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Date: 5/5/2023

Title: Traffic Incident Management

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I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide information on the use of safety practices, traffic calming devices and operational deployment at incident scenes in and around the roadway.

II. Policy

This policy clearly defines the operational practices for Prince George County Fire and EMS. This procedure is designed to provide maximum protection and safety for personnel operating in or near moving vehicular traffic.

III. Definitions

- 1. Advanced Warning** - a temporary traffic control device (sign, road flare, cones, staff vehicle, DOT, PD) that advises approaching motorists to transition from normal driving status to that required by the temporary emergency traffic control measures ahead of them.
- 2. Block** - large apparatus, usually an engine, ladder truck, rescue (squad) positioned on an angle to the lanes of traffic creating a physical barrier between upstream traffic and the incident space.
- 3. Buffer Space** – The area between the merging taper and the incident space. This space provides a recovery area for errant vehicles.
- 4. Downstream** - the direction vehicles are moving as they travel away from the incident scene.
- 5. Heavy Apparatus** – Engines, Aerials, Tankers, and heavy rescue vehicles.

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6. **Incident Space** - the designated protected work area of a roadway within which emergency personnel provide services. This constitutes the area from the upstream block to the furthest downstream emergency scene vehicle.
 7. **Light Apparatus** – Support units, utility units, Jeep/Brush units, transport units, light rescue units.
 8. **Limited Access Highways** – A roadway system that can consist of multiple lanes, access ramps, and tolls designed to operate with less friction at even higher speeds and higher uninterrupted flow.
 9. **POV** – Privately Owned Vehicles (non department owned vehicles)
 10. **Primary Roads** - A roadway with two or more lanes that is intended to move large volumes of traffic at moderate to high speeds.
 11. **Right-Hand Block** – a vehicle blocking position where the passenger side of the vehicle is positioned to face oncoming or upstream traffic.
 12. **Secondary Roads** - A roadway supplementing a primary road, usually wide enough and suitable for two-way traffic at slow to moderate speeds.
 13. **Taper** - blend or causing to blend traffic gradually into fewer lanes of travel (Merging Taper) and to return motorist to their normal path (Downstream Taper).
 14. **Temporary Traffic Control (TTC)** - Utilizing Temporary Traffic Controls (TTC) at a Traffic Incident Management Area helps move road users safely and expeditiously past or around an incident, reduces the likelihood of secondary traffic crashes, and keeps motorists off the surrounding road system.
 15. **Upstream** - the direction vehicles are traveling from as they approach the incident scene.
 16. **Upstream Block** – typically the second arriving large apparatus positioned upstream of a working block.

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17. Working Block- typically the first arriving large apparatus positioned to create a physical barrier where equipment and personnel are utilized to mitigate the incident.

IV. Safety

1. Always maintain situational awareness of moving vehicles.
2. Always look before you move! Avoid turning your back to the traffic flow.
3. All responding emergency vehicles shall position on the incident side of the roadway.
4. Emergency vehicles shall not be positioned on the other side of traffic barriers such as jersey walls, fences, etc. If the Incident spans a divided highway appropriate resources should be requested to provide protection for both sides of the roadway.
5. Personnel arriving on fire apparatus should, whenever possible, exit and enter the apparatus from the protected work area, away from moving traffic.
6. Always look prior to opening doors and stepping out onto roadways.
7. Prior to exiting an emergency vehicle, all personnel shall don a PGFEMS issued American National Standards Institute (ANSI) compliant traffic vest anytime their assignment places them in areas of moving traffic. This includes incidents that require structural/extrication PPE. *Exception: Those personnel who are directly engaged in firefighting or extrication are not to don an ANSI compliant traffic vest or jacket. When fire and/or entanglement hazards have been mitigated personnel are required to don an ANSI compliant vest or jacket as soon as possible.*
8. Personnel shall wear helmets with chinstraps adjusted at all roadside incidents when practical.
9. Personnel who are engaged in extrication operations shall wear structural or extrication PPE.
10. The incident space shall be identified as soon as possible with traffic cones. Flares or strobes should be considered to enhance the effectiveness of cones.

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11. Temporary traffic control devices such as traffic cones, flares and strobe lights shall be deployed while facing oncoming traffic while allowing an escape from oncoming traffic.
12. No privately owned vehicles shall respond to a highway, limited access roadway, or traffic incident.
13. Light-duty apparatus (Brush units, support units, and responder units) should be limited in responding to limited access highways (I95 & I295). These units shall be positioned up-stream of the incident in the protected area when on scene.
14. Personnel shall not remain in the cab or stand in proximity of a blocking vehicle. When possible, personnel shall exit the blocking unit on the safe working side of the apparatus and move to the incident space immediately and report to the command post.

