Payson Fire Department
Standard Operating Procedures

Category: SOP **Section: Safety and Health** **Subject: Road and Highway Incident Scene Safety**	**SOP # 2.5.15** **Date Adopted: 10/11** **Revision Hx:**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to establish procedures for Payson Fire Department members when operating at road and highway incident scenes. The Payson Fire Department (PFD) is committed to the safety of its members. It is the philosophy of the Payson Fire Department that every member deserves a "round-trip ticket" to and from every incident. This SOP identifies parking practices for fire department and other resources that will provide maximum protection and safety for personnel operating in or near moving vehicle traffic.

POLICY

IT SHALL BE THE POLICY OF THE PAYSON FIRE DEPARTMENT 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.

PROCEDURE

All personnel should understand and appreciate the high risk that responders 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 firefighter safety. Nighttime road and highway incidents are particularly hazardous as visibility is reduced and the flashings of emergency lights tend to confuse motorists.

Emergency personnel are at great risk while operating in or near moving traffic. The following approaches should be taken for the safety of all responders operating on a road or highway scene:

1. Never trust the traffic
2. Engage in proper protective parking
3. Wear high visibility, tear-away reflective vests (ANSI Class III)
4. Reduce motorist vision impairment
5. Use traffic cones and flares

The following procedures are to be used for safe operations when operating in or near moving vehicle traffic:

1. Always maintain an acute awareness of the high risk of working in or around moving traffic. Never trust moving traffic. Never turn your back to traffic and always look before you step.

2. Always position apparatus to protect the scene, patients, emergency personnel, and provide a protected work area. Where possible, angle apparatus at 45 degrees away from curbside. This will direct traffic around the scene (See Figure 1). Apparatus must also allow for adequate parking space for other emergency 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.

3. 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 (See Figures 2, 3, and 4).

4. 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 oncoming traffic. The will protect the pump operator (See Figure 5). On roadways with limited room to maneuver, it is acceptable to position the apparatus towards curbside to protect the pump operator. At all other times, it is desirable to position apparatus in the direction traffic should flow.

5. The first arriving 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 the initial safety officer. Ensure that adequate warning distances are established for operations in blind-corners such as Corvair Curve on SR 87. Consider placing additional apparatus or coordinating with law enforcement to establish warning system far upstream of the incident to warn oncoming traffic.

6. During daytime operations, leave all emergency lights on to provide warning to drivers. Ensure that the apparatus directional traffic arrow warning light is activated and properly set.

7. For NIGHTTIME scene 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. Ensure that the apparatus directional traffic arrow warning light is activated and properly set.

8. Crews should exit the curb side or non-traffic side of the apparatus whenever possible. Crew members should exit the apparatus wearing the supplied ANSI traffic safety vest.

9. Always look before stepping out of apparatus, or into any traffic areas. When walking around fire apparatus parked adjacent to moving traffic face the direction traffic is coming from and walk as close to fire apparatus as possible.

10. Crews shall wear the provided retro-reflective, tear-away ANSI class III safety vest or jacket any time they are operating in or near vehicle traffic. These vests are provided and secured inside every PFD apparatus.

11. When parking apparatus to protect the scene, be sure to also protect the work area. The area must be protected so that the patients can be extricated, treated, moved about the scene, and loaded into ambulances safely.

12. Once enough fire apparatus have “blocked” the scene, park or stage unneeded vehicles off the street whenever possible. Bring in ambulance/rescue companies one or two at a time and park them in safe locations on scene. This may be “down stream” from other parked apparatus, or the ambulance may be backed at an angle into a protected loading area to prevent working in or near passing traffic. At residential medical emergencies, park ambulance/rescue companies in driveways for safe loading where possible. If driveways are inaccessible, park Engine and Ambulance/Rescue companies to best protect patient loading areas (See Figures 6 and 7).

13. Place traffic cones at the scene to direct traffic. This should be initiated by the first arriving company arriving on the scene and expanded, if needed, as additional companies arrive on the scene. Always place and retrieve cones while facing on-coming traffic.

14. Placing flares, when safe to do so, adjacent to and in combination with traffic cones for nighttime operations greatly enhances scene safety. Only place flares to direct traffic where safe and appropriate to do so. Flares shall not be used in times of “high,” “extreme,” or “red flag” fire danger adjective ratings.

