



CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF FIRE SERVICES



STATEMENT OF COOPERATION

THIS STATEMENT OF COOPERATION (SOC) is in response to reoccurring conflicts between first responder's conduct and scene management at traffic collisions and emergency incidents on California's roadways.

As provided by state law, the California State Board of Fire Services (Board) provides a forum for addressing fire protection, training and prevention issues of statewide concern including how the fire service interacts with allied agencies. In addition, the Board approves technical and performance training standards of fire service personnel to state and national standards, accredits curriculum, establishes policy for the certification system for the California Fire Service and advises the State Fire Marshal on the dissemination of regulations, standards and practices.

Millions of citizens depend on California's law enforcement, fire and emergency medical services. They have come to anticipate the finest in public-safety response, training and professionalism. This SOC is designed to ensure this objective by reinforcing the need for continuity of a chain of command based on authority and jurisdiction as well as supervision, response, communication, conflict resolution and training of law enforcement, fire and EMS personnel.

There has been reoccurring issues between law enforcement and fire service personnel at traffic collision scenes and emergencies occurring on California's public roadways that are unacceptable to the Board. Many of these conflicts have been fueled by a lack of understanding of the responsibilities and tactics of law enforcement and fire personnel. Regrettably, some of these avoidable incidents have become public and have been further exacerbated by the media and, in a few cases, resulted in civil litigation.

The Board recognizes that law enforcement; fire and EMS personnel have the *common objectives of preservation of life, protecting property, and protection of the environment*. Furthermore, both seek to ensure the safety of their personnel and equipment at incident scenes. These common objectives are achieved through application of the Incident Command System (ICS), as outlined in the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) guides, and adherence to mandates set forth by state codes and regulations.

Law enforcement recognizes that the primary focus and basis of operational procedures and tactics of fire service personnel is the establishment of a safe scene, patient care and protection of property. The Board further recognizes that law enforcement agencies have the primary responsibility for scene safety, including that of first responders; they must also not be obstructed from their investigation and/or protection of victims, evidence and witnesses.

The Board encourages and promotes training and oversight in the proper response to all highway incidents. Moreover, the Board urges law enforcement, fire and EMS personnel to integrate the following practices into their organizations operating procedures:

- Encourage the establishment of strict standards and practices for interagency emergency response and scene management.
- Institute the common use of the ICS/SEMS/NIMS guides in managing emergency incidents and traffic collisions on public highways.
- Incorporate local agency policy and procedures into emergency vehicle operations training and Driver Operator 1A and 1B curriculum.
- Establish joint training and exercises to be conducted at the local level.
- Establish a method of post incident conflict resolution policies to resolve issues that do arise in order to maintain a professional working relationship.

Communication and training is vital for establishing and maintaining a positive working relationship between law enforcement, fire and EMS services. This relationship includes the reinforcement of common understating and respect of agency disciplines, roles and responsibilities in order to achieve mutual public safety objectives.

It is the intent of this SOC to facilitate safe and efficient responses for all first responders. To this end, the Board shall ensure that policies, procedures, training curriculum and certifications include appropriate training addressing interagency cooperation.

In witness thereof on this 24th day of August, 2017.

Dennis Mathisen, Chair
State Fire Marshal

Jerry Davies, Vice Chair