



POLICY MANUAL

Emergency Operations Policy

Freeway Response

Revised: 05-04-04

Code: 1 – 2 – 14

Book Chapter Subject

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14.0 Purpose: Vehicle accidents on the roadway are one of the most hazardous alarms requiring response. This document provides the actions necessary to protect both firefighters and accident victims.

14.01 Scope: All emergency response personnel.

14.02 **POLICY**

This document shall serve to establish guidelines necessary when responding to motor vehicle accidents (MVAs) and car fires. Safety of our personnel, as well as that of any accident victims, is critical during roadway operations. All crew members must adhere to these guidelines when responding to incidents occurring on freeways.

14.03 **GOAL**

It shall be the goal of the Incident Commander/or Company Officer to make certain all personnel are operating within the intent of this SOP. The Incident Commander and/or COMPANY OFFICER shall consider the safety of emergency personnel and accident victims at all times and establish an incident action plan with this in mind.

Note: No two accident scenes are ever alike. This SOP was developed to serve as a guideline to assist in the response to roadway-based incidents. No SOP can ever take into account all of the challenges that will be present on-scene. The SOP is not designed to relieve the Incident Commander of the responsibility of using common sense. If following this SOP in any way places or will place either emergency workers or victims in harm's way, another set of tactics and strategies should be considered immediately.

14.04 **APPARATUS RESPONSE TO FREEWAY INCIDENTS**

The Dispatch matrix (Policy # 4-2-5) shall be used for Apparatus Freeway Response.

[Response By Call Type \(4-2-5\)](#)



14.05 RESPONSE TO THE ACCIDENT SCENE

Dispatch shall relay all pertinent information to the Incident Commander while en-route to the scene. This information shall be relayed via CLOVIS Fire Channel One monitored by responding units.

Responding units need to pay close attention to the following hazards on all roadway-based MVAs:

- A. Power lines and utility poles in roadway**
NEVER drive over downed power lines.
- B. Vehicles involved in the MVA**
Watch for vehicles involved in the MVA. Scan the scene for vehicles off the roadway, which may not be evident at first glance.
- C. Bystanders and patients approaching emergency vehicles**
Helpful bystanders may approach your vehicle, even stepping in front of it to attract your attention.
- D. Hazardous materials from the accident**
Gasoline, oil, coolants and other fluids will be present at the scene of an MVA or car fire. Care should be taken to avoid spotting apparatus near these hazards.

14.06 WEATHER CONDITIONS

Proceed with caution during times of bad weather. Rain and fog may decrease visibility. Proceed to the scene with due regard for the present weather conditions and develop your incident action plan with those conditions in mind.

14.07 ARRIVAL ON-SCENE

- Arriving emergency vehicles should be positioned to afford as much protection as possible for emergency workers and victims.
- Position the emergency vehicles at a 45-degree angle in the roadway.



14.07 ARRIVAL ON SCENE – (Cont.)

- If the MVA occurs on the side of the roadway, a minimum of one lane of traffic will be closed. If the accident occurs in a middle lane, a minimum of two traffic lanes will be closed.
- Position emergency vehicles far enough from the scene to warn oncoming traffic and still provide ample protection for the scene.
- All emergency vehicles shall keep their warning lights in operation during the entire incident.
- Headlights shall be turned off when vehicles are blocking lanes of oncoming traffic.
- Emergency vehicles not used in shielding the accident shall be parked on the shoulder or the median, if one exists. All vehicles shall be staged on the same side of the road to aid in traffic flow around the incident.

14.08 TRAFFIC FLOW CONSIDERATIONS

- Consideration must be given to warning oncoming vehicles of the accident scene ahead.
- Traffic cones shall be used to close the needed lane or lanes up to and around the accident scene.
- Coordination of lane closures with law enforcement shall be considered a HIGH priority of the Incident Commander.
- The following distances shall be used as a guide when setting up traffic cones (these figures represent the distance from the accident site at which traffic cones need to be deployed):

25-mph traffic 70 feet
35-mph traffic 115 feet
45-mph traffic 165 feet
55-mph traffic 225 feet
65-mph traffic 300 feet

14.09 SCENE LIGHTING



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Lighting shall be established as soon as possible at the accident scene. Responding vehicles with light towers shall be placed as close to the scene as possible to assist with scene lighting. Care should be taken to avoid positioning these light towers so that the lights do not blind or disorient oncoming traffic.