

BODEGA BAY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

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SUBJECT: Apparatus Placement

DATE: 18JAN08

1. PURPOSE

1.1. This procedure identifies parking practices for apparatus that will provide maximum protection and safety for personnel operating in or near moving vehicle traffic. It also identifies several approaches for individual practices to keep firefighters safe while exposed to vehicle traffic.

1.2. All personnel should understand and appreciate the high risk that firefighters are exposed to when operating in or near moving vehicle traffic. We should always operate from a defensive posture. Always consider moving vehicles as a threat to your safety. Each day, emergency personnel are exposed to motorists of varying abilities, with or without licenses, with or without legal restrictions, and driving at speeds from creeping to well beyond the speed limit. Some of these motorists are the vision impaired, the alcohol and/or drug impaired. On top of everything else, motorists will often be looking at the scene and not the road.

1.3. Nighttime operations are particularly hazardous. Visibility is reduced, and the flashings of emergency lights tend to confuse motorists. Studies have shown that multiple headlights of emergency apparatus (coming from different angles at the scene) tend to blind drivers as they approach.

2. REFERENCES

- 2.1.** California Penal Code 148.2
- 2.2.** California Penal Code 409.3
- 2.3.** California Health and Safety Code 1798.6
- 2.4.** FIRESCOPE ICS 420 (FOG) Field Operations Guild
- 2.5.** Federal Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) Section 6I

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1. INCIDENT COMMANDER (I/C): Normally established by the first arriving resource, until relieved by a supervisor. Determines Incident Objectives and Strategies for resources. Establishes the immediate priorities.

3.2. UNIFIED COMMAND: Joint Command with representatives from all agencies with jurisdictional responsibilities. The Fire Officer and the CHP Officer shall establish a Unified Command and confirm Incident Objectives and Strategies.

3.3. FREEWAY: a freeway is an access-controlled, divided highway. Most freeways are four lanes, or two lanes each direction, but many freeways widen to incorporate more lanes as they enter urban areas.

3.4. NON-FREEWAY: a roadway, parking lot or other surface over which vehicles travel.

3.5. MANAGEMENT OF THE SCENE OF AN ACCIDENT: The coordination of operations which occur at the location of an accident.

4. POLICY

4.1. It shall be the policy to position apparatus at the scene of emergencies in a manner that best protects the work area and personnel from vehicle traffic and other hazards.

4.2. Fire and CHP need to establish unified command as soon as possible to jointly provide a safe parking and work area and to quickly resolve the incident.

5. PROCEDURES

5.1. SAFETY BENCHMARKS

Emergency personnel are at great risk while operating in or around moving traffic. There are approaches that can be taken to protect yourself and all crew members:

5.1.2 Never trust the traffic:

Always maintain an acute awareness of the high risk of working in or around moving traffic. Never trust moving traffic. Always look before you step! Always keep an eye on the traffic!

Crews should exit the curb side or non-traffic side of the vehicle whenever possible.

Always look before stepping out of apparatus, or into any traffic areas. When walking around fire apparatus parked adjacent to moving traffic, keep an eye on traffic and walk as close to fire apparatus as possible.

5.1.3. Engage in proper protective parking:

Always position apparatus to protect the scene, patients, emergency personnel, and provide a protected work area. Where possible, angle the apparatus toward the curb. This will direct motorist around the scene. Apparatus positioning must also allow for adequate parking space for other fire apparatus (if needed), and a safe work area for emergency personnel. Allow enough distance to prevent a moving vehicle from knocking fire apparatus into the work areas.

The area must be protected so that patients can be extricated, treated, moved about the scene, and loaded into ambulances safely. Remember to position ambulances to protect patient loading areas.

At intersections, or where the incident may be near the middle of the street, two or more sides of the incident may need to be protected.

Block all exposed sides. Where apparatus is in limited numbers, prioritize the blocking from the most critical to the least critical.

