ROLL CALL REMINDER:

SCANNING THE ROAD

This Roll Call Reminder is intended to generate a dialogue between law enforcement supervisors and patrol officers while creating a framework for regular agenda items during staff meetings. Please note that the message contained here only aims to support the department's safe driving efforts and is not meant to replace current driver safety strategies.

Dear Department Leader,

The National Highway Traffic Safety Association (NHTSA) reports that 41% of accidents attributed to the driver are a result of a recognition error while scanning their surroundings. It is critical that officers develop their scanning skills so they can avoid hazards, or at the least, increase the amount of time they have to react to a hazard should they need to.

Scanning skills are an important aspect of driver safety. Here are some scanning tips and reminders.

- Do not have a fixed stare.
- Perform a 360-degree scan. Look forward, behind and to the left and right of your patrol car.
- Look beyond the car ahead of you.
- Check blind spots and mirrors often.
- Do not stay in another vehicle's blind spot.
- Look for changes in traffic flow.

Collisions typically occur because people fail to recognize an issue while surveying the area, or they are unable to react in time due to late recognition. While driving on patrol, it is important that your officers are aware of their surroundings by scanning the roadway. Constant scanning is a critical element to defensive and safe driving.

References

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). (n.d.). National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NCSA) Motor Vehicle Traffic Crash Data Resource Page [Data set]. Publisher. https://catalog.data.gov/dataset/national-motor-vehicle-crash-causation-survey-nmvccs

SCANNING THE ROAD

This Roll Call Reminder discusses the need for officers to scan the road while driving on routine patrol. The intent is to have a department leader or designated team member read the reminder aloud to the team. After hearing the message, work together to answer and respond to the questions that follow. To conclude the conversation, it is important that you acknowledge the hazards you face while driving and commit to bearing them in mind while operating your patrol vehicle.

Welcome Law Enforcement Officers,

Vehicle accidents can occur when people fail to recognize an issue while surveying the area, or they are unable to react in time due to late recognition. Scanning the road is a very important skill that helps drivers remain alert and prepared for upcoming roadway and traffic hazards.

According to experts from the University of Texas, you should be checking all of your mirrors every five seconds (UT Dallas Police Department, n.d.). While this sounds like a lot, constant scanning is a critical element to defensive and safe driving. Consider these scanning tips and reminders:

- Do not have a fixed stare.
- Perform a 360-degree scan. Look forward, behind and to the left and right of your patrol car.
- Look beyond the car ahead of you.
- Check blind spots and mirrors often.
- Do not stay in another vehicle's blind spot.
- Look for changes in traffic flow.

In addition to navigating around typical driving hazards, officers must also recognize that their emergency vehicle may create challenges for other drivers on the road. All drivers are taught to move over or yield the right of way when they see an emergency vehicle approaching their vehicle; however, drivers don't always obey.

Drivers are often distracted and may not be aware of an approaching patrol vehicle; or, they may be unable to move over or yield the right of way due to traffic conditions or roadway hazards, such as other vehicles or construction. Knowing your surroundings will help you change course if necessary or to slow down or stop the patrol vehicle in time to prevent a collision.

- What roadway hazards do you most commonly encounter?
- How much time do you need to react to those hazards?
- How can you maintain awareness of your surroundings while driving?

Collisions typically occur because people are not paying attention to what's around them, or they don't react in time. While driving, whether on patrol or in pursuit, remember to scan for hazards and road safety issues constantly. Know your surroundings. Being aware of what's going on around you is a critical aspect of driver safety.

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