

# Sample General Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**CONTACT:** [Name, Phone Number, E-mail Address]

***Note: Before filling in the names of the organization and organization spokesperson, you must contact them for permission to use their names in this press release. Also, you must get their approval for the language of their quotations, and any changes or additions they may require. This press release is meant to be used by agencies conducting safe, quick clearance in accordance with their state and/or local laws.***

“Last year, [insert local incident responders killed #] officers, firefighters, EMTs, and tow truck drivers were struck by a vehicle and killed and [insert local incident responders injured #] were injured when responding to a traffic-related incident in [insert Community/County name],” said [insert Law Enforcement Agency Representative name].

One of the most dangerous parts of a responder’s job is stepping out on the side of the road, whether it is to assist a motorist, a traffic stop, or to investigate a crash. Across the United States in 2019, 18 law enforcement officers, 9 fire/EMS, 14 tow operators and 3 mobile mechanics were struck by a vehicle and died.<sup>1</sup> On average, every year 20,000 first responders are injured in the U.S. while responding to traffic incidents.<sup>2</sup>

Performing safe, quick clearance of traffic incidents increases the safety of responders by minimizing their exposure to passing traffic, reducing the probability of secondary crashes, and reducing overall congestion levels and delay.<sup>3</sup> It is necessary so that traffic flow may be restored to pre-incident levels as safely and quickly as possible, limiting the disruption to the quality of life and contributing to public health by allowing drivers to arrive safely.

Safe, quick clearance also benefits our community. Travel congestion and the resulting delayed travel times greatly affects the quality of life in our communities by causing late arrivals to work or meetings, daycare drop offs or pickups, doctor’s appointments, flights, interviews, and a host of other important events.<sup>4</sup>

33,654 fatal motor vehicle crashes occurred during 2018 in the U.S., and as a result, a total of 36,560 lives were lost.<sup>5</sup> When a crash occurs, the likelihood of a secondary crash increases exponentially, which in turn increases the risk to motorists and responder lives, as well as making it more difficult for responders to arrive and depart a scene.<sup>6</sup> Roadway traffic incidents come at a financial cost as well. The annual economic cost of motor vehicle crashes in the U.S. is estimated to be nearly \$242 billion. That equates to \$77.4 billion in lost workplace and household productivity; \$76.1 billion in property damage costs; \$23.4 billion in present and future medical costs; and \$65.1 billion being other costs.<sup>7</sup> Each person living in the U.S. essentially pays a \$784 “crash tax” annually.<sup>8</sup>

“We urge you to move over and/or reduce your vehicle’s speed when approaching a scene where incident responders are present. Violating **[insert state]**’s move over laws can be costly, with fines up to **[insert maximum fine amount]**.”

For information on **[insert your state’s name]** move over laws, **[insert link to your state’s Move Over law]**.

Sources:

- <sup>1</sup> ResponderSafety.com, “2019 Emergency Responder Struck-by-Vehicle Fatalities.” [https://d35c9cxt8mg8m.cloudfront.net/Downloads/04e633ac-9666-48d6-9aee-0ba196f4850a/10/2019\\_12\\_31\\_Responder-Struck-By-Fatalities\\_Year-End-Totals.pdf?response-content-disposition=attachment](https://d35c9cxt8mg8m.cloudfront.net/Downloads/04e633ac-9666-48d6-9aee-0ba196f4850a/10/2019_12_31_Responder-Struck-By-Fatalities_Year-End-Totals.pdf?response-content-disposition=attachment) (Accessed on January 8, 2020.)
- <sup>2</sup> Public Resources,” Arizona Traffic Incident Management. <https://tim.az.gov/node/4700>
- <sup>3</sup> Lance E. Dougald, et al., *Traffic Incident Management Quick Clearance Guidance and Implications*, (Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT): Virginia Transportation Research Council, February 2016), 1.
- <sup>4</sup> Kalle Culotta, et al., “Does Travel Time Reliability Matter?”(FHWA-HOP-19-062), (Washington, D.C.: October 2019), 4. <https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/fhwahop19062/fhwahop19062.pdf>
- <sup>5</sup> “Fatality Facts 2018,” Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) – Highway Loss Data Institute (HLDI). <https://www.iihs.org/topics/fatality-statistics/detail/state-by-state>
- <sup>6</sup> Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Highway Administration Focus States Initiative: Traffic Incident Management Performance Measures Final Report. Traffic Incident Management Performance Measurement Presentation. <https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/fhwahop10010/presentation.htm> (Accessed on January 21, 2020.)
- <sup>7</sup> Advocates for Highway & Auto Safety, *17<sup>th</sup> Annual Roadmap of State Highway Safety Law*, (Accessed on January 24, 2020.) <https://saferoads.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Advocates-for-Highway-and-Auto-Safety-2020-Roadmap-of-State-Highway-Safety-Laws.pdf>
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid Advocates for Highway & Auto Safety.