

2019 - 2024 Struck-by-Vehicle Fatalities

Year	LEO	Fire/EMS	Tow Operators	Road Service Technicians	DOT/S SP	Total
2019	18	9	14	3	0	44
2020	17	4	21	1	3	46
2021	30	9	22	2	2	65
2022	17	11	18	4	1	51
2023	14	8	21	0	3	46
2024	22	4	10	1	4	41
Totals	118	45	103	11	13	293



Emergency Responder Safety Institute
www.respondersafety.com

These struck-by-vehicle fatalities are a solemn reminder of the hazards of handling roadside service.



Todd currently serves at the Deputy Director of Training for the Emergency Responder Safety Institute (ERSI; www.respondersafety.com) and is the founder of TIM Heroes, Inc., a 501c3 non-profit focused on emergency responder safety.

He is also a Traffic Incident Management Specialist at Jacobs Engineering, and has served as the Traffic Incident & Emergency Management (TIM) Supervisor for the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PTC). Before that, Todd worked as an emergency dispatcher and has experience as a former volunteer firefighter, emergency medical technician, and hazardous material team member. Todd is Wreckmaster 6/7A certified, and has received several awards for his work in roadway safety.

Staggering Statistics

Reflections on Crash Responder Safety Week 2024

By Todd A. Leiss

As the dust settles from this year's Crash Responder Safety Week (CRSW), which took place on November 18-22, 2024, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) continued to highlight the importance of ensuring the safety of emergency responders on our roadways. This year's theme, "Responders Ahead! Reduce Your Speed as You Proceed," resonated strongly with communities across the nation, emphasizing the critical need for drivers to slow down and move over for those who dedicate their lives to keeping our roadways safe.

RECAP OF THE WEEK

Crash Responder Safety Week serves as an annual reminder of the sacrifices made by first responders, police officers, fire officials, paramedics, and towing and recovery operators who respond to accidents and emergencies on our highways. The FHWA began commemorating CRSW in 2016, originally under the name National Traffic Incident Responder Awareness Week (NTIRAW). Since its inception, CRSW has evolved and is now observed annually during the second full week of November. This initiative is embraced by national associations, state departments of transportation, departments of public safety, metropolitan planning organizations, and local departments of public works, cities, and individual responders to bring attention to traffic incident responder safety.

This year, CRSW raised awareness of the dangers these heroes face daily. Since 2019, a staggering 293 emergency responders have been struck and killed on U.S. roadways, including 114 towing and recovery operators and road service technicians. These statistics highlight the urgent need to promote safer driving practices around emergency scenes.

Each day of the week featured a different topic to guide the message:

- Monday, 11/18: Responders Ahead! Reduce Your Speed as You Proceed.
- Tuesday, 11/19: Driver Education
- Wednesday, 11/20: Responder Training
- Thursday, 11/21: More Than a Crash
- Friday, 11/22: Slow Down, Move Over

STATE PROCLAMATIONS

In addition to these focused themes, numerous states took the opportunity to issue proclamations from governors supporting Crash Responder Safety Week. These proclamations helped to elevate the message statewide and reinforced the commitment to the safety of emergency responders, showcasing the importance of community involvement in this initiative.

With a focus on these daily themes and the backing of state leadership, ►

the FHWA called on drivers to remain vigilant and respectful when encountering emergency vehicles. Thousands of motorists participated in discussions and events aimed at promoting the crucial message that slowing down and changing lanes can save lives.

FOCUSING ON TOW OPERATORS

A significant aspect of this year's CRSW was the inclusion of towing and recovery operators, recognizing their

integral role in roadside safety. These professionals work tirelessly to clear the roads after accidents and provide assistance to stranded motorists, often in dangerous conditions.

By highlighting their contributions during CRSW, the FHWA underscored the broader challenges all emergency service personnel face on busy roadways.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATION

Throughout Crash Responder

Safety Week, a variety of outreach initiatives took place, including community workshops, social media campaigns, and educational programs. Agencies and organizations collaborated to share important statistics and personal stories, bringing to light the real-life impact of speeding and distracted driving around emergency situations.

State and local agencies reported increased community engagement, with many residents pledging to adopt safer driving habits. Events in schools and on social media platforms buzzed with posts about the importance of slowing down for responders, fostering a culture of respect and caution on the roads.

MOVING FORWARD

As CRSW came to a close, the efforts and awareness it created did not end with the week. The FHWA encourages drivers to internalize these lessons year-round. By continuing to prioritize safety, respecting the work of our first responders, and adhering to laws regarding speed limits around emergency scenes, we can all contribute to safer highways.

The unifying message from CRSW—slowing down and being aware (and moving over)—is a shared responsibility. Together, we can honor the heroes who serve our communities while ensuring the safety of everyone on the road.

As we reflect on the impactful events of Crash Responder Safety Week 2024, let's commit to making our roadways safer every day, not just during one designated week. The lives saved may be those of our neighbors, friends, or family members—those who go to work every day to protect and assist us most certainly deserve our respect on the road.



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