



National Fire Fighter Near-Miss Reporting System Reports Related to High Visibility Vests

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Report Number: 05-156
Report Date: 05/27/2005 1410

Demographics

Department type: Combination, Mostly paid
Job or rank: Lieutenant
Department shift: 10 hour days, 14 hour nights (2-2-4)
Age: 43 - 51
Years of fire service experience: 24 - 26
Region: FEMA Region III
Service Area: Urban

Event Information

Event type: Non-fire emergency event: auto extrication, technical rescue, emergency medical call, service calls, etc.
Event date and time: 04/23/2005 0800
Hours into the shift: 0 - 4
Event participation: Witnessed event but not directly involved in the event
Do you think this will happen again? Yes
What do you believe caused the event? Other
What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Property damage
- Lost time injury
- Life threatening injury
- Minor injury

Event Description

Ladder company was operating at the scene of a personal injury vehicle accident on a divided interstate highway. The incident was at the point of being cleared. The ladder truck was blocking the two left lanes of a three lane highway. The truck was parked on a 45% angle with the front facing the median strip. Several road flares (appx 5) were placed behind the truck for a distance of appx. 150 feet. An occupied state police vehicle was located between the ladder truck and the road flares. All four members of the Ladder crew were in the vehicle preparing to leave the scene. The EMS vehicle had already left the scene. At this point a tractor trailer driver lost control of the vehicle that he was driving (a double trailer semi). The vehicle came to a stop between the ladder truck and the guardrail narrowly missing both the state police vehicle and the ladder Truck. All FD personnel were wearing high visibility safety vests during the entire incident.

Lessons Learned

1. ALWAYS BE ALERT! 2. Make absolutely sure you or part of your response can be seen from as far away as possible. 3. Quicker response of state roads safety vehicle. 4. Disassemble the scene from the down traffic side of incident first.

Report Number: 05-0000332

Report Date: 07/01/2005 1946

Demographics

Department type: Combination, Mostly paid

Job or rank: Other: Master Firefighter

Department shift: 24 hours on - 48 hours off

Age: 34 - 42

Years of fire service experience: 17 - 20

Region: FEMA Region III

Service Area: Suburban

Event Information

Event type: Fire emergency event: structure fire, vehicle fire, wildland fire, etc.

Event date and time: 07/01/2005 1150

Hours into the shift: 0 - 4

Event participation: Involved in the event

Do you think this will happen again? Yes

What do you believe caused the event?

- Situational Awareness
- Human Error
- Decision Making

What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Lost time injury
- Life threatening injury
- Minor injury

Event Description

While taking up from a truck fire on an interstate highway I was almost hit by a civilian vehicle. I was third-due engine and positioned to block traffic. There was also a rescue squad, two ambulances, a tanker and a battalion chief as IC. Traffic had been halted while firefighting was occurring and a large backup of traffic began and continued for 15 minutes. When traffic was allowed to pass the incident using the inside shoulder and fast lane, I positioned myself in front of my engine, which was acting as a traffic barrier, out of the flow of traffic. I was intending to halt the closest lane to allow an ambulance to exit the scene when a red car squeezed thru the space between my engine and the two lanes of traffic. The car then took the third lane of traffic and drove thru our scene accelerating, missing me by no more than a foot. I was watching the ambulance instead of the traffic flow. I was wearing my turnout pants and a traffic safety vest. The weather was hot, humid and sunny.

Lessons Learned

I will not assume that just because I am in a "traffic shadow" of heavy apparatus I won't be hit.

Report Number: 05-0000434

Report Date: 08/11/2005 2151

Demographics

Department type: Combination, Mostly paid

Job or rank: Battalion Chief / District Chief

Department shift: 24 hours on - 48 hours off

Age: 34 - 42

Years of fire service experience: 21 - 23

Region: FEMA Region VI

Service Area: Urban

Event Information

Event type: Non-fire emergency event: auto extrication, technical rescue, emergency medical call, service calls, etc.

