



CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF FIRE SERVICES

STATEMENT OF COOPERATION

THIS STATEMENT OF COOPERATION (SOC) is in response to reoccurring conflicts between first responders regarding 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 fire prevention issues of statewide concern including how the fire service interacts with allied agencies. In addition, the Board approves technical and performance standards for training of fire service personnel in accordance with state and national standards; accredits emergency services related curriculum; establishes policy for the California Fire Service Training and Education System (professional certification) and advises the State Fire Marshal on the promulgation of regulations, standards and practices.

The primary objective of public safety is the protection of life, property and the environment at the highest levels of professionalism. 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 have been reoccurring issues between law enforcement and fire service personnel at the scenes of traffic collisions and other emergencies occurring on California's public roadways that which are unacceptable. 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 were 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 other first responders; they must also not be obstructed from their investigation and/or protection of victims, evidence and witnesses.

The Board encourages and promotes the training and oversight in the proper response to highway incidents. The Board urges law enforcement, fire and EMS personnel to integrate the following 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 CAL FIRE – Office of the State Fire Marshal Fire Apparatus/Driver Operator 1A and 1B curriculum.
- Establish joint training and exercises to be conducted at the local level.
- Establish a method of post incident (Debriefing) conflict resolution policies to resolve issues that do arise in order to maintain a good working relationship.

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

It is the intent of this SOC to facilitate the inter agency cooperation necessary for the safe and efficient response for all emergency first responders.

Dennis Mathisen, Chair

Jerry Davies, Vice Chair

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