



Solano County Fire Chiefs Association GUIDELINES

Guideline Name:	Traffic Incident Management
Number:	15
Revision / Reviewed Date:	May 15, 2019

I. Purpose

Establishes guidelines for operational procedures for District response to emergency calls occurring on roadways and freeways

Incident scene protection will take priority before any personnel engages in the incident. It shall be the policy of all personnel to position apparatus and other emergency vehicles at all incidents on roadways, highways and freeways in a manner that best protects the incident scene and the work area

Such positioning shall afford protection to fire personnel, law enforcement, medical workers, towing operators and the public from the hazards of working in or near moving traffic. Fire personnel may direct traffic for safety purposes

The position of blocking apparatus shall take into consideration all factors that limit sight distance of the approaching traffic including lighting conditions, road conditions, curves, bridges and over and under passes

II. Definitions

Block: positioning a fire apparatus in a lane or lanes of traffic creating a physical barrier between upstream traffic and the work area

Buffer Area: provides protection for traffic and workers

Downstream: the direction traffic is traveling away from the incident scene

Lane +1: This occurs when responders block the involved lane plus one additional lane to provide a protected lateral space for safety against moving traffic

Linear block: Apparatus shall block a minimum of one lane (linear block) obstructed by the involved vehicle(s)

Multi Lane block: In freeway zones that have more than 2 lanes in each direction, fire apparatus may block additional lanes of traffic to protect the work area (multi lane block)

Temporary Refuge Area (TRA): Area providing safety and protection from the elements of changing roadway conditions- area inside apparatus or area immediately shielded by the closest positioned apparatus

Temporary Traffic Control (TTC): measures implemented to move road users past or around the traffic incident to reduce the likelihood of secondary traffic crashes

Transition Area: moves traffic out of its normal path

Upstream: the direction traffic is traveling as the vehicles approach the incident scene



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Work Area: portion of roadway closed to road users that is set aside for workers, equipment and materials

III. Safety Concerns

- A. Assure incident scene safety before conducting operations
- B. Never trust approaching traffic
- C. Avoid turning your back to approaching traffic
- D. Always wear appropriate and required PPE
- E. When walking around apparatus, stop at the corner, check for on-coming traffic and proceed remaining as close to the rig as possible
- F. Personnel should constantly remain aware of traffic and shall exercise caution when operating at the scene
- G. Avoid exiting the vehicle on the traffic side, firefighters in crew cabs should move across the cab to exit on the protected side of the apparatus
- H. Always look before opening doors and stepping out of apparatus into any moving traffic areas
- I. Use extreme caution when retrieving equipment from upstream side of apparatus, post lookouts if necessary
- J. Whenever possible, work from the shoulder side of the incident and use the shoulder for staging and hose deployment if possible
- K. Clear the scene as soon as possible. Secondary collisions pose a significant threat
- L. Keep only those apparatus on the roadway that are needed for operations and traffic control
- M. Minimize personnel exposure on the roadway
- N. At least one person shall always face and be aware of on-coming traffic

IV. Procedure

- A. Wear appropriate PPE including High Visibility Vest (ANSI Class II retro-reflective)
 - 1. HVV not to be worn during direct firefighting operations
 - 2. HVV not to be worn if entanglement hazards exist
 - 3. HVV is the law, not an option



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- B. Personnel and victim safety are the top priorities
- C. Scene blocking maxim: "Take only what you need for only as long as you need it"
 - 1. Utilize progressive lane opening as incident de-escalates
- D. Establish Unified Command with Law Enforcement
 - 1. Communicate about scene safety needs
- E. On scene procedure
 - 1. Temporary Traffic Control (TTC) measures shall be established on all incidents on roadways, highways and freeways for the safety of personnel and civilians. The principle of "Time, Distance, and Shielding" shall be practiced:
 - a. Time: personnel shall minimize exposure time by mitigating all incidents in an efficient manner
 - b. Distance: protected "buffer areas" shall be established to allow distance from moving traffic. Relocation to a safe area away from moving traffic is optimal
 - c. Shielding: apparatus shall be positioned to best protect the incident scene. All civilians and personnel not directly engage in the operations of the incident shall retreat to a Temporary Refuge Area (TRA) (see Appendix A)
 - 2. Consider requesting additional apparatus for assistance in scene protection
- F. First Engine On-Scene
 - 1. The first arriving unit shall position the apparatus to protect the scene between approaching traffic and the incident scene if not already protected by other units. Initial apparatus placement should provide a work area protected from traffic approaching in at least one direction on roadways
 - 2. Apparatus shall be positioned upstream from the work area at a 30° to 45° angle to the traffic lane markers or curb in a manner intended to direct traffic around the incident scene regardless of the type of incident (see fig. 1 & 2). The apparatus will be positioned to allow a 2-3 foot space between the front corner of the vehicle and the traffic lane demarcation line. This longitudinal buffer area is to reduce encroachment into traffic lanes
 - 3. Blocking vehicle wheels shall be turned away from the activity area so that in case the vehicle is struck it will move away from any activity in that area



