

**Different = Wrong?**

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After a week of reflecting on last week's Open Friday comments, as well other general grousing on the blogs and such, can those differences of opinion be boiled down to this: if it's different, it's wrong? Is that it? If it's new, strange, or just done another way, then it's wrong / weird / annoying / etc.? Maybe we're simply stating the obvious as we continue to wonder why some people feel (and vocalize) such strong dislike toward other departments and their practices.

Without a shadow of a doubt the biggest obstacle is difference. It all boils down to If I do not understand the whole picture then it must be wrong.

**Porter** ([Email](#)) - 03/03/07 - 17:19

There are different ways to do different tasks and end up with the same results and that is fine. But there are ways to do things completely wrong. Lets take ventilation for example, there are times for vertical ventilation and there are times for horizontal (to include PPV, or hydraulic) but there are times when doing either is the wrong decision. It is only through training that you are able to identify these. I think that the lack of training by some departments in this county irritates some people.

There are other issues as well that I don't think you will ever be able to change someones mind on. For example with me. I don't understand why some departments insist on taking 2, 3 or even 4 trucks to a reported vehicle (passenger or pick up, not box truck or larger) fire. If you can't put a veh fire out with 500-1000 gallons of water then you need to attend another fire control class or get some junk cars and light them up for training. Everyone on here wants the firefighters of this county to return to the fire station safely after a call, but due to lack of training and other safety issues it is going to bite us in the a\$\$ one day and take another one of our brothers or sisters.

**Mike** - 03/03/07 - 17:25

"but there are times when doing either is the wrong decision" I need to edit this statement. I meant to say that there are times when doing either is the wrong decision. Like doing horizontal when you need vert or the opposite like vert ventilating for a small room and contents when natural or horizontal would have been perfectly fine.

Hopefully this will clarify my comments

**Mike** - 03/03/07 - 17:29

Multiple units to a small-sized vehicle fire is a great example, as it forces a question of perspective. From the fire control perspective, 500 or 1000 gallons and a single company should be sufficient. But what other perspectives come into play? On a major or secondary road, an extra piece of apparatus (or more) is probably useful for scene safety and blocking. And at a high level, does simply rolling a rig when possible provide value? Perhaps. Operators gain "10-33 experience" every time they run a call. From the fiscal perspective, the more a piece is used, the easier it is to justify the expenses required to maintain and operating the unit. Etcetera.

**Legeros** - 03/03/07 - 17:39

Yes of course the drivers get experience from driving, but putting a piece of apparatus on the street running 10-39 to a call where it is not "needed" i.e the 4th due engine on a car fire down a side street, is that not a huge liability to the department if that truck were to get into a wreck injuring/killing a civilian or department members? is responding to a call when not truly being needed the best way/time to gain "experience"? I am not saying rolling extra trucks to provide a safe work area for firefighters is a bad thing, which it is not. But when the same departments add multiple trucks to calls that should be single company responses I think something needs to be looked at. As a tax payer I want to know why am I paying for these trucks to roll out on calls that can be handled by the unit that was first called out. Why is it that i always hear extra units being added to calls where there is seemingly no need for them?

**John** - 03/04/07 - 00:08

I agree with John. If said department were to get into a wreck after needlessly adding themselves, more than likely one of the first questions would be, whether it was a true emergency or not. My opinion is that hurting or killing someone, running emergency traffic to a call that can be handled by 1-2 units from the same or different departments, is CRIMINAL. Putting yourselves, your men, and the public in danger is all thats being accomplished. If you're not needed, keep your ass at home, especially when its not a true emergency. We could "what if" any scenario to

death, but what's right is right, and we all know when it is and isn't. Be safe. PTB. EGH.

**Flip** ([Email](#)) ([Web Site](#)) - 03/05/07 - 19:55

If you really want to go to the scene go 10-40 traffic—everyone wants to see a good vehicle fire or a torn up car that boasts moral, but there is no need for so many units to go 10-39 that puts the public in danger, as does long responses when a shorter response is possible if you catch my drift...