Event date and time: 05/27/2005 0800

Hours into the shift: 0 - 4

Event participation: Involved in the event

Do you think this will happen again? Yes

What do you believe caused the event?

- Individual Action
- Situational Awareness
- Procedure
- Human Error

What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Life threatening injury
- Lost time injury
- Property damage
- Minor injury

Event Description

While driving to work on a six-lane divided highway in my marked vehicle, I stumbled across a MVA in the middle lane of the opposite direction. I radioed in the incident and parked my unit at the closest point that I could to the scene. I had to park on the eastbound off-ramp shoulder and climb up a 15' embankment to get to the scene. Therefore, I donned my bright orange safety vest and radio and proceeded up the hill. Once at the top, I had to climb over a three foot concrete wall to get to the vehicles while using only one hand because the other was in a cast. I found three vehicles had rear-ended each other in the middle lane of a 60 mph stretch of the downhill side of a slight hill about one yard from the peak of this hill. I was almost struck by at least one vehicle trying to cross the open lane to the vehicles. I had to wait for a moment before the drivers of the vehicles going around the incident actually saw me and allowed me to cross. I had the arriving fire engine oppose traffic for a short distance and park behind the vehicles to provide safety for us. This still left the lanes to the left and right of the incident open. While awaiting the arrival of additional units, at least one near-miss occurred as one driver had to lock his brakes while coming over the hill to avoid hitting the fire truck. I finally had the next fire truck park at the top of the hill to provide earlier warning to drivers

BEFORE they reached it. I also had the inside lane blocked to provide us some room to work. The rest of the scene went well.

Lessons Learned

1. Orange safety vests do not come with a large 'S' imprinted in the chest as standard equipment. It doesn't matter how orange the vest is, people still won't see it! 2. Never just walk into traffic until you make eye contact with the driver, they have acknowledged your existence, permit you to cross, AND the vehicles behind it have stopped. 3. Always stop or detour enough traffic to allow for safety of crews working...even if this means shutting down the highway. 4. Always take into consideration hills and blind spots/turns when operating on roadways.

Report Number: 05-0000592
Report Date: 10/31/2005 1305

Demographics

Department type: Paid Municipal
Job or rank: Assistant Chief
Department shift: 24 hours on - 48 hours off
Age: 34 - 42
Years of fire service experience: 14 - 16
Region: FEMA Region VI
Service Area: Urban

Event Information

Event type: Non-fire emergency event: auto extrication, technical rescue, emergency medical call, service calls, etc.
Event date and time: 10/06/2005 1130
Hours into the shift: 0 - 4
Event participation: Witnessed event but not directly involved in the event
Do you think this will happen again? Yes
What do you believe caused the event?

- Accountability
- Individual Action
- Decision Making
- Protocol

What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Lost time injury
- Life threatening injury

Event Description

Responded for assistance on a minor motor-vehicle accident in a residential area. Upon arrival, witnessed an employee working the scene without a safety vest on. The SOP/SOG is to wear safety vests on all incidents on or near a roadway. Although this was a low traffic area, the safety vest should be worn.

Lessons Learned

Safety vests should be worn even in low traffic areas in order to establish repetitiveness of safe actions during all events. A reminder of the current SOP/SOG should be passed on to all staff as well as examples of when not using proper safety equipment has been detrimental to employees.

Report Number: 05-0000655

Report Date: 12/09/2005 1828

Demographics

Department type: Combination, Mostly paid

Job or rank: Fire Fighter

Department shift: 24 hours on - 48 hours off

Age: 25 - 33

Years of fire service experience: 4 - 6

Region: FEMA Region IV

Service Area: Urban

Event Information

Event type: Non-fire emergency event: auto extrication, technical rescue, emergency medical call, service calls, etc.

Event date and time: 11/28/2005 0700

Hours into the shift: 21 - 24

Event participation: Involved in the event

Do you think this will happen again? Yes

What do you believe caused the event?

