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## Standard Operating Guidelines

**SOG NO.:** KP-2-0034

**SOG TITLE:** HIGHWAY INCIDENT SAFETY

**ADOPTION DATE:** 01/07

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### **PURPOSE:**

- A. To provide incident responders with a uniform guide for safe operations at incidents occurring on the highway system.
- B. To serve as guideline for decision making and can be modified by the incident responders as necessary to address existing incident conditions.

### **POLICY:**

All Highway Incidents are under the direct supervision of the Law Enforcement agency having jurisdiction.

- A. It shall be the policy of the King of Prussia Volunteer Fire Company (KPVFC) to respond to and operate on all highway incidents in a safe manner.
- B. To utilize all safety equipment available to us to provide protection for emergency personnel as well as the public.
- C. To provide a safe environment on all highway incidents for emergency personnel to operate.

## PROCEDURES

### A. Response

1. Emergency responders need to operate safely, making every effort to minimize the risk of injury to themselves and those who use the highway system. Responders operating in the emergency mode need to operate warning devices and follow the guidelines specific to their standard operating procedures.
2. Response on access ramps shall be in the normal direction of travel, unless the incident commander on the scene can confirm that oncoming traffic has been stopped and no civilian vehicles will be encountered on the ramp.
3. Shoulder lanes will be used **ONLY** by emergency vehicles/apparatus. Emergency support vehicles are authorized to use the shoulder lanes only when directed or authorized to do so by the incident commander.
4. **Reflective vests assigned to apparatus should be worn on all highway/roadway incidents at all times.** If SCBA is utilized a safety vest are not required.

### B. Arrival

1. The first emergency responder arriving to the scene of any highway incident will assume the role of incident commander if in the absence of the law enforcement agency representative. The individual assuming that role is subject to change as additional responders arrive at the scene.
2. Once and representative of the Law Enforcement agency arrives, we will operate under their supervision utilizing a unified incident command system.
3. Standard practice will be to position response vehicles in such a manner as to ensure a safe work area. This may be difficult to accomplish at incidents on secondary and one-lane roads. Position emergency response vehicles in such a manner as to provide the safest area possible.

### C. Parking of Response Vehicles

1. Providing a safe incident scene for emergency responders is a priority at every emergency incident. However, consideration must be given to keeping as many traffic lanes open as possible. Except for those vehicles needed in the operation and those used as a shield for the incident scene, other response vehicles should be parked together ("staging area"). As a matter of routine, the parking of response vehicles should be on one side of the roadway. Parking should be on either the shoulder or median area, if one exists, but not both. Parking response vehicles completely out of available travel lanes greatly assists in the movement of traffic. If not needed to illuminate the scene, drivers should remember to turn vehicle headlights off when parked at incidents.
2. The proper spotting and placement of emergency apparatus is the joint responsibility of the driver and the KPFVC Officer-in-Charge (OIC). The proper positioning of emergency response vehicles at the scene of an incident assures other responding resources of easy access, a safe working area and helps to contribute to an effective overall operation. The safety of everyone on the scene is foremost while they are operating, both in emergency and non-emergency situations.

#### **D. On Scene Actions**

1. An incident safety zone shall be established, allowing fire and rescue units to position in close proximity of the incident. The responding fire apparatus should be placed some distance from the incident, making use of it as a safety shield blocking only those travel lanes necessary. In the event that a motorist enters the incident safety zone, the fire apparatus will act as barrier; and, in the unlikely event that the fire apparatus is moved upon impact, it will travel away from the incident safety zone.
2. Before exiting any emergency response vehicle at an incident, personnel should check to ensure that traffic has stopped to avoid the possibility of being struck by a passing vehicle. Personnel should remember to look down to ensure debris on the roadway will not become an obstacle, resulting in a personal injury.
3. Position apparatus to channel traffic away from an incident.

#### **F. Clearing Traffic Lanes**

1. When outside of a vehicle on a major roadway, both civilian and emergency responders are in an extremely dangerous environment. Therefore, it is imperative to take every precaution to protect all responders and those involved at incident scenes. Although positioning emergency response vehicles to serve as a shield for work areas is a prudent practice, we must remember that reducing and/or shutting down traffic lanes creates other problems and safety concerns. Therefore, it is critical when operational phases are completed that emergency response vehicles be repositioned to allow traffic to flow on as many open lanes as possible.
2. Remember that unnecessarily closing or keeping traffic lanes closed greatly increases the risk of a secondary incident occurring in the resulting traffic backup.
3. Keeping the safety of all personnel in mind, and coordinating the needs with other emergency services, the incident commander should begin to open any closed lanes as soon as practical.