

SAFETY BULLETIN

Ensure your Team is Prepared!

Defensive Driving

FOCUS: Too many firefighters and civilians are injured or killed each year as the result of vehicle accidents involving firefighters. We must use the same level of safety emphasis when driving as when fighting fires. Also, more criminal charges are being filed against firefighters than in the past due to their driving errors.

CHALLENGE

Of the various driving tasks firefighters perform, traveling through intersections while driving Code 3 continues to be one of the most dangerous. Defensive driving techniques must be practiced to anticipate the errors made by other drivers on the roads we share if we are to get there safely. These defensive techniques should anticipate the common driver mistakes we make on a routine basis. Factors in the equation should include time of day, road, weather and traffic conditions as well as our familiarity with the equipment we are driving!

DISCUSSION

- Have you had a near miss or crash caused by the actions of another driver?
- Describe what happened. In hindsight, could you have avoided the crash?
- What defensive driving techniques do you practice on a regular basis?
- How do we transfer this knowledge to less experienced drivers?
- How can we better educate the public regarding the appropriate actions to take when emergency vehicles are approaching?
- What affect do you think lights and sirens have on the common driver?
- How important is the driver's experience when employing defensive driving tactics?
- What suggestions do you have to improve the defensive driving portions of our training programs?

The greatest asset of the fire service is our people; protect them!