- Human Error
- Other
- Individual Action

What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Minor injury
- Life threatening injury
- Lost time injury

Event Description

Responded to a 2 vehicle accident. Apparatus, Engine Company, and police cruiser were blocking entire roadway for safety. I was containing oil leak from wrecked vehicle. Driver of a passing vehicle drove around response vehicles at approximately 30mph. Subject's vehicle came within three feet of me after driving off of the side of the road and then back on the roadway. Inclement weather was not a factor. (The following is submitted by the reviewer at the request of the reporter. The engine company's upper zone rotating warning lights were out of service and had been out of service for some time. The lower zone strobe warning lights were operating. The civilian vehicle was sitting approximately four vehicles behind the engine company. From the civilian's vantage point, the engine company appeared to be sitting in traffic. The driver could not see the lower zone warning lights flashing and the upper zone lights were not operating. The driver apparently became impatient and pulled around the line of traffic. The reporter also advised that he was wearing bunker pants and a department issued t-shirt only while operating in the roadway. He was not wearing a retro-reflective traffic safety vest. End of addendum.)

Lessons Learned

This situation could have only been prevented if there was a police officer or firefighter keeping watch behind the accident scene. The roadway was blocked at the time. (Added at the request of the reporter: 1. The engine company should have been out of service. The upper zone lights had not been working for an extended period of time. The department was aware of the problem, had been working with the manufacturer, but was unsuccessful in getting the problem resolved. The vehicle should have remained out of service until the lights were repaired. 2. All personnel operating on the roadway should be provided with and use an approved retro-reflective traffic safety vest. The vest will improve visibility and worker safety.)

Report Number: 05-0000672

Report Date: 12/27/2005 1441

Demographics

Department type: Paid Municipal

Job or rank: Assistant Chief

Department shift: 24 hours on - 48 hours off

Age: 34 - 42

Years of fire service experience: 17 - 20

Region: FEMA Region V

Service Area: Suburban

Event Information

Event type: Non-fire emergency event: auto extrication, technical rescue, emergency medical call, service calls, etc.

Event date and time: 12/23/2005 2030

Hours into the shift: 0 - 4

Event participation: Involved in the event

Do you think this will happen again? Yes

What do you believe caused the event?

- Individual Action
- Equipment

What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Lost time injury

Event Description

While at an auto accident scene, firefighter steps out into traffic to allow the medic unit out to respond to hospital. The firefighter had a full set of turn-out gear on. Firefighter did not have a safety vest on that was rated a Class III.

Lessons Learned

Employees need Class III vest or coats while operating on road ways.

Report Number: 05-0000684

Report Date: 01/04/2006 1505

Demographics

Department type: Volunteer

Job or rank: Fire Fighter

Department shift: Respond from home

Age: 43 - 51

Years of fire service experience: 14 - 16

Region: FEMA Region V

Service Area: Rural

Event Information

Event type: Fire emergency event: structure fire, vehicle fire, wildland fire, etc.

Event date and time: 12/21/2005 0200

Hours into the shift: 0 - 4

Event participation: Involved in the event

Do you think this will happen again? Yes

What do you believe caused the event?

- Decision Making
- Human Error
- Individual Action
- SOP / SOG

What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Lost time injury
- Life threatening injury
- Minor injury

Event Description

On the date indicated, around 2:00am we had a call for an MVA on one of the main highways. As I approached the scene, I see no one doing a block, so I blocked to the right. I get out, and put my gear on. I can't put a high visibility vest on because the chief says our gear is good enough. I see a chief officer and a one-year firefighter walking down the shoulder of the road. I did not know it was the fire chief until he said something because it was so dark. They had dark clothing on, no gear. I see a 3-month firefighter with nothing on and two more firefighters with just over a year on with just their turnout coats on. Cars are flying by. The speed limit is 55mph. The accident was on a small curve in the road. We clear the scene. No one was in the vehicle that was involved in the MVA. They left the scene. I have done some training with the officers and firefighters on responder safety. I have asked for a responder class to be given at our station. We have the money. I was told they would check into it. We have had several near misses on the roads. I have showed my department how to block with the vehicles. All the next day after the MVA, this was on my mind. We are going to get someone killed. I asked for a policy to be put into place if safety rules or the SOGs are not followed, their should be privileges taken away. One member, a 7-year veteran stated even if you have your gear on and you get hit you are going to die. How do we change this mind set?

