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The Emergency Responder Safety Institute (ERSI), a committee of the Cumberland Valley Volunteer Firemen's Association (CVVFA), reports that vehicles struck and killed 44 emergency responders who were working various types of roadway incidents in 2019.

Roads and highways have become one of the most dangerous places to work for personnel who respond to all kinds of incidents, including motor vehicle crashes, fires, medical emergencies, disabled vehicles, law enforcement activities, and other unplanned events that cause injuries, property damage, and/or traffic delays. The personnel most often involved with these incidents include firefighters, law enforcement officers, emergency medical technicians, tow truck operators, mobile mechanics, and safety service patrol operators. We refer to them collectively as "emergency responders" in this report.

An analysis of the 44 fatalities in 2019 identified the following summary information:

- **18 Law enforcement officers were struck and killed in 2019.** One of those officers was off duty when he stopped to assist a motorist with a disabled vehicle. The other 17 cases were line-of-duty deaths. Law enforcement officers killed accounted for 41% of all emergency responder struck-by-vehicle fatalities in 2019.
 - 11 officers (28%) were struck and killed while conducting traffic stops or involved with some other law enforcement activity.
 - 5 officers (11%) were struck and killed while working motor vehicle crash scenes.
 - 2 officers (5%) were killed while assisting motorists with disabled vehicles.
- **14 Tow truck operators and 3 mobile mechanics were struck and killed in 2019.** These 17 fatalities accounted for 27% of emergency responder all struck-by-vehicle fatalities in 2019.
 - 12 tow operators and 3 mobile mechanics (34%) were struck and killed while assisting disabled vehicles along roads and highways.
 - One tow operator (2%) was struck and killed while assisting police with a vehicle involved in a traffic stop.
 - One tow operator (2%) was struck and killed at the scene of a motor vehicle crash.
- **9 Fire/EMS personnel were struck and killed in 2019.** These 9 fatalities accounted for 20% of all emergency responders struck-by-vehicle fatalities in



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2019. Two Fire/EMS personnel were off duty when they were struck at motor vehicle crash scenes. The other 7 fatalities were line-of-duty deaths.

- 6 Fire/EMS personnel (14%) were struck and killed at motor vehicle crash scenes.
- 2 firefighters were struck and killed at fire scenes.
- 1 EMT was struck and killed while working an EMS standby assignment at a racetrack.
- **There were no reported fatalities of safety service patrol operators in 2019.**

It's important to point out that there are dozens more struck-by-vehicle incidents each year that cause serious injuries to emergency responders, including career-ending, disabling injuries like amputations, head trauma, and back injuries. There are also numerous property damage incidents that significantly damage or destroy expensive emergency vehicles that must then be taken out of service, making them unavailable to meet the community's needs.

The ERSI recommends the following action items to reduce the number of struck-by-vehicle fatalities:

1. All responder agencies should ensure that all responders are **trained annually** on the hazards of roadway incident operations and the strategies and tactics that protect personnel operating at incident scenes. At a minimum, all responders should complete the basic training outlined in the National Traffic Incident Management & Responder Safety program available for free in each state and online from the Federal Highway Administration and the Responder Safety Learning Network (www.rsln.org). Fire departments should strive to comply with "Chapter 9 – Traffic Incident Management" of *NFPA 1500: Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety, Health, and Wellness Program* from the National Fire Protection Association. All personnel who are responsible for establishing and maintaining temporary traffic controls at incident scenes should strive to comply with the provisions of *NFPA 1091: Standard for Traffic Incident Management Personnel Professional Qualifications*.
2. All responder agencies should **communicate, collaborate, and cooperate** with other responding agencies in their region. Joint training for multi-discipline personnel is encouraged on at least an annual basis and preferably more frequently. All agencies should participate in regular Traffic Incident Management Committee meetings on a local or regional basis.



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3. All responder agencies should strive to provide the most **effective temporary traffic controls** and advance warning in the earliest stages of all incidents using available emergency vehicles, emergency warning lights, and temporary traffic control devices as outlined in training and local procedures.
4. All responder agencies should provide their personnel with **appropriate personal protective equipment** including uniforms, high visibility apparel, footwear, and head protection suitable for the task at hand. Departments should require personnel to wear high-visibility garments whenever they are exposed to moving traffic.
5. All agencies should **educate motorists** about “Move Over” laws, which are now in place in all states, and the proper way for drivers to react to emergency vehicles either traveling to or working at emergency scenes. Free public education materials are available at www.respondersafety.com/PIO
6. All agencies and states should **record, report, and track struck-by-vehicle incidents** involving emergency responders on a quarterly or more frequent basis.

This report was complied by Jack Sullivan (CSP, CFP), Director of Training for the Emergency Responder Safety Institute (www.respondersafety.com), a committee of the Cumberland Valley Volunteer Firemen's Association (www.cvvfa.org). The ERSI serves as an informal advisory panel of public safety leaders committed to reducing deaths and injuries to America's emergency responders. Members of the Institute, all highly influential and experts in their fields, are personally dedicated to the safety of the men and women who respond to emergencies on or along our nation's streets, roads, and highways. Members of the Institute include firefighters, fire officers, emergency medical technicians, law enforcement officers, tow operators, safety service patrol personnel, trainers, writers, managers, government officials, technical experts, and leaders who bring meaningful change through their individual efforts and collective influence.



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