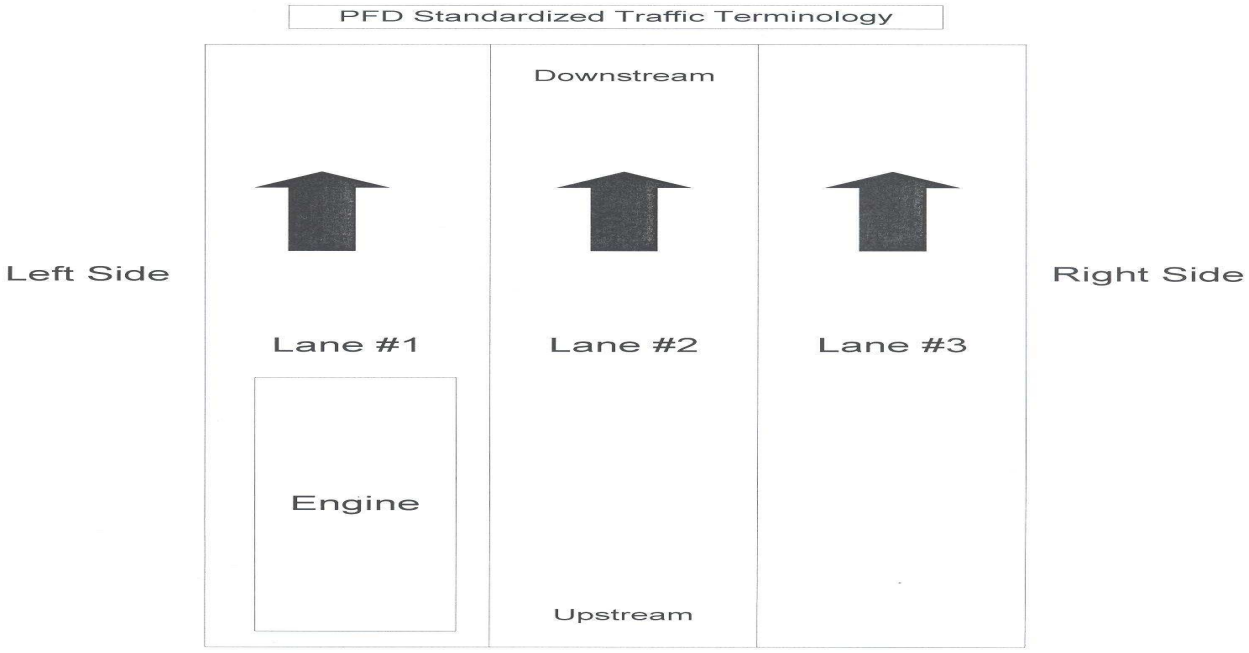
15. The general recommendations for the start of traffic cones/flares are:

Speed:	Distance
25 mph	65 feet
40 mph	105 feet
60 mph	160 feet

16. For incidents longer than 30 minutes duration, the incident commander or on-duty battalion chief should ensure the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) is contacted as soon as it is determined an incident scene time will be extended to help mitigate and manage traffic flow. This will be accomplished by a request through Alarm or DPS. If DPS is used, advise Alarm of current traffic flow conditions.

17. Consider the use of the orange retro-reflective "Emergency Scene Ahead" sign carried in the battalion apparatus. This sign should be placed far enough upstream of the incident to give oncoming motorists adequate time to slow down before traveling through the scene work area. This location will be well ahead of the start of cone placement as stated in section 15. ADOT should be contacted as soon as it is determined an incident will last longer than 30 minutes to help mitigate and manage traffic flow. A request through Alarm or DPS is the methods to be used. If DPS is used, advise Alarm of current traffic flow conditions.

18. At major intersections, an early call for police response will be necessary. Provide specific direction to the police officer(s) as to exactly what the scene traffic control needs are. Ensure the police are parking to protect themselves and the scene. Position ambulance/rescue companies to protect patient loading areas. Utilize the standardized traffic terminology listed below when communicating:



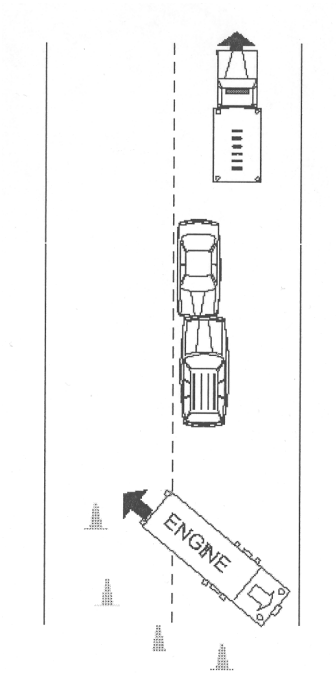


Figure 1
Engine parked protecting scene
and engineer's panel.