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4. Apparatus shall block a minimum of one lane (linear block) obstructed by the involved vehicle(s). In freeway zones that have more than 2 lanes in each direction, fire apparatus may block additional lanes of traffic to protect the work area (multi lane block)
5. First arriving engine should consider the need for extrication and provide work space for the extrication apparatus close to the accident scene

G. Second-Due Unit

1. The Second-Due apparatus shall be the Blocking Unit unless otherwise directed by the "IC". The Blocking Unit will position further upstream at a 30° to 45° angle to the traffic lane markers or curb in a manner directing traffic around the incident scene
2. Blocking apparatus will keep all emergency warning lights on during the incident. This provides a visible warning to the physical barrier that the apparatus presents
 - a. Subsequent arriving apparatus should determine if maintaining emergency lighting on scene would benefit or hinder scene visibility. With the power of modern strobe lights, several emergency vehicles exhibiting full lighting could overwhelm approaching drivers. This is especially important to remember under some atmospheric conditions such as fog or heavy misting rain. The goal is to illuminate and protect the scene but only to the extent that it helps, not hinders the safety and protection of the scene.
3. Additional TTC measures shall be the primary responsibility of the second-due company officer unless directed otherwise. The company officer will assess the incident and establish cone/flare patterns as necessary based on current and anticipated conditions. The company officer will coordinate with the "IC" when additional apparatus are needed to "block" in order to secure a safe work area

H. Use of Cones, Flares and other visual warning devices

1. Cones, flares and other visual warning devices only suggest the transition and tapering into other lanes, they do not provide physical scene protection. They provide advance warning for approaching vehicles and should be used when possible in conjunction with blocking
2. Cones at 15'-20' intervals upstream of the blocking apparatus will be placed when determined appropriate to provide adequate initial tapering (see fig.



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5). Cone interval distance shall be lengthened and additional cones shall be requested based on the following considerations:

- a. The need for physical markers
- b. Anticipated incident duration
- c. Weather/road conditions
- d. Traffic speed
- e. Other hazards

3. Personnel placing and/or retrieving cones, flares and other visual warning devices must do so while facing oncoming traffic. Placing flares or other lighting adjacent to and in combination with traffic cones for nighttime operations greatly enhances scene safety

I. Ambulance Units

1. Ambulance Units will position downstream within the (protected) work area with their loading doors angled away from traffic. In the event that multiple ambulances are requested, the "IC" will consider staging them away from the incident until they are needed

J. Additional Arriving Units:

1. All additional units will position apparatus as directed by the "IC". If unable to make contact with the "IC", the company officer will position the apparatus to provide for responder and civilian safety with the following considerations:

- a. Anticipated incident duration
- b. Weather/road conditions
- c. Traffic speed
- d. Other hazards

2. If conditions warrant the need, an additional apparatus should position to provide lateral protection of the work area (see Fig. 7)

3. When a protected work area is established by prior arriving apparatus, additional apparatus should park downstream within the protected area

K. Apparatus Repositioning

1. Care must be exercised to prevent obstructing any more of the roadway than is necessary to protect the accident scene. Once emergency



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operations are concluded and it is safe to do so, apparatus may be repositioned to free up adjacent lanes

2. Temporary Traffic Control (TTC) measures must continue while personnel are on or near roadways with moving traffic

L. Temporary Refuge Area (TRA)

1. All civilians and fire personnel not directly involved in the operations of the incident shall be directed to retreat to a Temporary Refuge Area (TRA) to ensure added safety and protection from the elements of changing roadway conditions. TRA(s) shall be in the area immediately shielded by the closest positioned apparatus (multiple bystanders/civilians on scene). When using a TRA, all persons shall remain together and continuously be accounted for

