



FCM 071-2016

DATE: June 17, 2016

TO: All DFD Personnel

THROUGH: Eric C. Tade, Chief of Department *ECT*
Todd A. Bower, Deputy Chief of Department *ECT for TAB*
Charles Drennan III, Division Chief, Operations *CD*

FROM: Robert J. Kmak, Shift Commander, Operations *RJK*

SUBJECT: ENGINE 9 NEAR MISS, INCIDENT 16-0030524

On March 23, 2016 at 21:12 hours, Engine 9 and Tower 9 were dispatched to an accident on eastbound I-70 and Brighton Boulevard. A vehicle was found by crews at I-70 and York Street, but it did not fit the description of the accident they were dispatched to. Tower 9 saw flashing lights further down the highway and proceeded to investigate while Engine 9 checked on the party at I-70 and York. While the crew of Engine 9 was waiting with one patient for police and paramedics, a car hit the back of Engine 9. Engine 9 requested assistance from Tower 9 and Chief 6 to protect the scene, and the crew from Engine 9 proceeded to check on the party that hit Engine 9. Tower 9 had been dispatched to yet another accident further down the highway, so Truck 26 was dispatched to assist Engine 9. Paramedics arrived and took a protective position behind Engine 9. Captain Miller stood in a position to watch traffic while his crew members were loading the patient on the pram when another vehicle slid to the left of the ambulance, bounced off the Jersey barrier, and struck Captain Miller and the rear of Engine 9.

After discussing this with members of Station 9, Assistant Chief Drapeau, and Captain Miller, the following was determined:

Engine 9 and Tower 9 had a minor accident that did not fit the description of the vehicle they were dispatched to. The accident appeared to be minor; Engine 9 was in a protective position behind the vehicle, a box truck, and crews were able to stand in a position protected by the Engine and box truck while waiting for paramedics and police. Tower 9 proceeded to investigate what they thought might be the accident they were dispatched to, which turned out to be a truck driving with its flashers on due to the weather. While waiting for paramedics, a vehicle hit the rear of Engine 9, forcing the crew to work in an unprotected area with a new patient until the ambulance arrived.

The initial goal was to investigate the accident that E9 and TR9 found at east bound I-70 and York Street, clear the highway as quickly as possible of this accident, and locate the accident fitting the description given by Dispatch. When E9 was struck, the goal changed to getting more protection for this scene and giving medical attention to the driver of the new accident.

Lessons Learned:

1. When dispatched to highway accidents, both rigs dispatched should stay together.
2. Size the situation up and close lanes with apparatus to create a safe zone for members to operate. In this situation, lane 1 was left with enough space to allow a vehicle by.
3. Keep Chief Officers and Shift Commanders updated during storms as to areas where support from other agencies is needed.
4. Continue collaborative dialog between the DFD Operations Division and agencies such as CDOT and Public Works to improve cooperative support during inclement weather.
5. Consideration should be given to close highways as needed when operating in these dangerous conditions.
6. In cases where a vehicle hits an apparatus protecting the scene, consideration should be given to make the scene safe again, whether that is by repositioning current apparatus, using other emergency vehicles on scene, and/or closing the highway.

This accident occurred during a time of high call volume and treacherous road conditions. The officers of E9 and TR9 made a decision to split the companies based on their size-up of the situation and the possibility of other parties needing aid further down the road. Engine 9 did place their apparatus in a position to protect the scene and crews were in a position that was protected by the Engine and a box truck. The ambulance did position their apparatus in a way which appeared to protect the scene. It is noted that even though the ambulance was protecting the scene, the rear of the ambulance was exposed to traffic, which would have put members in danger when loading the patient. When companies are dispatched to highway accidents, one company should position to protect the scene while the other company sizes up the situation.

The following pictures were from the accident, taken after Captain Miller was struck. This document is intended to provide insight into this accident and for members of the Denver Fire Department to review and discuss safety issues, not only on highway accidents but all traffic accidents.

Special thanks to the crew members of Station 9 for sharing this incident openly and honestly to enhance the safety and wellness of the Denver Fire Department.

RJK:kfc/H/FCM/2016/071-2016 Engine 9 Near Miss Incident 16-0030524

DISPOSITION: Read at Roll Call for three (3) consecutive shifts.

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