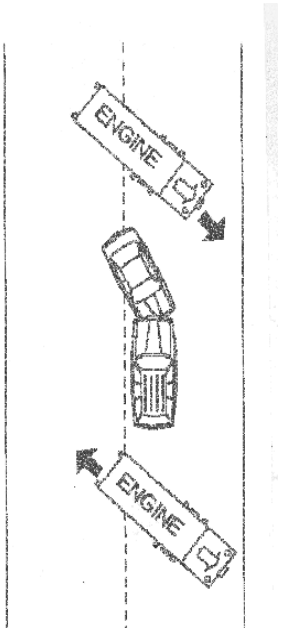


Figure 2
2-engine response parked protecting scene
and engineer's panel on upstream engine.

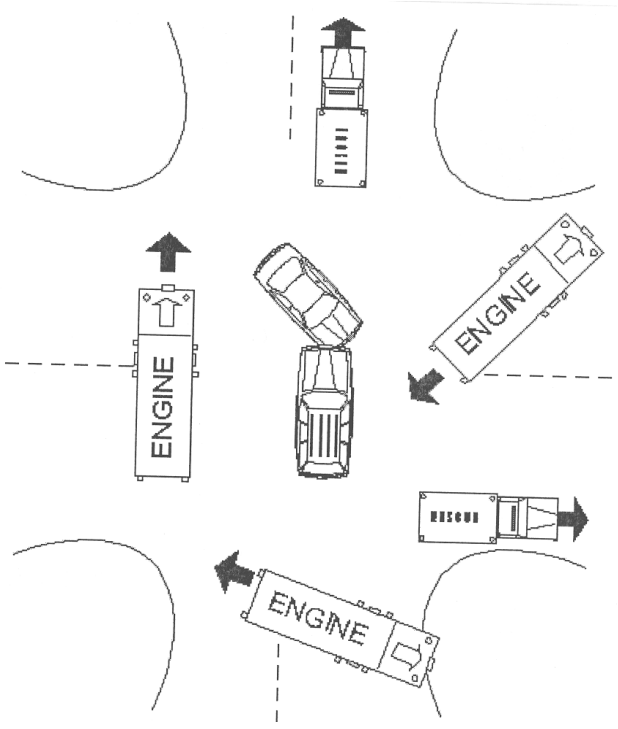


Figure 3
Intersection blocked with scene, engineer's panel
and patient loading areas protected.

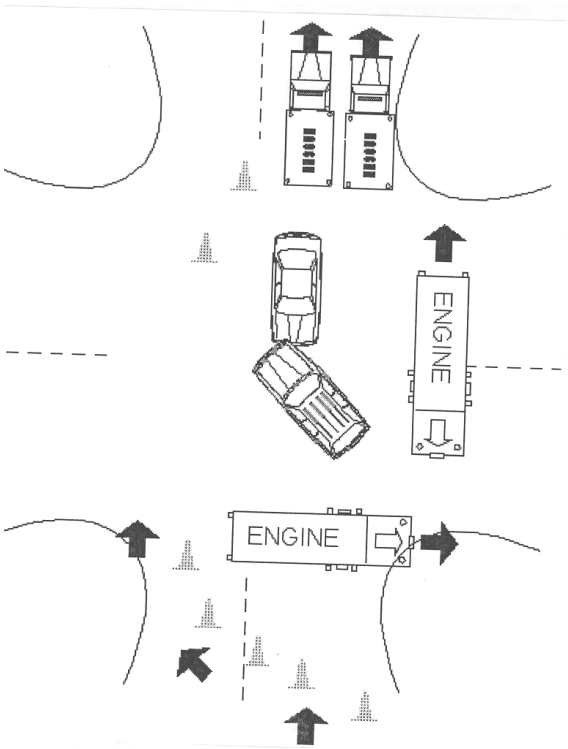


Figure 4
Intersection blocked with 2-engine response. Scene, engineer's panel, and patient loading areas protected.