M. Fire Operations

1. Incident scene safety will be the priority before conducting fire suppression operations. First arriving Fire Apparatus must establish a physical barrier between the incident and oncoming traffic. Apparatus will be positioned upstream at a 30° to 45° angle to the traffic lane markers or curb in a manner intended to direct traffic around the incident scene
 - a. Exception: Apparatus may be positioned in the "block to the right" position opposite to the direction of traffic for the protection of the pump panel. Extreme caution shall be practiced as this will suggest oncoming traffic to divert in the opposite direction intended. If road conditions are determined unsafe, fire suppression operations shall not begin until Temporary Traffic Control (TTC) measures are established by a second arriving blocking unit or law enforcement

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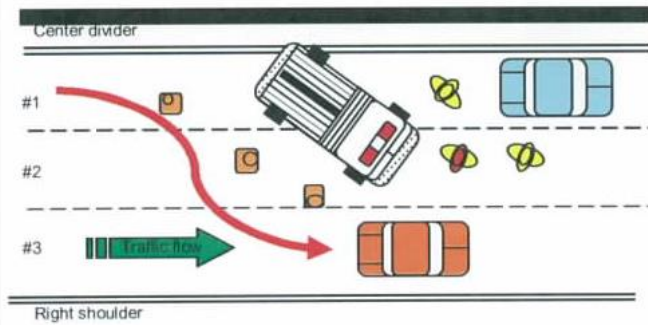


Fig. 1 – Eng. blocking to direct traffic to the outer lanes.

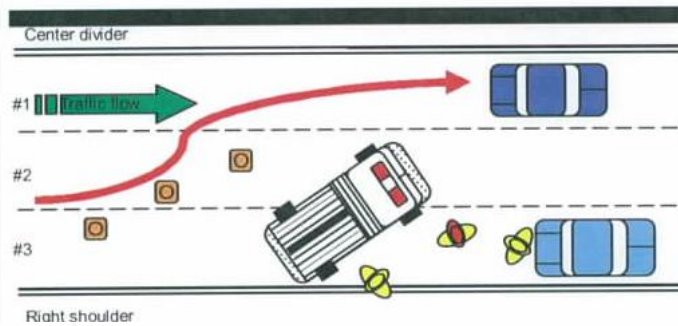


Fig. 2 – Eng. blocking to direct traffic to the inner lanes

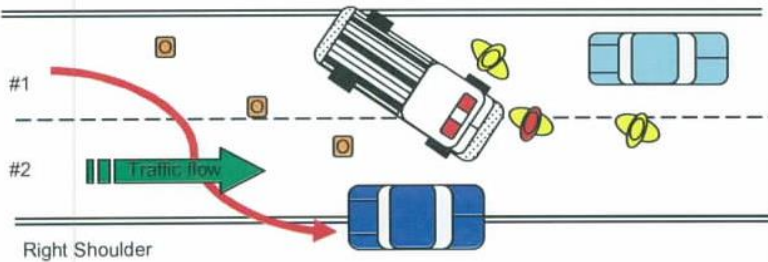


Fig.3 – 1st in Eng. takes the incident lane and a portion of the adjacent lane, allowing enough room for traffic to pass.

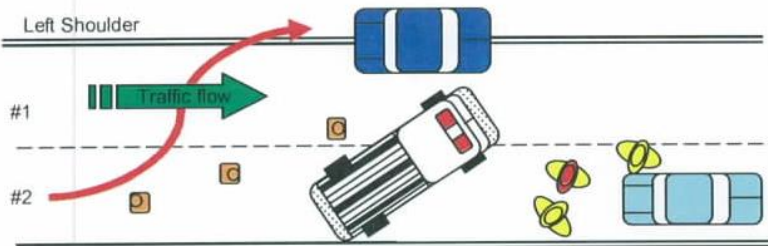


Fig.4 – 1st in Eng. takes the incident lane and a portion of the adjacent lane, allowing enough room for traffic to pass.

