



National Fire Fighter Near-Miss Reporting System Reports Related to Driving

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10-691

Event Description

We were responding in our first out engine to a medical assignment in our first due area. While we were traveling down a hill that we travel on a routine basis, an ambulance pulled out in front of us. They stopped at the stop sign at the end of the side street and clearly saw us coming. They proceeded to pull out into our lane of travel endangering their lives and the lives of my crew on the engine company. There were two people in the ambulance and four people in the engine company. Due to the high skill level of the senior engineer, a collision was avoided. Good brakes on the truck contributed to avoiding the collision. If the truck had not stopped in time, a catastrophic collision would have occurred and lives may have been lost. The engine was not traveling at a high rate of speed, but due to the slope of the hill, it was difficult to slow our 45,000 pound engine down. Due to good training and good equipment, lives were saved and a collision was avoided.

Lessons Learned

The lessons learned from this event were always be on the lookout for people to pull out in front of you while responding to emergencies, and to always stay alert for other responding units. Another lesson is to always take care of your equipment and always be up to date on your driving skills. Always share past experiences with the newer firefighters so they will know what to do if this situation happens to them.

10-145

Event Description

We were dispatched in the early a.m. hours to assist a neighboring company on a barn fire. Arriving on scene, we were given the assignment of water supply for tender truck operations. We traveled approximately 1.5 miles to a local creek to dam it up and began drafting. We were able to draft sporadically, but we were having problems maintaining a productive flow due to equipment failure. After about two hours into the operation, we were given the command to discontinue operations and return to the station. We broke down our operations and began to travel home. While enroute to our station, we encountered icy conditions. We were traveling down a two lane roadway which was winding and approximately a 30 degree slope. The engineer encountered black ice and tried to keep control of the engine. The truck's front passenger side wheel left the roadway causing the driver to lose control. The truck flipped onto its driver's side spilling all of its hose and equipment into the roadway. There were five personnel on the truck at the time of the crash. Injuries were contained to one person attempting to disembark the truck. Radio communication was limited to poor signal strength in the low lying area. It took over one and a half hours to get assistance to us due to weather conditions.

Lessons Learned

Know changes in environment while on calls and change the route if necessary.

10-36

Event Description

An engine company blew through an intersection at a four-way light. They had the red signal, the pre-alerting system was working, and the intersection is blind on one corner. The engine blew the light at a high rate of speed, nearly hitting the ladder company who had stopped even though they had a green light.

Lessons Learned

Always stop at blind intersections.

10-224

Event Description

While responding to a structure fire, we had a small engine and a larger engine responding in tandem. The smaller engine turned on the wrong road and used a gravel road/pathway to get back onto the correct road. The larger engine followed onto the same route as the smaller engine. The dust from the gravel road made visibility very poor and this caused the larger engine to hit a big bump in the road, launching it into an intersection going too fast. The larger engine actually was airborne and came off the ground.

Lessons Learned

The driver learned to slow down and use proper following distances while responding. There were no injuries.

10-627

Event Description

Note: [] Brackets denote reviewer de-identification.

I had taken the department's [vehicle info omitted] 3/4 ton pick-up to the site of a Saturday fundraiser to get our fire safety house and return it to the station. Several things had happened to make me pushed for time for an appointment. As I was driving through the parking lot, I realized that I had not checked the lights on the trailer, so I called the volunteer who was following me in his POV. He advised me that the brake/turn lights were not functioning. As I pulled up to the lot exit onto the highway, I put the truck in park, set the parking brake and went back to check the wiring connector. I could find nothing obvious that would cause a problem and, while troubleshooting the problem, a bus turned into the driveway beside the tow vehicle. Because of the position of the trailer, the bus could not enter the parking lot. I hurriedly entered the cab, released the parking brake, and put the truck in drive. It would not move because the trailer brakes were now locked. Frustrated by being pushed for time, the waiting bus, and equipment issues, I exited the cab without putting the truck in park or setting the parking brake. I went back to the trailer connector (by this time I was thinking the problem was contact issues at the plug) and unplugged the connector. I plugged it back in and wiggled the connector to try and make contact. This action

successfully joined the contacts, which released the trailer brakes. The truck/trailer immediately began to roll forward. Luckily the truck was parked on level ground as opposed to a decline grade, so it was rolling very slowly. Had it rolled forward quickly, I could easily have been struck and over-run by the trailer, or it could have rolled into the path of oncoming traffic on the rural highway.

Lessons Learned

We should revise SOP/SOG's with a specific, written check-off sheet to be completed after hitching to a tow vehicle, and prior to moving.