



Keeping you Knowledgeable, Safe, and in Compliance!

Ernest A. Emerson
Fire Protection Resource Library

A Volume From the Library

Road Hazards

Hazards on the road are fairly common and can range from bad weather and road conditions to poor roadway lighting and signage. However, the most dangerous thing found on the road is the average American driver. Whether the driver is distracted, sleepy, inexperienced, elderly, or under the influence of alcohol or drugs, they each pose an unpredictable threat to other drivers. Human error is the critical causative factor in 94 percent of traffic accidents, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's 2015 study.

Unfortunately, the drivers of emergency vehicles are not immune to the danger other drivers present. Too often,

there is not much you can do about such hazards, except to practice driving defensively. The EMS World article in the Additional Resources sidebar lists the basics, which can be applied to both EMS and fire apparatus: performing routine maintenance on the vehicle, don't assume other drivers will yield the right-of-way, and control your speed. Another key safety factor is seatbelts – too often, fire fighters are too full of adrenaline from answering a call to remember to buckle up.

Even after you have arrived at a roadway incident, focus on scene safety. Secondary collisions are often far more serious because fire fighters are no longer protected by seatbelts and the apparatus. Be prepared and stay safe!

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Additional Resources:

- [Traffic Safety Courses \(commission requirement\)](#)
- [EMS World Driving Tips](#)
- [IAFF Best Practices \(pdf\)](#)
- [Scene Safety](#)

Training Videos Listed below are some of the videos available from our lending library on this subject.

EMERGENCY VEHICLE RESPONSE SAFETY

AV06-2046 Length: 4:00:00 Format: DVD

This four hour course produced by VFIS is divided into four chapters. Chapter 1, Defining the Problem; Chapter 2, Changing Attitudes; Chapter 3, Components of an Emergency Vehicle Response Safety Program; and Chapter 4, Administrative and Operational Guidelines. (2003)

EMERGENCY VEHICLE ROLL-OVER PREVENTION

AV07-2143 Length: 30:00 Format: DVD

Nationwide the number of emergency service vehicle rollovers has skyrocketed in the past

few years. All emergency vehicles are subject to rollovers, but tankers, pumper tankers and ambulances are particularly vulnerable because of their high center of gravity. This DVD program discusses common rollover circumstances, best practices for maintaining vehicle control and an explanation of rollover conditions. (2004)

VEHICLE DRIVING OPERATIONS: PART 1-3

AV06-2037 Length: 1:30:00 Format: DVD

In 2003 more firefighters died in the line of duty while driving to and from calls than died from fighting fires. This three-part course presents studies on apparatus accidents, what methods to use to increase safety,

and recommended procedures and policies. (2006) [Copy 2](#)

VEHICLE OPERATIONS AND SCENE SAFETY

AV07-2069 Length: 30:00 Format: DVD

This FETN program is presented by the National Fallen Firefighter Foundation. It addresses the importance of safe driving for emergency vehicles; the need for driver training and qualifications; the consequences of unsafe driving; safe driving procedures, including a personal commitment to seat belt use; vehicle safety inspections and maintenance; and roadway scene safety issues. The course is intended to promote awareness of the issues and an appropriate attitude toward safety. (2007)