

	<b>TRAVIS COUNTY ESD #5</b> <b>MANCHACA FIRE RESCUE</b>  <b>Department Best Practices</b>	<b>A711</b>
	Authorized by:  Fire Chief Chris Barron	<b>Effective:</b> 7/18/2025 <b>Rescinds:</b> 2/12/2018 <b>Reference:</b> AFD A711.1 <b>Application:</b> Shift Personnel
<b>Roadway Incidents</b>		

## I. Purpose

To provide guidelines for protecting personnel while they are operating outside their apparatus at incidents on roadways.

## II. Background

Public Safety personnel who have been struck by vehicles while operating on roadways account for a significant portion of national Line of Duty Deaths and injuries. The increased amount of traffic and apathy towards emergency vehicles has led to a dramatic increase in deaths and injuries while working on roadways. Manchaca Fire Rescue is striving to prevent these types of incidents by instituting the following guidelines

*This document is a direct adaptation of the Austin Fire Department SOG on Roadway Incidents. It has been adopted by Manchaca Fire Rescue as an Auto Aid partner to maximize standardization between partner agencies. Variations and additions to the language from the parent AFD document will be signified by text in italics. Generic changes that do not affect content such as formatting and changing “AFD” to “MFR” will not be noted.*

## III. Policy

- A. **Scene blocking.** MFR members shall protect themselves at all times on roadways by positioning their apparatus in such a manner as to provide a protective barrier between oncoming traffic and the incident scene.
- B. **Second unit.** A second apparatus shall be dispatched to assist with scene safety for incidents on roadways. This will normally be the next closest unit, regardless of type.
- C. **PPE.** All members shall use appropriate protective clothing when operating in the proximity of motor vehicle traffic.

## IV. Best Practices

The following best practices should be followed at all firefighting and emergency scene operations, except where deviation can be justified by Fire Officers. Any significant deviation should be communicated to responding/on-scene units as soon as possible.

### A. Incidents Occurring on Roadways.

1. **Response plan.** Two apparatus will be dispatched to all incidents that occur on a roadway.
2. **Scene positioning.** The first arriving apparatus should position at a 45-degree angle to provide a barrier between the incident scene and oncoming traffic. Apparatus will normally be positioned to block the lane the incident is in plus one additional lane for a buffer zone. The crew will take appropriate measures to provide for scene safety before mitigating the incident. In the event that Squad 501 or smaller apparatus is responding as a second unit to a roadway incident, the apparatus should be positioned with consideration for both personnel protection and the overall safety of the scene. The second unit should be used to support the initial response, ensuring that vehicle positioning offers maximum safety for all personnel on site. i.e. smaller apparatus in front of the scene followed by the larger apparatus for blocking.
3. **Pump use.** If the pump is to be used, apparatus should be placed so that pump panel is on the downstream side of oncoming traffic to protect the pump operator.
4. **Upstream positioning.** The second arriving apparatus should position upstream from the first apparatus in a position that is adequate to provide an advance warning to oncoming traffic. The following factors should be taken into account when determining apparatus placement:
  - a. Line of sight
  - b. Traffic speed
  - c. Weather conditions
  - d. Hills and curves
  - e. Exit and/or entrance ramps.
5. **Command.** Incident Command will be established and transferred in accordance with standard MFR guidelines.
6. **Second company duties.** The duties of the second Company should be determined by Command; generally they should be responsible for the following:
  - a. Scene Safety
  - b. Placement of traffic cones
  - c. Use of a spotter
  - d. Assist with incident mitigation if necessary.

7. **Cancellation of second company.** The first Company on scene may cancel the second responding apparatus if traffic in the area is under complete control. Apparatus should remain on scene as necessary to protect Fire and other Public Safety personnel.

#### B. Incidents Occurring on Minor Streets.

1. **Single unit response.** For incidents occurring on minor streets or parking lots, Fire Dispatch may just assign the normal Still Alarm unit. Upon arrival, this unit should position with proper blocking techniques to protect incident scene.
2. **Requesting second unit.** The Officer should request a second unit, if necessary, to help protect the scene, i.e. blind curves, hills, etc.
3. **Medical calls.** For residential medical calls, units should strive to leave the front of the address open for the medic unit and should position with a slight blocking angle to protect the patient loading zone.

#### C. General Traffic Safety.

1. **Excessive lighting.** To avoid distracting or blinding traffic, only those emergency lights necessary to warn oncoming traffic should be used while parked. This is especially important during nighttime operations when excessive lights can be distracting. Use of amber lighting is recommended if available.
2. **Restoration of normal traffic flow.** Units should strive for “quick clearance”. The incident should be mitigated as quickly and safely as possible so personnel can be moved from harm’s way and traffic flow can be restored to normal.
3. **Traffic flow concerns.** Any lanes necessary to protect firefighters and other public safety personnel should be shut down but unnecessary restriction of traffic flow should be avoided. Keeping traffic moving helps reduce traffic snarl and reduces the risk of secondary collisions.
4. **TXDOT resources.** TXDOT should be considered as a resource to assist with traffic control on major roadways. TXDOT has a vested interest in keeping the roadways open and can also assist with procuring whatever equipment is necessary to clear the roadway. TXDOT is indemnified by State law and has the authority to remove any vehicle off the roadway to restore traffic flow. Incident Commanders may request the TXDOT through Fire Dispatch.
5. **Traffic cones.** Traffic control devices such as cones should be placed and retrieved while facing oncoming traffic. Traffic cones should be set at a distance to provide advance warning to approaching motorists. Distance should be based on traffic speed using the following suggested guidelines:

POSTED SPEED LIMIT	DISTANCE FROM APPARATUS TO 1 <sup>st</sup> TRAFFIC CONE
35 MPH	100 Feet
45 MPH	150 Feet
55 MPH	200 Feet
55+ MPH	250+ Feet

6. **Debris.** Sweeping of debris should be accomplished while facing traffic.
  
7. **Avoiding upstream exposure.** Personnel should mount and dismount the apparatus on the downstream side of traffic whenever possible. If the Officer's door is exposed to traffic when leaving the scene, the Officer should consider riding in the crew area until the unit clears the roadway. Consideration should also be given to loading equipment such as medical gear on the downstream side of the apparatus or carrying it in the cab until the unit returns to the station.