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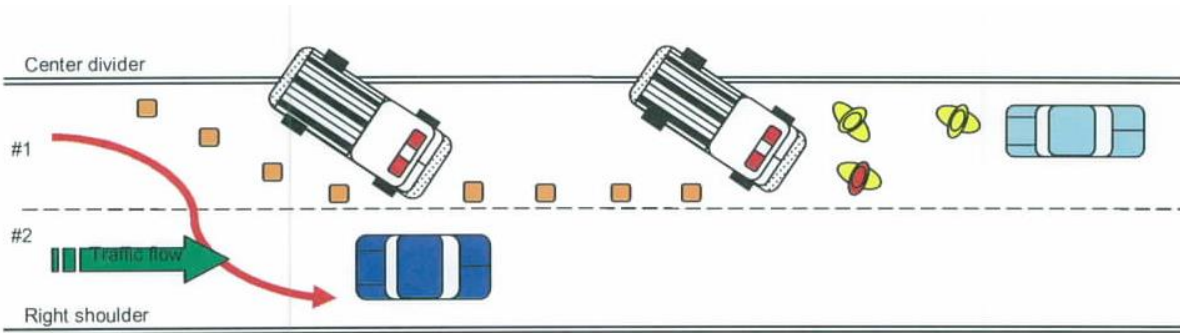


Fig 5- Blocking engine in place

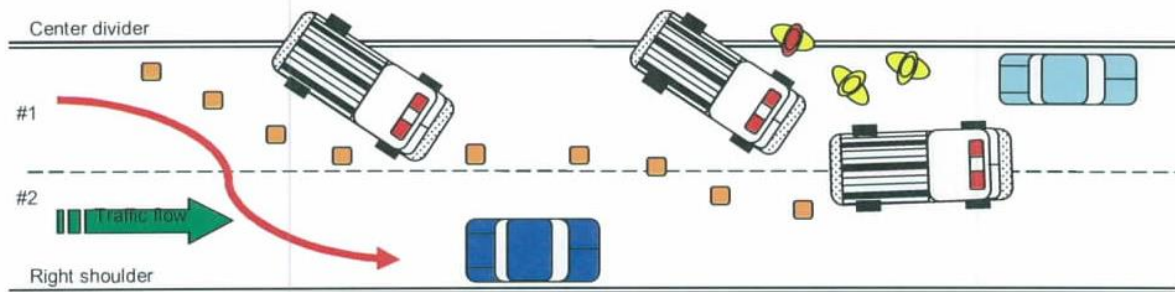
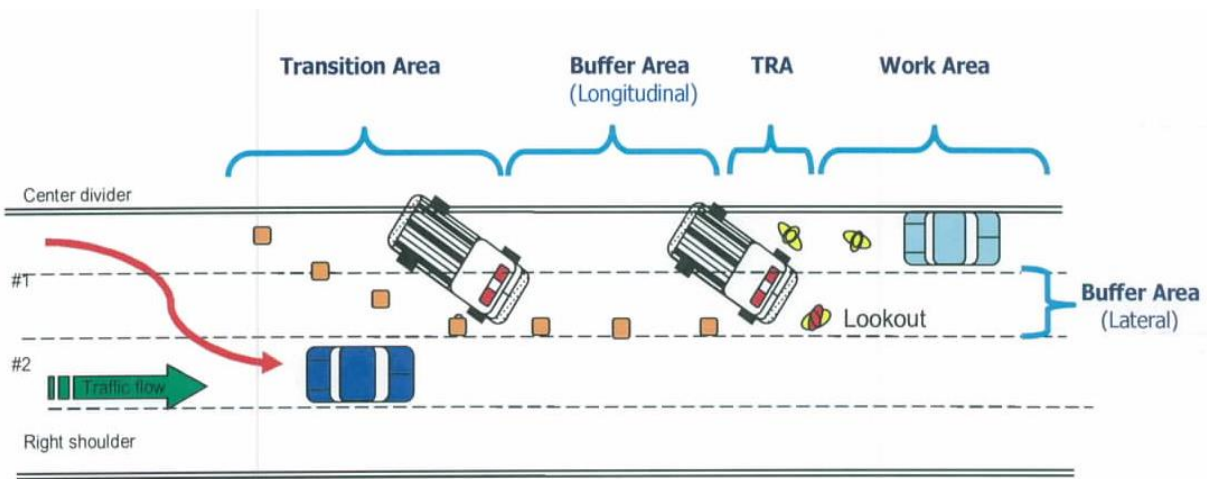