For first arriving engine companies where a charged hoseline may be needed, angle the engine so that the pump panel is "down stream," on the opposite side of on-coming traffic. This will protect the pump operator. The first company officer (or Command) must assess the parking needs of later-arriving fire apparatus and specifically direct the parking and placement of these vehicles as they arrive to provide protective

blocking of the scene. This officer must operate as an initial safety officer. Once enough fire apparatus have "blocked" the scene, park or stage unneeded vehicles off the street whenever possible. Bring in ambulances one or two at a time and park them in safe locations at the scene. This may be "down stream" from other parked apparatus, or the ambulance maybe backed at an angle into a protected loading area to prevent working in or near passing traffic. At residential medical emergencies, park ambulances in driveways for safe loading where possible. If driveways are inaccessible, park ambulances to best protect patient loading areas.

5.1.4. Wear high visibility reflective vests or turnout gear:

Wear the safety vest or reflective turnout gear any time you are operating in or near vehicle traffic.

5.1.5. Reduce motorist vision impairment:

During daytime operations, leave all emergency lights on to provide warning to drivers.

For NIGHTTIME operations, turn OFF fire apparatus headlights. This will help reduce the blinding effect to approaching vehicle traffic. Other emergency lighting should be reduced to yellow lights and emergency flashers where possible.

5.1.6. Use traffic cones and flares:

MUTCD, NIOSH and NFPA require incident first-responders to provide advance warning to motorists.

Place traffic cones at the scene to direct traffic. This should be initiated by the first company arriving on the scene and expanded, if needed, as later arriving companies arrive on the scene. Always place and retrieve cones while facing on-coming traffic. Placing flares, where safe to do so, adjacent to and in combination with traffic cones for nighttime operations greatly enhances scene safety. Place flares to direct traffic where safe and appropriate to do so.

Listed below are general recommendations for the start of traffic cones/flares:

Speed Distance

25 mph 65 feet

40 mph 105 feet

60 mph 160 feet

At major intersections a call for Law Enforcement response may be necessary. Provide specific direction to the Law Enforcement officer as to exactly what your traffic control needs are. Ensure the Law Enforcement Officers are parking to protect themselves and the scene.

5.2. FREEWAY OPERATIONS CONSIDERATIONS:

5.2.1. APPROACH AND STAGING:

Engine and truck units responding to emergencies on the freeway may respond Code 3 to the freeway, but shall reduce to Code 2 once on the freeway. Staff and/or smaller vehicles may continue Code 3 and/or if freeway traffic is moving slower than your unit and when Code 3 would assist in rapid response

5.2.2. ADDITIONAL SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS:

Freeway emergencies pose a particular high risk to emergency personnel. Speeds are higher, traffic volume is significant, and motorists have little opportunity to slow, stop or change lanes. The California Highway Patrol (CHP) will also have a desire to keep the freeway flowing. Where need be, the freeway can be completely shut down. This, however, rarely occurs.

For freeway emergencies, we will continue to block the scene with the first apparatus on the scene to provide a safe work area. Other companies may be used to provide additional blocking if needed. The initial company officer, or command, must thoroughly assess the need for apparatus on the freeway and their specific positions.

Companies should be directed to specific parking locations to protect the work area, patients, and emergency personnel. Other apparatus should be parked downstream when possible. This provides a safe parking area.

Staging of Ambulances off the freeway may be required. Ambulances should be brought into the scene one or two at a time. A safe loading area must be established.

Traffic cones should be placed farther apart, with the last cone approximately 160 feet "upstream," to allow adequate warning to drivers. Place and retrieve cones while facing the traffic. The termination of the incident must be managed with the same aggressiveness as initial actions. Crews, apparatus, and equipment must be removed from the freeway promptly, to reduce exposure to moving traffic.

6. KEY POINTS:

- Fire and CHP need to establish unified command as soon as possible to jointly provide a safe parking and work area and to quickly resolve the incident.
- Provide specific direction to Law Enforcement as to what traffic control needs you have.
- Where possible, angle apparatus at a 45 degree angle from the curb.
- Prioritize placement of the apparatus by blocking from the most critical to the least critical side. Often times two or more sides may need to be protected.
- To protect pump operator, position apparatus with the pump panel on the opposite side of on-coming traffic.
- Position ambulances to protect patient loading areas.
- Where possible, park ambulances in driveways or position rescue to protect patient loading area.
- Whenever possible, emergency vehicles and equipment should be moved to the right shoulder to mitigate traffic congestion and prevent the possibility secondary collisions.