**Roger** - 03/05/07 - 23:21

Think about the studies they have done going non emergency versus going emergency traffic. I know some can fight that time is crucial but for a fire alarm or a car fire not life threatening, what does 15 to 30 seconds matter..

**Roger** - 03/06/07 - 12:14

I won't get into the amount of units that certain departments send to certain incidents. What some might view as overkill, others might view as "firefighter safety" or essential. However, seconds matter if someone happens to be trapped in said vehicle that is burning.

Unfortunately, when the cell phone was introduced people became more lazy than before. Rather than stopping to help, it's so much easier just to pick up your cell to report the incident and keep about your business. When you're speeding down the interstate at 75 mph, it's hard to see if anyone is in the car or any other circumstance(s).

If the call in question is a "clean-up" call, to me, emergency traffic isn't necessary. Car fires though, they seem like an emergency to me. When it comes to our safety on an interstate, just ask departments out west who have experienced someone getting nailed while at work on the side of a road.

**Silver** - 03/06/07 - 16:31

How many engine companies does it take to pull someone out and spray some water? At the most two. An engine company and a rescue should suffice. Safety on the interstate. It takes one engine to block two lanes of interstate..done right. The more units on scene = the more personnel to be hit. 1 engine and 1 rescue is all it takes unless it becomes a haz-mat or something of the sort...once again we can "what if" all day, but the more people on scene are just more opportunities for someone to get hit. Keep em home and off the street.

**Flip** ([Email](#)) ([Web Site](#)) - 03/06/07 - 17:40

I for the most part agree with Flip's last comment.

Silver, Be careful going non emergency to a clean-up. I once discussed this with a Capt. where i was filling in and he thought the same as you. I was disagreeing with him telling him that you can't know what you've got until you get there. A couple of months later he responded 10-40 to a clean-up to find that he was the first unit on scene of a double pin-in wreck. What do you think his opinion is on the subject now?

**firedriver** - 03/06/07 - 22:22

So, just out of curiosity, what type of calls does everyone think should be run "non-emergency?" To keep it simple, I'm implying what type of calls should Fire Apparatus respond to 10-40? Reset a fire alarm? Fire Alarm Activations? Car Fires? Fluid clean ups from a 10-50 with PD (or EMS) on scene? CO Alarms with no reported symptoms? I've heard people give reasons for/against running the above calls both emergency traffic and non-emergency. Personally, I tend to agree that Fire Alarms and Car Fires should be responded to with emergency traffic. One might argue that most car fires (that actually end up being something decent) are typically just written off as a 'total loss' by insurance companies, so why should we risk our lives (and everyone else on the road) to get there ASAP. I still don't see that as a viable reason for not going emergency traffic.

Mike, this might be getting away from the original topic. Feel free to move my question somewhere else (including the filing cabinet with the plastic liner thing!).

**Luke** - 03/07/07 - 00:46

A lot of our inability to run cold on many calls comes down to the information (or lack of it) taken with the subject while on a 911 call. I have encountered numerous examples of calltakers not asking enough questions while on 911 calls for a department to be able to run cold comfortably. (or make an accurate decision on what piece of apparatus needs to respond to a specific incident) You have all run them... Dispatched as a request for service: you arrive to find a house full of smoke? Dispatched as a Diabetic Crisis: you arrive to find a MVA? Dispatched as a Subject burned: you arrive to a working kitchen fire? And every idiot on a cell phone has NO idea what the inner/outer loop means or what direction they are traveling (N,S,E,W) so we have to cover all the bases ourselves. Not ALL departments run engines on all calls, some use speciality vehicles (SUV's, Pickups, etc) on EMS calls, so accurate information is crucial, as it is to everyone else as well. Basically it nearly impossible to have all the "absolutes" discussed. It comes down to department policy and a good officer with enough of a leash to make

his/her own decisions. Be responsible and accountable for your actions, stay safe, and come home after every call.

**DT** - 03/07/07 - 09:18

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