

7004.03

## Traffic Incident Management Standard Operating Procedure



*This procedure is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. The procedure should not be construed as creating a higher duty of care, in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party civil claims against employees. A violation of this procedure, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department for non-judicial administrative action in accordance with the laws governing employee discipline.*

**Related Policies:** NFPA 1002, 1091, 1451, 1500.

**Applicable HI Statutes:**

### **I. PURPOSE**

To establish guidelines for protection of personnel and incident victims at all roadway or roadside incident scenes.

### **II. APPLICABILITY**

All members. Company officers and supervisory personnel shall ensure compliance

### **III. POLICY**

It shall be the policy of the Hawai'i Fire Department to position apparatus and other emergency vehicles at a vehicle-related incident on any street, road, or highway 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.

### **IV. PROCEDURES**

1. The following procedures identify parking practices for fire department apparatus and vehicles that will provide maximum protection and safety for personnel operating in or near moving vehicle traffic.
2. These procedures identify several approaches for best practices to keep firefighters safe while exposed to the hazardous environment created by moving traffic.

### **V. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

1. 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 vehicle-related roadway incident.
2. 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. At any time, a motorist may be driving without a legal driver's license.
3. Approaching vehicles may be driven at speeds from a creeping pace to well beyond the posted speed limit. Some of these vehicle operators may be vision impaired, under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, or have a medical condition that affects their judgment or abilities. In addition, motorists may be completely oblivious to your presence due to distractions caused by cell phone use, loud music, conversation, inclement weather, and terrain or building obstructions. 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.



4. Nighttime 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.

## VI. TERMINOLOGY

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.
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. “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.
6. “Shadow”- the protected work area at a vehicle-related roadway incident that is shielded by the block from apparatus and other emergency vehicles.
7. “Taper”- the action of merging several lanes of moving traffic into fewer moving lanes.
8. “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.
9. “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.
10. “Upstream”- the direction that traffic is traveling from as the vehicles approach the incident scene.

## VII. SAFETY BENCHMARKS

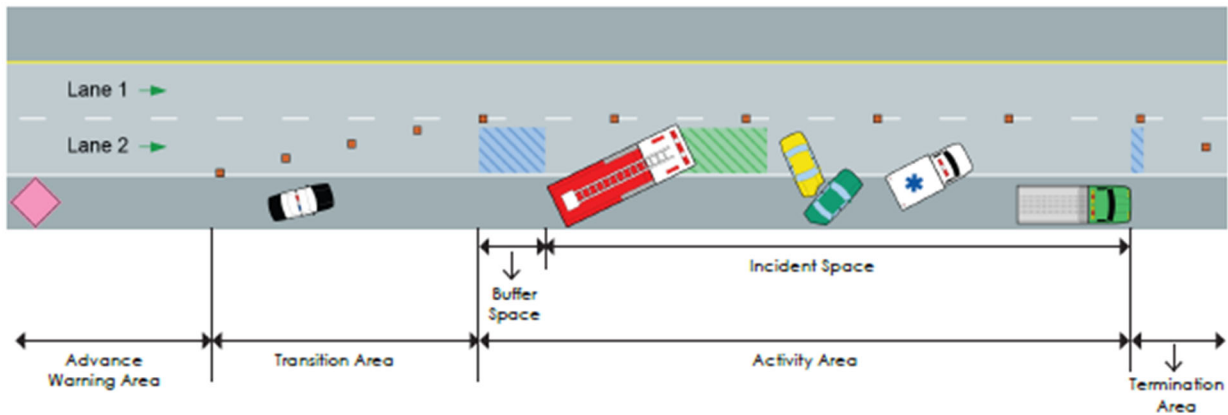
1. Never trust approaching traffic
2. Avoid turning your back to approaching traffic
3. Establish an initial “block” with the first arriving emergency vehicle or fire apparatus.
4. Always wear structural firefighting helmet and PPE.
5. Always wear the Class II or Public Safety highway safety vest at all vehicle-related emergencies or when working in or near a roadway.
6. Turn off all sources of vision impairment to approaching motorists at night time incidents including vehicle headlights and spotlights.
7. Use fire apparatus and police vehicles to initially redirect the flow of moving traffic.
8. Establish advance warning and adequate transition area traffic control measures upstream of incident to reduce travel speeds of approaching motorists.
9. Use traffic cones and/or cones illuminated by flares where appropriate for sustained highway incident traffic control and direction.



10. Establish a fire department member assigned to the “Flagger” function 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.

## VIII. SAFETY BENCHMARKS

1. Always position first-arriving apparatus to protect the scene, patients, and emergency personnel.



2. Initial apparatus placement should provide a work area protected from traffic approaching in at least one direction.
3. 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.
4. Allow apparatus placement to slow approaching motorists and redirect them around the scene.
5. Use fire apparatus to block at least one additional traffic lane more than that already obstructed by the crashed vehicle(s).
6. When practical, position apparatus in such a manner to protect the pump operator position from being exposed to approaching traffic.
7. 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.
8. When blocking with apparatus to protect the emergency scene, establish a sufficient size work zone that includes all damaged vehicles, roadway debris, the patient triage and treatment area, the extrication work area, personnel and tool staging area, and the ambulance loading zone.
9. Ambulances should be positioned within the protected work area with their rear patient loading door area angled away from the nearest lanes of moving traffic.
10. Command shall stage unneeded emergency vehicles off the roadway or return these units to service whenever possible.
11. 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.



