



KY Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) Program

Kentucky Haz Alert

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Emergency Responders Struck and Killed During Incident Response

Case 1: A 49-year-old male tow truck driver was transporting a vehicle at night when he noticed that the load felt strange. He proceeded to pull to the side of the highway near a guardrail and check the vehicle securement. He was tightening the winches at the rear driver side of the truck, when a box truck operated by an intoxicated driver crossed the white line, striking the worker and killing him.

Case 2: A 52-year-old male emergency roadside technician (ERT) was called by local authorities to assist a semi that was stalled in the narrow emergency lane of a bridge. While the ERT was assisting the semi, a single-unit truck crashed into the emergency work zone, striking the

ERT, and causing him to fall 75-80 feet to his death off the bridge.

Case 3: A 53-year-old environmental cleanup company worker was called by a towing company to assist in incident management after a tractor-trailer flipped on the interstate. Safe perimeters were set up in the area of the incident. A box truck traveling in the same direction in the open high-speed lane approached a slower-moving pickup truck. The box truck tried to swerve to avoid impact, hit the pickup truck and spun into the marked-off emergency work zone, striking and killing the worker.

To Prevent Worker Injuries,

Employers should:

- Develop a safety training policy that requires annual safety training of incident management responders.
- Perform routine safety vehicle inspections to ensure that they are in proper, safe working condition.

Employees should:

- Wear appropriate high-visibility vests when working along roadways.
- Utilize proper traffic control devices that warn approaching motorists of emergency incidents.
- Exit a vehicle from the side that is away from the traffic lanes.

EMPLOYERS SHOULD DEVELOP A SAFETY TRAINING POLICY THAT REQUIRES ANNUAL SAFETY TRAINING OF INCIDENT MANAGEMENT RESPONDERS

Currently, not all emergency responders are required to have proper safety training. Employers should ensure that their employees are receiving up-to-date annual training on safety procedures. Safety procedures should emphasize best practices that keep workers safe while working emergencies in or near traffic zones.

EMPLOYERS SHOULD PERFORM ROUTINE SAFETY VEHICLE INSPECTIONS TO ENSURE THAT THAT THEY ARE IN PROPER, SAFE WORKING CONDITION

Vehicles and equipment should be inspected before responding to any incident. A safety checklist should be kept to ensure that the vehicle has all safety equipment on board. A pre-trip inspection should be conducted to check that the equipment and vehicle are in safe working order. A routine check for safety issues before beginning a job will help reduce the risk of injury.

EMPLOYEES SHOULD WEAR APPROPRIATE HIGH VISIBILITY VESTS WHEN WORKING ALONG ROADWAYS

Vests should be worn that are in accordance with ANSI/ISEA 107/207* guidelines¹. The Federal Highway Administration says that high-visibility vests should be replaced when they become faded, torn, dirty, soiled, worn, or defaced, or if they are no longer visible at 1,000 feet, day or night². Safety vests should be worn at all times, especially when working alongside a roadway.

EMPLOYEES SHOULD UTILIZE PROPER TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES THAT WARN APPROACHING MOTORISTS OF EMERGENCY INCIDENTS

Proper warning cones and other traffic control devices should be readily available and deployed anytime that a job is in or around a roadway. Workers should establish a safe work space prior to assisting the vehicle in need. Responders should face traffic at all times when placing and retrieving traffic control devices³. Truck emergency lights should also be engaged to help warn approaching motorists.

EMPLOYEES SHOULD EXIT A VEHICLE FROM THE SIDE THAT IS AWAY FROM THE TRAFFIC LANES

The worker should take caution by exiting the vehicle from the side that is opposite the flow of traffic. Emergency lane widths vary, often times leaving little space between the service vehicle and the approaching motorists. Exiting the vehicle from the side opposite of the traffic lanes will help reduce the risk of serious injury or death.

For more information, contact:

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References:

1. <http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/wz/resources/policy.htm>
2. <http://www.fs.fed.us/t-d/pubs/htmlpubs/htm12512818/page02.htm>
3. http://www.njsfac.org/downloads/NJ_Highway_Incident_Traffic_Safety_Guidelines.pdf

*ANSI/ISEA 107/207: American National Standard for High-Visibility Safety Apparel and Headwear

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