

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council****September 24, 2024**

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SUBJECT: OFFICER PROTECTION WHILE INVESTIGATING ACCIDENTS

The purpose of this Informal Report is to provide information on what strategies and/or tactics are being used by the police department to protect officers when investigating accidents.

One of the most dangerous things an officer can do is investigate a vehicular accident on the freeway or busy arterial road. Driver inattention and speed are the leading causes of secondary collisions and/or injuries. Even more concerning, impaired drivers create a significant risk to everyone's life, health, and safety on any accident scene in addition to driving on our city streets.

The protection of our officers is paramount and there are several preemptive strategies and/or tactics they can use to protect themselves while investigating accidents. Even though every accident scene is different, there are several resources available to ensure the safety of everyone involved.

When the first officer arrives on scene there are visual warnings to alert other drivers of the hazard.

- Red and blue emergency lights
- If time allows, officers can put out flares or cones

When a second or third officer arrives on the scene they can:

- Use red and blue emergency lights
- Put out flares or cones
- Create a buffer area and block traffic from behind
- If at night, use their flashlight to direct traffic

If an accident occurs on the freeway during the daytime/early evening the below resources can respond along with our officers:

- Fort Worth Police Department (AVE) arrow truck
- Tarrant County Courtesy patrol arrow truck

If an accident involves injuries the below resources can respond along with our officers:

- The Fire Department arrives with a large truck that can help provide a barrier while they are on the scene; they will stay as long as we need them
- Medstar Ambulance is a visual deterrent with its lighting

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If a major accident occurs requiring the freeway will be shut down:

- Multiple officers will arrive on the scene and block the freeway using emergency lights and flares
- The Fire Department will bring out their truck and use it as a barrier
- Medstar will respond to treat and transport the wounded
- Fort Worth Police Department AVEs arrow trucks could be used
- Tarrant County Courtesy Patrol arrow trucks could be used
- TxDot can bring out large vehicles to help block the freeway
- Tow trucks will sporadically arrive and remove vehicles and are a visual deterrent because of their lights and size

In addition to the above resources, the Fort Worth Police Department uses social media to warn drivers of accidents that will cause significant traffic delays or occur at high-traffic locations. By doing so, the local media then reshapes the Fort Worth Police Department social post and also reports that information in real time on television and the radio. Also, the Fort Worth Police Department utilizes the TxDot message boards on the freeways to warn drivers of a road blockage or accident location.

Although it is impossible to guarantee the safety of everyone on an accident scene, the Fort Worth Police and Fire Department use every available resource to minimize the inherent risk and danger associated with this type of call.

If you have any questions, please contact Executive Assistant Chief Robert Alldredge at (817) 392-4131.

David Cooke
City Manager