12. Law enforcement 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.
13. For first arriving engine or truck 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. Topography and wind direction shall also be considered. HAZMAT considerations shall be a part of the size-up and decision making process.
14. Provide specific directions to law enforcement officers as to exactly what your traffic control needs are. Ensure that law enforcement vehicles are parked in a position and location that provides additional protection of the scene.
15. 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.
16. Personnel shall place cones and flares and retrieve cones while facing oncoming traffic.
17. 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

## **IX. INCIDENT COMMAND**

1. Ensure that the first-arriving apparatus establishes an initial block to create an initial safe work area.
2. Assign a parking location for all ambulances as well as later-arriving apparatus.
3. 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.
4. Directions “Right” and “Left” shall be as identified as from the approaching motorist’s point of view left or right.
5. Instruct the driver of the ambulance to “block to the right” or “block to the left” as it is parked at the scene to position the rear patient loading area away from the closest lane of moving traffic.
6. Ensure that all ambulances on-scene are placed within the protected work area (shadow) of the larger apparatus.
7. Ensure that all patient loading into ambulances is done from within a protected work zone.
8. The initial company officer and/or Incident Commander must operate as the Safety Officer until this assignment is delegated.
9. Command shall ensure that traffic signal preemption strobe systems (if so equipped) are turned OFF and that other emergency lighting remains ON.

## **X. EMERGENCY PERSONNEL**

1. Always maintain an acute awareness of the high risk of working in or near moving traffic.



- Act as if they are out to get you!
- 2. Never trust moving traffic.
- 3. Always look before you move.
- 4. Always keep an eye on the moving traffic.
- 5. Avoid turning your back to moving traffic.
- 6. Personnel arriving in crew cabs of fire apparatus should exit and enter the apparatus from the protected “shadow” side, away from moving traffic.
- 7. Officers, apparatus operators, crew members in apparatus with individual jump seat configurations and all ambulance personnel must exit and enter their units with extreme caution remaining alert to moving traffic at all times.
- 8. Class II or Public Safety vest and helmet must be donned prior to exiting the emergency vehicle.
- 9. Always look before opening doors and stepping out of apparatus or emergency vehicle into any moving traffic areas. When walking around fire apparatus or emergency vehicle, be alert to your proximity to moving traffic.
- 10. Stop at the corner of the unit, check for traffic, and then proceed along the unit remaining as close to the emergency vehicle as possible.
- 11. Maintain a “reduced profile” when moving through any area where a minimum “buffer zone” condition exists.

## **XI. NIGHT OR REDUCED LIGHT CONDITIONS**

1. Turn OFF vehicle headlights.
2. Turn OFF traffic signal preemption strobes (if so equipped).
3. Provide overall scene lighting.
4. All personnel in PPE with helmets.
5. Illuminate cones with flares if possible.
6. Consider additional companies for additional upstream “Block.”
7. Establish initial block: minimum two lanes.
8. Two lanes plus paved shoulder or three driving lanes.
9. Place cones and/or cones illuminated by flares upstream of apparatus, last cone approximately 150 feet “upstream” of apparatus.
10. Establish Flagger position, monitor approaching traffic sound emergency signal as necessary.
11. Use law enforcement vehicles for additional blocking.
12. Stage additional companies off highway.
13. Establish liaison with law enforcement.
14. Terminate incident aggressively.

### **I. Officer’s Safe Parking “Cue Card”**

1. “Block” with first-arriving apparatus to protect the scene, patients, and emergency personnel.
2. Block at least one additional lane.
3. Block so pump panel is “downstream.”

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4. Block most critical or highest traffic volume direction first.
5. Consider requesting additional law enforcement assistance.
6. Wear PPE and helmet at all times.
7. Always wear Class II or Public Safety vest when operating in or near a roadway.
8. Establish more than adequate advance warning.
9. Traffic cones at 15' intervals.
10. Deploy minimum 5 cones upstream.
11. Cones only "Suggest," they do not Block!
12. Expand initial safe work zone.
13. Direct placement of ambulances.
14. Ensure ambulance's park within shadow of larger apparatus as directed.
15. Lane 1 is furthest right lane, next is Lane 2, then Lane 3, etc. from approaching motorist's point of view.
16. Direct ambulance to "block to the right" or "block to the left" to protect loading doors.
17. Place ambulance patient loading area facing away from closest lane of moving traffic.
18. All patient loading into ambulances is done from within a protected work zone.
19. You are the Safety Officer.
20. Consider assigning firefighter as upstream "Spotter" as necessary for approaching traffic.