Lessons Learned

Fire departments are subject to the Federal Highway Administration's Department of Transportation Manual On Uniform Traffic Control Devices. All departments should make themselves aware of this document. The website address is: <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov>. My department's failure to acknowledge this responsibility is compromising firefighter safety. Ignoring the rule, and flatly refusing to seek information to educate and protect the members of the department is creating a dangerous work environment for the department members. Our department suffered a serious injury during a highway operation several years ago. Make changes in your department before someone gets injured.

Report Number: 06-0000267

Report Date: 05/05/2006 1530

Demographics

Department type: Paid Municipal

Job or rank: Battalion Chief / District Chief

Department shift: 10 hour days, 14 hour nights (2-2-4)

Age: 43 - 51

Years of fire service experience: 27 - 30

Region: FEMA Region I

Service Area: Suburban

Event Information

Event type: Vehicle event: responding to, returning from, routine driving, etc.

Event date and time: 01/16/2006 1609

Hours into the shift: 13 - 16

Event participation: Told of event, but neither involved nor witnessed event

Do you think this will happen again? Uncertain

What do you believe caused the event?

- Situational Awareness
- Decision Making
- Protocol
- Weather

What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Property damage
- Life threatening injury

Event Description

At 1609 hours, Monday, January 16, 2006 a passenger vehicle traveling west on (location deleted) struck (Department name deleted) Engine (X), and pushed it approximately eight feet sideways. The engine was parked as a blocking apparatus at the scene of a previous motor vehicle collision. There were nine personnel on the scene and none was injured. There was extensive damage to the right front and side of the apparatus. The driver of the passenger vehicle was transported to a level one trauma center. Fortunately, (this department) had instituted an aggressive General Operating Guideline [GOG] pertaining to vehicle placement at highway / roadway incidents. All personnel are required to wear either turnout gear or an issued safety vest.

Lessons Learned

Fortunately, the Department policy was followed, embraced, and applied as it pertained to vehicle placement at highway / roadway incidents. We strongly suggest that ALL departments seriously consider adopting a very aggressive policy for roadway safety. In conjunction, we challenge all officers and supervisors to practice roadway safety and to strictly enforce such a policy on ALL calls to which it even remotely applies. Plans are being made to provide even more advanced warning for similar incidents, either signs or apparatus, personnel placed further from the incident depending on posted speed limits.

Report Number: 06-0000475

Report Date: 09/18/2006 1759

Demographics

Department type: Combination, Mostly paid

Job or rank: Lieutenant

Department shift: 24 hours on - 48 hours off

Age: 34 - 42

Years of fire service experience: 17 - 20

Region: FEMA Region III

Service Area: Urban

Event Information

Event type: Non-fire emergency event: auto extrication, technical rescue, emergency medical call, service calls, etc.

Event date and time: 09/15/2006 2237

Hours into the shift: 13 - 16

Event participation: Involved in the event

Do you think this will happen again? Uncertain

What do you believe caused the event?