Fig 7- Additional blocking engine for lateral protection

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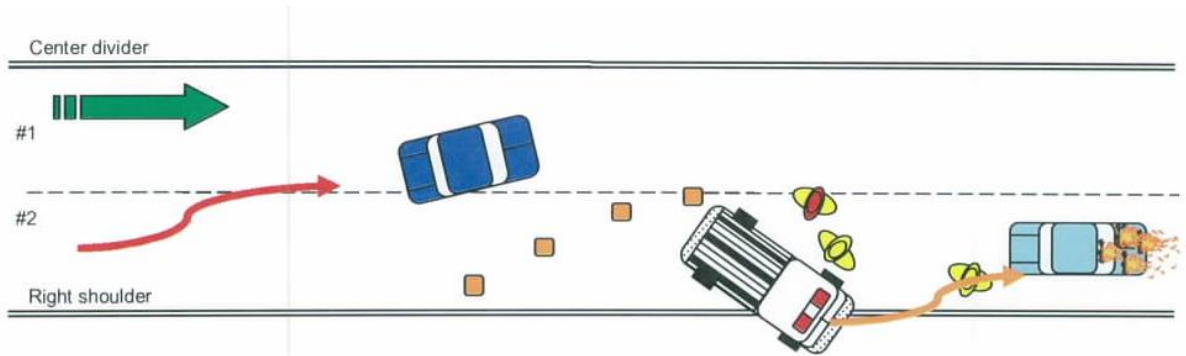


Fig 8- 1st due engine positioned to protect pump panel. Cones set to establish a Transition Area directing traffic in the direction around the incident.

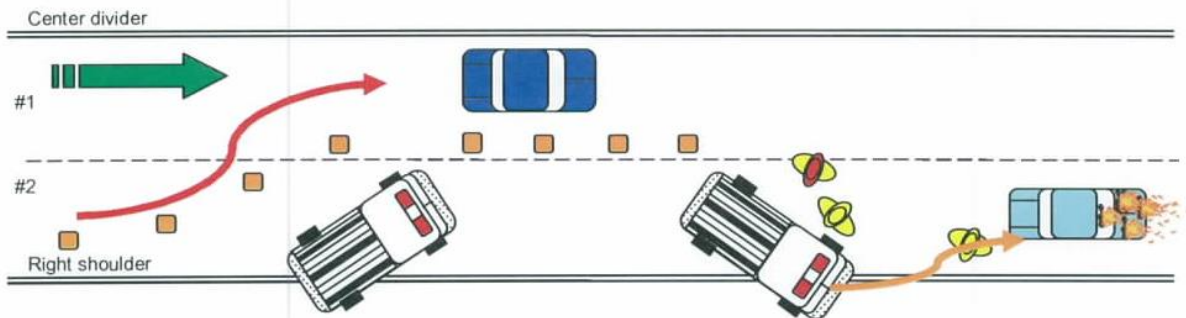


Fig 9- 1st due engine positioned to protect pump panel. Blocking engine positioned to direct traffic around vehicle fire.

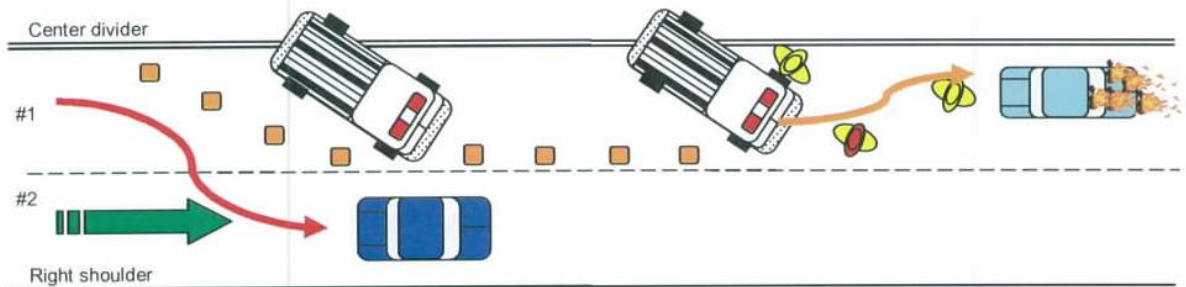


Fig 10- Engines positioned to direct traffic around vehicle fire