the area framed by cones. The photo below demonstrates a desirable traffic incident management scene setup.



High-Volume, Limited Access Highway Operations

High-volume, limited access highways specifically include Interstate 49, but could describe other multi-lane roadways within the RFD response areas such as Hudson Road, South 8th Street, West Walnut Street, West New Hope Road, etc. A desire to keep the traffic flowing on these high-volume roadways is inherent in all operations. When deemed necessary by the incident commander for the protection of personnel and patients involved, any or all lanes may be shut down. This however should be a rare occurrence and should be exercised for the shortest time possible.

Multi-lane designation shall occur based on the direction of traffic flow with lanes designated as left, center, and right. Shoulders shall be referred to as left shoulder or right shoulder. The first arriving company should establish command and begin traffic control by blocking the primary affected lane(s) and shunting traffic accordingly. This company should communicate to additional companies the direction of travel with accurate incident location and specific assignments for apparatus positioning. For example an incoming unit might be told to park safe in the protected area or “block upstream of the incident in the southbound I-49 right lane and right shoulder.”

When blocking more than one traffic lane, the initial apparatus should be placed approximately 100' from the incident with the upstream apparatus position at least 100' but not greater than 300' from the first arriving unit. The upstream apparatus will position in a manner that allows traffic to move to the left or right with an area of transition prior to reaching the initial apparatus. When patient care or extrication efforts are required the rescue, medic unit, and command vehicle shall be positioned in the safe area established by the blocking apparatus or downstream of the incident.

