



## Resources for Public Education on Safe Driving Practices at Emergency Response Scenes

Every day across America, distracted and uninformed drivers pose a major threat to the safety and wellbeing of first responders who risk their own lives on roads and highways to assist those involved in traffic incidents.

Every year, an average of 5 firefighters, 12 law enforcement officers, and more than 60 employees of state departments of transportation are struck and killed while working roadway incidents.<sup>1</sup> The number of near misses and injuries is far higher, but unknown. Vehicle-related incidents are the second leading cause of firefighter deaths<sup>2</sup> and the number one cause of law enforcement officer deaths<sup>3</sup>.

So far in 2017<sup>4</sup>, 38 law enforcement officers have died in traffic-related incidents and 9 firefighters/EMS personnel have died by being struck by a vehicle while on duty. Another 3 deaths occurred when fire personnel were off duty but stopped to help along a roadway.

The traveling public is a vital partner in the effort to keep first responders safe by properly passing emergency scenes and giving roadway responders room to work. When the public is informed about and compliant with laws like Slow Down Move Over, refrains from distracted driving, and practices driving habits that enable them to safely pass emergency scenes on the roadway, first responders and the motoring public are both safer. To reach the goal of a fully-educated and full-compliant public, the nonprofit Cumberland Valley Volunteer Firemen's Association has released new educational resources available for free at [ResponderSafety.com/PIO](http://ResponderSafety.com/PIO). Fire departments and community safety partners are encouraged to use these materials, including PSAs and talking points, to help the public understand their legal<sup>5</sup> and moral responsibility to change lanes and slow down when approaching a stationary emergency response vehicle on the roadway, avoid distracted driving, and exercise caution when passing emergency scenes. The available resources can be easily customized by the department and tailored to each jurisdiction's applicable statutes.

<sup>1</sup> Source: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/publicroads/14julaug/05.cfm>

<sup>2</sup> Source: <http://www.nfpa.org/~media/files/news-and-research/fire-statistics/fire-service/osfff.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Source: <http://www.nleomf.org/facts/officer-fatalities-data/causes.html>

<sup>4</sup> As of 9/14 for fire statistic <https://apps.usfa.fema.gov/firefighter-fatalities/fatalityData/incidentDataReport?deathYear=2017> and 9/25 for law enforcement statistic <http://www.nleomf.org/facts/officer-fatalities-data/>

<sup>5</sup> All 50 states have a Move Over Slow Down law on the books.