V. Roadway Incident Management

Incident Commanders (IC) shall consider the following primary objectives to assure a safe incident for emergency scene personnel, incident victims, and motorists:

1. Responder safety. Establish a protected incident space.
2. Provide emergency care and transportation of the sick or injured.
3. Restore normal traffic flow.
4. Early communications with other responding agencies is the key to obtaining resources in a timely manner and allowing for a safe and quick clearance.
5. The incident commander shall immediately request the appropriate VDOT resources when:
 - a. Roadway infrastructure is involved.
 - b. On Scene, resources are unable to adequately protect the incident space.
 - c. Traffic control devices and/ or detours are needed

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6. The IC shall perform a scene size up and request the appropriate resources to protect the scene and mitigate the incident.
 - a. Assure that the first arriving apparatus established a block to create a safe incident space.
 - b. Identify and communicate to all responding apparatus the location and lanes of travel involved in the incident. Lanes of travel shall be identified in numerical order beginning with the inside most lane and working out to the shoulder of the road.

Assure that all incident activities are performed within the protected incident space.



- a. EMS transport vehicles should be staged downstream of the incident and within the incident space. This allows for safer incident operations including patient loading and rapid egress from the scene while keeping the vehicles in a protected position.
- b. All ancillary vehicles (tow trucks, media etc.) should be staged downstream of EMS vehicles and within the incident space.

VI. Emergency Vehicle Operations

1. Position emergency vehicle in a manner that protects responders and patients.
2. The first arriving blocking apparatus should initiate a “right hand block” to protect the DPO and create a physical barrier between the incident and approaching traffic.

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3. Blocking apparatus should position with the greatest angle possible to the incident space to provide optimal protection.
4. Apparatus should attempt to block at least one additional traffic lane than what is already obstructed by the crashed vehicle.
5. At minimum one lane of travel shall be blocked when operating on a highway or limited access roadway.
6. When parking, the front wheels of all upstream emergency vehicles should be turned away from the incident.
7. Upstream blocks shall be established at a distance approximately 100-300 feet from the working block.
8. Blocking units shall remain in place until the last unit clears and order given by the IC.
9. EMS transport vehicles, staff vehicles, brush units, light duty vehicles, etc. shall be used as a primary block until large apparatus arrive on scene. Once larger vehicles arrive those vehicle(s) need to be repositioned within the protected incident space.
10. On limited access highways, a minimum of two blocking apparatus shall be utilized. The first arriving apparatus will be the working block and the second arriving apparatus will be an upstream block. Only heavy apparatus will be used for blocking.
11. On limited access roadways, road cones shall only be deployed downstream from the blocking apparatus. Cone placement shall begin at the furthest upstream blocking unit and continue through the incident space

VII. Primary & Secondary Roadways

- A. Primary and secondary roadways have many of the same risks associated with limited access roadways. However, additional potential risks are created due to factors such as limited line of sight for motorists, topography, and narrow lanes of travel.

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1. A blocking apparatus (heavy apparatus) shall be sent to all incidents occurring on primary and secondary roadways.
2. The primary assignment of the initial arriving blocking apparatus is to block the affected lane(s) and create a protected incident space.
3. Additional blocking units should be requested based on size-up.
4. The IC should initiate advanced warning both upstream and downstream of the incident as soon as resources allow.
5. A merging taper utilizing TTC devices such as traffic cones can be created upstream of the blocking unit on primary and secondary roads if the IC determines that it is safe to do so

I. Intersections, Bridges, & Roundabouts

- A. Incidents occurring in intersections present additional risks to responders due to vehicles approaching the incident space from multiple directions. It is important for the IC to identify all potential areas of incident space intrusion.
1. Emergency vehicles must be strategically positioned at incidents located in intersections to secure the incident space from approaching traffic in opposing directions.
 2. Blocks should be established in a systematic approach from highest to lowest identified risks as resources arrive.
 3. Consider vehicle speed, traffic volume, the location of the incident and anticipated personnel work areas when prioritizing blocking unit placement.
 4. Position police vehicles, fire staff vehicles, etc. to enhance the protection of the incident space located in intersections.

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- B. Responders must be aware of the additional risks associated with working on bridges or overpasses. These areas offer little or no safe havens or escape routes for responders.
1. All personnel working on bridges and overpasses must maintain a high level of situational awareness of unprotected edges and structural openings.
 2. The IC should consider blocking all lanes of approach when operating on bridges.
 3. Any incident that transcends opposite sides of an open span bridge shall be considered separate incidents and the appropriate resources shall be requested to handle as such. Personnel shall not attempt to cross bridge openings.
 4. Bridges will freeze faster in inclement weather than other road surfaces. Advanced warning and additional upstream blocking is of paramount importance when operating in these conditions.
 5. The IC should ensure contact is made with the bridge-master on incidents occurring on the Benjamin Harrison Bridge. The bridge master monitors Marine channel 68. The ECC can contact via phone if needed.
- C. Roundabouts typically produce low approaching vehicle speeds, however, signage, landscaping, etc. located in the center of roundabouts may decrease the motorist's ability to see emergency vehicles and responders.
1. The IC should consider initiating advanced warning, utilizing police vehicles at all roundabout entrances.

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