- Situational Awareness
- Human Error
- Decision Making

What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Life threatening injury

Event Description

At 22:31 hours, [an Engine and Aerial] responded for a two year old not breathing at [address withheld]. We were following [the Aerial and two police cars] up [the] road looking at the house numbers. We were flagged down by the residents who were flashing their porch lights after [the Aerial] and PD went by the residence. We immediately stopped in the west bound lane of [the road], gathered our equipment, dismounted the engine, and proceeded to cross. All traffic had come to a complete stop. I crossed in front of [a vehicle] that would later strike [my Master Firefighter]. I had made it approximately thirty feet from the fire engine when I heard [my Master Firefighter] yell at the driver of the [vehicle]. I turned to see [my Master Firefighter] stagger and the red oxygen bag that he was carrying laying on the ground next to him. After I walked back to him, he told me that he had been struck by the [vehicle]. He said his elbow was scraped; his left Knee and his right thigh were hurt. PD promptly took action and gathered information from the driver. [The Master Firefighter] was the last member to cross [the road]. He said that he had made eye contact with the driver of the [vehicle], and that she had "gunned" it right when he was in front of her. None of the crew from [our Engine] was wearing a safety vest since we were just crossing the street. The emergency lights were operational.

Lessons Learned

I would park on the same side of the road as the incident. In this case, we came up on this house so quickly that we didn't have time to get over. Shut down the road or have police respond for traffic control.

Report Number: 06-0000542
Report Date: 10/29/2006 1806

Demographics

Department type: Paid Municipal
Job or rank: Captain
Department shift: 24 hours on - 24 hours off
Age: 43 - 51
Years of fire service experience: 21 - 23
Region: FEMA Region VI
Service Area: Suburban

Event Information

Event type: Non-fire emergency event: auto extrication, technical rescue, emergency medical call service calls, etc.
Event date and time: 08/09/2006 2300
Hours into the shift: 13 - 16
Event participation: Involved in the event
Do you think this will happen again? Uncertain
What do you believe caused the event?

- Decision Making
- Human Error
- Situational Awareness

What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Life threatening injury
- Lost time injury

Event Description

Our engine and Brush pumper responded together to a report of a possible heart attack at a residence in a rural-suburban interface. On arrival, the engine officer and firefighter disembarked the apparatus and entered the residence with EMS gear along with the brush pumper operator. The engine operator was left behind to secure the apparatus and follow us in to assist with patient care. After we had made entry to the residence, located the patient, and began patient assessment and treatment, we were alerted by a neighbor that one of the fire fighters had been hit by a car out by the road. The ambulance crew was entering the residence at this same time and I left the patient with two crewmembers and the ALS crew to check on the engine operator. I located him near the roadway recovering from a prone position and trying to "walk off the pain in his legs and back." He was adamant that his injuries were minor and everything would be all right, not to make a big deal out of anything. After questioning the driver, a witness, and the operator, I decided he would have to be checked at emergency for severity of injuries. He was sent to the nearest ER for evaluation. He has been off duty nearly three months now, been through surgery to repair three fractured discs, and still has to complete rehab on his back and then begin surgery and rehab on his left knee. This could very well be the last response he ever makes as a firefighter. We often overlook infrequent hazards especially when responding to minor or low risk calls. We have trained extensively on safety for many types of incidents but we can still be complacent

regarding hazards that are not anticipated, such as traffic hazards on an EMS call. We are prepared for and address traffic hazards when working on or near roadways as with MVA's but do not really anticipate getting run over trying to enter a house to provide ALS/BLS services. At this accident scene, there were three emergency vehicles located next to and partially on the roadway as there was insufficient room to completely leave the roadway. Eastbound traffic was stopped by the ambulance and the engine; westbound traffic had slowed to a walking pace at the front of the residence because of the lights and activity. As the last two westbound cars passed by the engine, the engine operator crossed behind them to enter the residence. He was struck by a pickup traveling approximately twenty-five miles per hour that had left the roadway to drive around the vehicles that were blocking his progress. The point of impact occurred about eight to ten feet off the paved surface in a shallow drainage ditch. The driver of the pickup stated he could not see anything because of the lights from the emergency vehicles shining in his eyes and never knew the firefighter was there until he heard the impact. The pickup was obscured from the engine operators view by the vehicles on the roadway, his attention was also diverted to providing access to the waiting ambulance as quickly as possible.

