



# Quick Drill

Engineer's Corner  
QD 07-21

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## Aim

Firefighters and Fire Officers recognize how to avoid, trap, or mitigate errors that could result in an apparatus accident.

## References

International Association of Fire Chiefs. (2007). *Firefighter Near Miss Report* 07-0000728. retrieved March 26, 2007 from [www.firefighternearmiss.com](http://www.firefighternearmiss.com).

## Conducting the Drill

Review the following near miss report, discuss the ways in which the individuals involved could have avoided, trapped, or mitigated the human errors involved in this near miss incident (questions provide on page 2).

I was the officer on a three person engine company (officer, driver, and firefighter). The driver for the day was an acting/back-up driver with 20 + years in the dept. Our engine was responding to a (BLS) medical aid call (seizure). This was our 5th run so far that day.

Our engine was responding with lights, siren & air horn, southbound on a 3 lane arterial (one lane each direction with a center turn lane). This incident happened at an intersection. The cross traffic was also a 3 lane arterial. We had a red light. As we approached the intersection the driver slowed slightly, but not enough to control each lane as we passed it based on amount of traffic. On our right hand side there was a school bus preparing to turn left and go northbound. The bus was nosed into the intersection, it stopped for us. To the right of the bus was the normal traffic lane (east/west). Both the bus and the traffic lane to its right had green lights.

A vehicle in that right lane was traveling at normal arterial speed 30+ MPH. As we approached the intersection, I told the driver to "watch out" on the far side of the bus. Just as I said that, the driver let off the accelerator (now traveling approx. 15 MPH). The east/west vehicle traveled directly in front of our engine - having been hidden by the school bus. My driver performed an emergency stop (slammed on the brakes) and we stopped less than three (3) feet from the crossing vehicle. We came to a stop; the civilian vehicle came to a stop. No damaged occurred and we continued on to our alarm.

One factor was the layout of this intersection in relation to the next intersection farther down the road. This next intersection was an area where a diagonal street met the intersection. What this means is that there were two intersections within a short distance of one another. Both intersections were within 600-800 feet apart. The key piece here is that my driver's attention was split between the first intersection (with the bus) and the second intersection (driver was trying to look "down range" to forecast passing/maneuvering needs). This split attention took away from full concentration on the first intersection.

This incident did not result in damage to the apparatus or injury to the firefighters involved. However, the outcome could have been much different with severe injury to the firefighters and civilians involved as well as significant damage to both vehicles.

1. What errors were made in this near miss incident?
2. How could these errors have been avoided?
3. What actions would have trapped these errors?
4. The crew managed to mitigate the errors and avoid injury or damage to their apparatus, but what other mitigation actions might have been taken?
5. What can you (personally and as a crew) do to prevent an incident like this from occurring during response to emergency incidents?



Take a minute to visit [www.firefighternearmiss.com](http://www.firefighternearmiss.com) and examine at least one other near miss report related to apparatus operation (you can search the reports by type of event).

Members are strongly encouraged to report near miss incidents using the National Firefighter Near Miss Reporting System. This process takes only a few minutes (on-line form) and can have a significant positive impact on firefighter safety on both the local and national levels.

Please forward your feedback on this Quick Drill to [Battalion Chief Ed Hartin](#)