

SECTION

3

# SUPPORT UTILITY RESPONDING TO AN INCIDENT



Los Angeles Fire Department  
Support Service Volunteer Unit

August 2017

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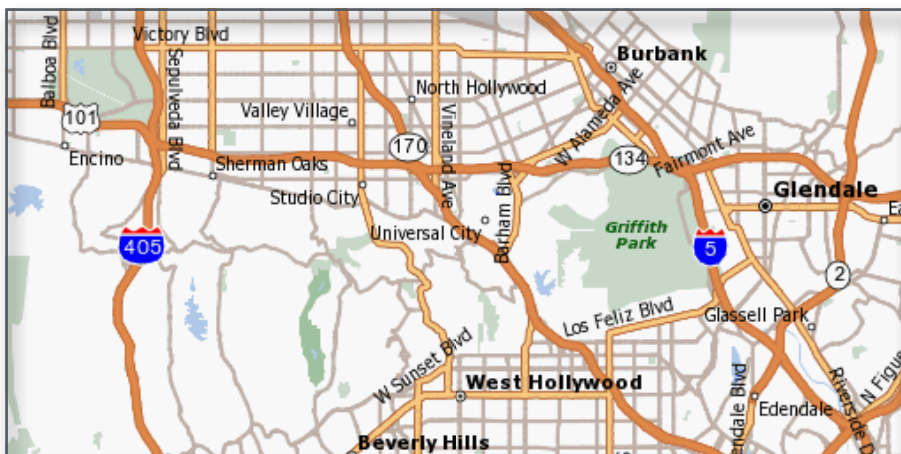
## Section 3 Responding to the Incident



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I remember a call we had in our first couple of years. We were training and had all three rehab utilities up at the training center. A brush fire started in Cypress Park just North of where we were. After awhile, we could tell this was going to be a stubborn fire and would take awhile to get a knock down. So we decided to go over to Supply and Maintenance and stand-by. More time goes by, so we called the Floor Captain at OCD and told them that we were standing by at the Shops. I decided to send two of the rehab utilities to “standby in the area” (around the corner). The Floor Captain could not get the IC to make up their mind to dispatch the unit. Finally the IC told the Floor Captain to send the Rehab Utilities. And before I hung up... Rehab 1 and Rehab 60 went on scene with OCD. The Floor Captain commented, “You guys are fast!” Laughing out loud, that was the fastest response time we ever had.



## Know Where You're Going

Get the incident location. Find it. Mark it.

Plan the best route to get there and find it in a map book or on the computer/cell phone using Google or Bing maps. Look at the major intersections that you will pass and look at the streets and intersection that you will go through. If you miss the street. Plan a second route if the street is closed or blocked by apparatus.

### Traffic Routes

Select the best route for safe travel. This may not be the shortest route. You should avoid schools, construction sites, and railroad crossings. Study the map before leaving the station and select alternate routes around the affected area if detours or road closures affect your travel. You may want to have a freeway route and surface street route depending upon traffic and the time of day.

**Remember** that traffic may backup and an alternate route may prevent you from being stuck in a traffic jam. Know the streets past your destination so you will know if you missed the street you are looking for.

### TIP

If you have a second volunteer, they should act as the navigator. Keeping track of where you are and what is coming up. They can check cell phone alerts for changes in traffic and have the Mapbook open to the exact location you are traveling in case the Incident Commander decides to have you report to another location.



There are many driving conditions that will affect how you drive and the routes that you take.

## Driving Conditions

### Safe Driving

- ◆ When driving, you must recognize and respond to changes in weather and road conditions. Adjust your speed to allow for decreased visibility at night, in fog and for poor road handling in rain conditions.
- ◆ Maintain a safe driving distance between the vehicle in front of you.
- ◆ Turn on your headlights to increase visibility. Headlights should be on whenever the Support Utility is moving. This may help people see your vehicle. Headlights are required when driving in the rain.
- ◆ Keep alert, pay attention to the radio and do not answer your cell phone when driving.

### Road Surface

Remember “SLIPPERY WHEN WET”: if it’s raining, the road surface may be slippery reducing the ability to stop quickly. Keep you eyes open for speed bumps, potholes and sink holes.



## Driving Conditions

### DRIVING SPEED

The basic rule about speed: You must only go a safe speed that allows you to control your vehicle. Go the posted speed limit. Faster speeds decrease stability and affect the ability to control the vehicle. You risk the safety of everyone riding in the vehicle when you speed.

**Remember** to keep within safe driving speed limits. We must set an example for safe driving.



## Driving Conditions

### BRAKING

Sudden braking may result in loss of control. The brakes will cause wheels to lock and you may skid dangerously. Pump your brakes slowly and smoothly. Brake when going into the curve and accelerate when you are going out of it. When decelerating, rest your foot lightly on the brake. Your stopping distance is the braking distance plus the time it takes for you to react.

### BACKING UP

A great deal of collisions occurs when backing up any fire apparatus. Make sure your mirrors are properly adjusted for backing. If fire department personnel are present you can have one of them back you up. (Walk behind you looking for obstructions) If you are not sure what's behind you, get out and look before you back. When backing, back up slowly and carefully. See Appendix A for backing hand signals



**Time Factor** The last area of response driving is the day of the week and time of day. In Los Angeles these are big factors. Think about the traffic at 4:00 p.m. on a Friday vs. 11:00 p.m. on a Sunday. Big difference.

### **Time of Day**

Rush-hour traffic starts early in Los Angeles and freeways come to a stop. Surface streets also start loading up by 7:00 a.m. and may not start to clear until 10 to 10:30. It starts all over between 2 and 3 p.m. and can last until after 8 or 9 o'clock. Plan routes around the heavy traffic that will develop over this time.

### **Day of the Week**

You can plan for less traffic on the weekend than on the weekday. Downtown surface streets are mostly clear during the weekend vs. thousands of cars that are on the streets and highway on the weekday.

**Remember** that on most holidays the streets in downtown will be open and the area freeways are less congested.





## Monitoring the Radio

While you are enroute to the incident you should monitor the LAFD radio for updates on the incident..Monitor the dispatch and Department Wide channels for the type of incident that you are responding to:

**BRUSH FIRE - CHANNEL 5**

**STRUCTURE FIRE - CHANNEL 9**

The Incident Commander will update Metro Fire Communications with progress on this incident. Requesting new or relief companies, releasing resources and information of the status on the incident will be done over the dispatch channel. The command and tactical channels will give you direct communication from fire suppression resources. Listen to what is going on for the incident. Is it down scaling and is the IC releasing resources or is it still going strong with request for more resources? Is the incident is spreading? If you have a handie-talkie radio you may want to set it to the Tac Channel so you can hear both channels at the same time without having the radio scan the channels and miss messages.You may want to turn off the scan feature for the main fire radio and set it to the dispatch channel or tac channel.

### TIP

If you have a second volunteer they should act as the navigator. There are two radio mic clips in the cab, one on the drivers side and one on the passenger side. If you have someone in the passenger side seat, move the mic to that side and have them do the communications.



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