Lessons Learned

Never, never, never take your safety or the safety of your crewmembers for granted. Always anticipate irrational responses from non-emergency personnel to emergency situations. Although many people behave in an appropriate manner at an emergency scene, as happened here, there may be an individual who takes inappropriate actions that can endanger him, the public and emergency responders. Anytime our emergency lights are on anticipate that drivers will be distracted, and that their ability to see driving hazards will be reduced because of the effect of the warning lights. High visibility clothing such as traffic safety vests or incorporating high visibility markings on our uniforms would help increase our visibility in many situations. Even this will not help when the vehicle operator is looking into the headlights of oncoming traffic or parked apparatus.

Report Number: 07-0000898

Report Date: 05/04/2007 1037

Demographics

Department type: Paid Municipal

Job or rank: Safety Officer

Department shift: 24 hours on - 24 hours off

Age: 34 - 42

Years of fire service experience: 17 - 20

Region: FEMA Region V

Service Area: Suburban

Event Information

Event type: Non-fire emergency event: auto extrication, technical rescue, emergency medical call, service calls, etc.

Event date and time: 03/16/2007 0138

Hours into the shift:

Event participation: Told to and submitted by safety officer

Do you think this will happen again?

What do you believe caused the event?

- Situational Awareness
- Procedure
- Decision Making
- Weather
- Human Error

What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Other
- Environmental
- Property damage
- Life threatening injury
- Lost time injury

Event Description

At 0138 hours, we responded to a report of an injury accident. Road conditions were changing to ice as a snow squall descended upon the area. Additional factors included increased traffic of potential intoxicated drivers, due to the eve of a traditional holiday (St. Patrick's Day) at a time when local establishments were closing. As units approached the scene, the first unit responded to the front of the accident scene and the engine followed to the rear of the MVA as a blocking engine. They set up at a 45 degree angle to traffic to block the MVA. No injuries were found at the scene. It soon became evident that the road conditions were icy as additional vehicles were experiencing difficulties as they maneuvered through the area. Lieutenant [name deleted] requested an additional engine to block further upstream of the MVA. Another engine was dispatched. A salt truck was also requested at that time. The B/C contacted dispatch and was notified that the county salt crews were activated and would make the scene as soon as possible, but there would be some lag time due to the unexpected nature of the storm. Firefighter [name deleted] exited the engine dressed in full turn-out gear and a

high visibility safety vest. She was setting up road flares upstream from the MVA to alert the on-coming traffic. The majority of the traffic had slowed to a crawl when a vehicle at a higher rate of speed lost control, swerving around the stopped traffic and began to slide towards the FF. The vehicle struck the center concrete barrier and slid along the barrier as she was straddling the concrete barrier attempting to escape and avoid injury. The vehicle struck the FF with a glancing blow to her left leg as she straddled the concrete barrier to avoid contact. The vehicle continued to slide and then stopped. The driver exited the car to examine the damage, and returned to the vehicle and drove off. The injured firefighter was shaken and ran towards the engine. The lieutenant was advised of the situation and contacted the B/C. Another engine arrived on scene, stopping traffic further upstream of the MVA. The EMS unit was dispatched to the scene and evaluated the injured FF. Their assessment revealed a stable patient with no serious injuries noted at that time. The captain and B/C responded to the scene. The injured FF refused transport to the ER at this time, stating she was okay. However, she went to [name deleted] Hospital shortly after returning to quarters, for evaluation. Local police were on scene to take a report and assist with traffic. State police did not arrive during the fire departments operations.