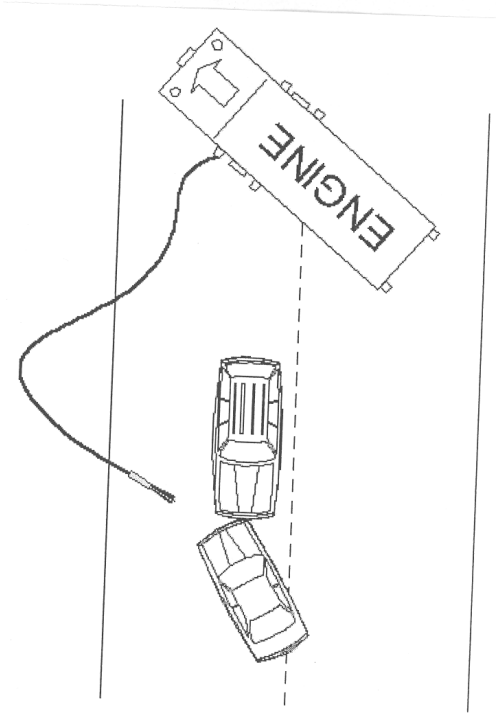


Figure 5
Single engine response with scene and engineer's panel protected.

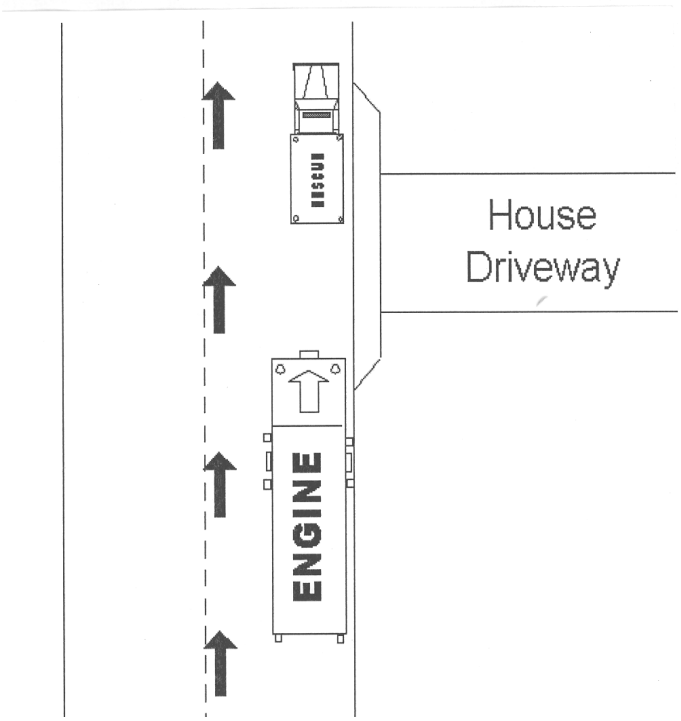


Figure 6
Routine EMS incident with patient loading area protected with the engine.

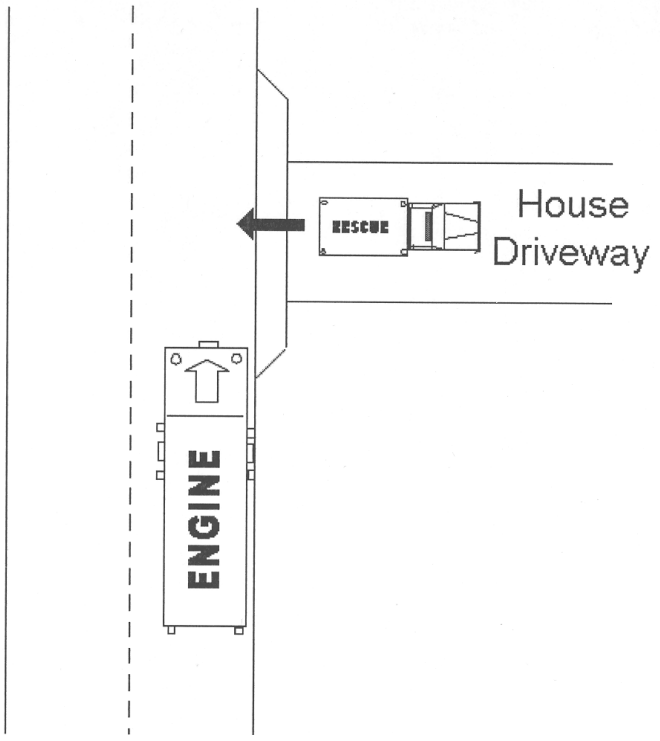


Figure 7
Routine EMS incident with patient loading area protected with the engine.