

VEHICLE ROLLOVERS FIRE/EMS

OBJECTIVES

- Understand which emergency vehicles are most likely to rollover
- Understand the predominant circumstances involving rollover accidents
- Understand how emergency vehicle drivers can prevent rollover accidents

The frequency of rollovers involving emergency vehicles is increasing at an alarming rate. Not only is it a concern in Utah, but it has become a national concern.

The facts are alarming:

- Many rollovers do not involve another vehicle (single vehicle accidents)
- Most are attributed to emergency vehicle driver error
- Nearly all emergency vehicle rollover accidents are preventable
- Employees and volunteers die in rollover accidents annually

Vehicles most likely to be involved in a rollover accident include:

- Tankers/Pumper Tankers (1,000 gallons or more)
- Ambulances
- Aerial Devices

Predominant scenarios include:

- Too much speed when entering a turn or curve (particularly left to right corners)
- Right side tires leave the paved surface and sink in soft shoulder
- Right side tires leave the paved surface, and the driver improperly attempts to bring the vehicle back onto the paved surface (overcorrecting)

The best way to avoid this problem is to understand why it occurs. Some common factors that contribute to emergency vehicle rollovers are:

- Driving too fast!
- The driver does not understand the physical dynamics involved with operating heavy vehicles with a high center of gravity. When combined with high speed, these factors can easily cause excessive body roll, leading to rollover.
- The vehicle takes up most of the normal lane width, leaving very little room for navigational changes within the lanes of travel- particularly on secondary and rural roads.

- Lack of emergency vehicle driver training.
- Inadequate or poor enforcement of existing policies.

PREVENTATIVE PRACTICES

- Constantly enforce and reinforce county or department SOP with respect to safe driving.
- Constantly reinforce to all emergency vehicle operators the need to slow down and keep both their emotions and speed of their vehicle under control. You cannot help the public if you become a casualty enroute.
- Provide regular training on emergency vehicle safe driving practices; particularly measures to prevent rollovers.
- Prior to driving, require all drivers to successfully demonstrate their proficiency operating each piece of equipment and annually thereafter.

SAFE DRIVING POINTERS

The following pointers will increase your ability to maintain control of an emergency vehicle should it run off the road surface.

- Take your foot off the accelerator and allow the vehicle to slow down gradually.
- Do not apply full brakes. Use soft application of the brakes, natural decelerations and downshifting to bring the vehicle to a safe speed.
- Under soft shoulder conditions tap the accelerator to help maintain control while slowing.
- Once the vehicle has been reduced to a safe speed, gently steer the vehicle back onto the road surface.

Things not to do:

- Do not attempt to steer back onto the road surface at full speed or under acceleration.
- Do not make any sudden or drastic steering movements.
- Do not apply full braking.
- Do not attempt to accelerate up and over the surface dropoff.

POLICY

Discuss all county policies relating to safe driving.

CLOSING

- *Encourage discussion about the presentation and the departments driving policies. Remind employees that the decision to drive safe or unsafe is a personal choice and that improper driving could have personal and professional consequences, e.g., injury, litigation, and disciplinary action.*