Lessons Learned

Lessons learned: If there is a duty injury on the scene of an emergency, to send them in for medical evaluation as soon as possible regardless. As we have experienced with a majority of "minor injuries" they usually will want to go to the ER or clinic within an hour or two of the injury to be evaluated. We are looking at changing our policy to make them go at the time of event. Update from the police: They thought they had found the vehicle. But further investigation proved otherwise. As of the writing of this report, the vehicle and driver are still at large. Upon review of our highway SOPs at the time of this event, we found they were all completely followed. We are in the process of adding that when flares or cones are to be placed further downstream or upstream of the event, we use a vehicle to protect the firefighter until this task is accomplished. Or as the units enter into the emergency scene with the protection of the truck, they place their cones or flares.

Report Number: 07-0001099

Report Date: 10/20/2007 2322

Demographics

Department type: Combination, Mostly volunteer

Job or rank: Lieutenant

Department shift: 24 hours on - 48 hours off

Age: 34 - 42

Years of fire service experience: 7 - 10

Region: FEMA Region X

Service Area: Urban

Event Information

Event type: Non-fire emergency event: auto extrication, technical rescue, emergency medical call, service calls, etc.

Event date and time: 06/01/2007 0120

Hours into the shift:

Event participation: Witnessed event but not directly involved in the event

Do you think this will happen again?

What do you believe caused the event?

What do you believe is the loss potential?

Event Description

We were dispatched to a rollover MVA. I assigned my firefighter to traffic control. A motorist almost hit my firefighter. The motorist said she could not see him. My firefighter had to jump past the fog line to avoid being hit.

Lessons Learned

Wear more reflective material, (traffic safety vest). Extend the traffic control pattern.

Report Number: 07-0001167

Report Date: 12/14/2007 1445

Demographics

Department type: Combination, Mostly volunteer

Job or rank: Driver / Engineer

Department shift: Duty night (in-station)

Age: 16 - 24

Years of fire service experience: 7 - 10

Region: FEMA Region III

Service Area: Urban

Event Information

Event type: Non-fire emergency event: auto extrication, technical rescue, emergency medical call, service calls, etc.

Event date and time: 11/24/2007 2200

Hours into the shift: 9 - 12

Event participation: Witnessed event but not directly involved in the event

Do you think this will happen again? Yes

What do you believe caused the event?

- Procedure
- Individual Action

What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Property damage
- Lost time injury
- Life threatening injury

Event Description

Wagon and medic were dispatched to an address on a 2 lane road where the speed limit is 25 mph for difficulty breathing. We were dispatched sometime in the late evening because it was dark outside. Wagon arrived first and parked facing south. The wagon was parked halfway in the southbound lane and halfway in the parallel parking lane. While the crew proceeded into the house, I remained outside to direct vehicles around the apparatus. I had the emergency lighting and the drivers side scene lighting turned on. The light on the rear of the wagon was directed up slightly into the trees so as not to blind drivers coming down the hill south on the road. I was wearing a vest and had my flashlight on. I was standing in the light from the light above the left rear personnel door that is affixed to the cab. The medic arrived later and pulled about 15 feet past the wagon heading north and parked. This caused traffic to go into the opposite lane to get around either piece of equipment. I remained where I started and directed traffic with no problem. Once the patient was loaded up, the wagon crew was waiting to get an "ok" to be released. One of the firefighters was standing at the driver's side rear corner of the wagon to direct southbound traffic around the wagon while I held the northbound traffic. The firefighter was wearing duty pants and a dark non department sweatshirt. After a couple of minutes of this, I told the firefighter that they were going to get hit and to go put their vest or jacket on. They said ok and were going to do so after the car that was about to pass got by. Unfortunately, this car was not paying any attention and decided to

hug the side of the wagon. This car was so close that if the firefighters had not pressed themselves up against the side of the unit, they probably would have been rolled down the side of the wagon. To this day I am surprised they did not at least get struck by the passenger mirror. Department SOP requires the use of a vest while on any incident where the speed limit is greater than 25 mph. However, personnel can wear them in 25 or lower if they deem necessary. Just for safety and visibility I wore mine in that area.

Lessons Learned

SOP should possibly be changed to require a vest whenever operations are being conducted on a roadway.