

## New Video Shows Ladder Truck Crash

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As [this WTVD story reports](#), the Raleigh Fire Department has released a video of the July 10 apparatus accident involving Ladder 4. While responding to a call, the 2004 Pierce Arrow XT tiller truck overturned at the intersection of [Dawson and South streets](#). The accident occurred at 10:50 a.m. Footage was captured from two cameras, a red light camera on Dawson Street, and a city bus on South Street. Raleigh Fire Chief John McGrath cites the cause as "human error and speed." Four firefighters were aboard the truck, and three were transported. None received serious injuries. Chief McGrath notes that "the accident will be used in firefighter training." He also added that the \$750,000 is "too badly damaged to repair," and the city is still evaluating if it can be replaced. [Read the WTVD story and watch the footage](#). Or, view photos from the scene by [Lee Wilson](#) and [Mike Legeros](#). Also [read our posting](#) from the day of the incident.

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The broadcast version of the video, I am told, shows the footage from both cameras. The web site is presently only showing the bus view. Perhaps it will be updated later.

**Legeros** - 08/24/09 - 19:08

I think the posting of this video is in poor taste. Fire-Fighters were hurt and are still dealing with the aftermath both personally and professionally. If the video was to be used for training purposes it should have been left at that and not broadcasted for public consumption for everyone to rubberneck over.

**John Kilvinski** ([Email](#)) - 08/24/09 - 20:23

Thanks for your perspective, John. And timed as I was editing my posting, to remove the still image that I included below the text. It seems perhaps too strong, still too close to home. But perhaps that is its value as a training aid, and as a message on the subject of safe driving.

**Legeros** - 08/24/09 - 20:32

To all my brothers and sisters, I will be short on this topic! All I can say is thank God we all are here today to run another call! So please have safe tour and please buckle up!!!!

**Jason Lane** - 08/24/09 - 20:51

John, just curious... why in poor taste? Why is this any different than any other vehicular accident photos posted on this blog? It's news. God forbid if someone had been killed or severely injured and there was a photo of them dragging along the ground, I could understand the concern. But those types of photos wouldn't be posted here no matter whom the victim's were. To me, no different than posting a shot of a building on fire and stating that two fire fighters perished in the fire.

**Todd D.** - 08/24/09 - 23:27

I don't think, from my perspective, it was in bad taste. It no doubt strikes close to home, especially when the people involved are people we know. It's no different, in many respects, as many other news stories that depict tragic times in history. It's just that this one strikes close.

The most important thing is that all four crew members are still here (so wear your seat belts).

The second most important thing is everyone take a message home from it. We are not immune to this stuff. It does not happen just to "other people's fire departments".

I don't know, maybe I look at the world differently, but I think that the video should be required viewing for anyone driving any sort of emergency vehicle. Not to embarrass or belittle anyone (there, but by the Grace of God, go I). But to reinforce sitting down in moving apparatus, wearing your seat belt, and slowing down.

And I think those are lessons that the members of Ladder 4 would also like for everyone else to learn.

**DJ** ([Email](#)) ([Web Site](#)) - 08/25/09 - 14:30

DJ – Couldn't have said it better myself. It should be used as a learning/training experience for the future.

**AB** - 08/25/09 - 16:20

I cringe when I think how this would have worked out in the late 70s when the truck in question would have been the 700 series ALF with all open cabs and no seat belts.

**DJ** ([Email](#)) ([Web Site](#)) - 08/25/09 - 16:26

Good points, Dale. It can happen here. Serious/catastrophic fire apparatus accidents in Raleigh and Wake County are recorded as early as the horse-drawn era. Three firefighters thrown from hose wagon on East Street, 1907. Horse killed after hose wagon strikes trolley, 1912. Etcetera.

Two line-of-duty deaths have resulted from overturned apparatus, Vernon Smith (Raleigh/1956) and Vernon Thompson (Cary/1960). A third duty death from a heart attack also resulted in an apparatus accident, Norwood Massengill (Fairgrounds/1971). The driver of Apex Engine 3 was ejected and seriously injured in a rollover in 1978. Three firefighters on Wake Forest Engine 63 were injured in a rollover in 2002. Etcetera.

Civilians have also been injured in collisions with apparatus in past decades. Raleigh, Knightdale (now Eastern Wake), etc. But we'll leave those skeletons buried for now.

It can happen here.

**Legeros** - 08/25/09 - 17:12

I do not think that the posting was in poor taste... I think that these incidents need to have as much attention drawn to them as possible. I will not comment or speculate as to what caused this accident; I am not trained in forensic accident reconstruction and the like.

I will say that I have been in a wreck in a fire truck... it was not our fault- the guy happened to swerve into us (he was avoiding a rear end crash that he was about to cause for HIMSELF)... That kind of stuff wakes you up a little! Part of the good news about our wreck was that 1) all fire fighters had seatbelts on 2) we were traveling on our side of the double yellow 3) we were actually going 10mph slower than the posted speed limit while utilizing all of our proper warning devices. Bad news 1) the guy that hit us was another employee of our municipality 2) he will never physically be the same as he was before the wreck.

I want everyone here to think about what would happen if you hit someone with your apparatus. Would you be able to handle the injuries they sustained or the possibility of death at your hands? As a group, we tend to drive fast and demand, rather than request, the right of way. I am thankful that my engineer was driving safely while we were responding... had it been any different, I think we would have killed the gentleman that hit us. I know that some people don't agree with my opinions about safe driving- for some reason we think that our emergency won't end up creating another one. We can stand here and tell each other that "You won't do anybody any good unless you make it to the call safely", and "Everyone buckle up". Quit using the "buzzwords" and practice safer driving techniques! The fact of the matter is, we keep having wrecks across the nation that are due to SPEED and FAILURE to YIELD at interscetions. Please slow down and drive responsibly- it might be my family that you hit and kill.

**Bob P.** - 08/26/09 - 09:42

Well said, Bob. We have had a number of emergency vehicle wrecks here in Wake County and in the surrounding counties, and a number of them have been fatal. There have been several LEO wrecks, with fatalities. There was a fatal ambo wreck in Wayne County several years ago, as well as a fatal ambo wreck in Harnett County around 2000. Crew members were killed in the Wayne County wreck (I think it was Fremont Rescue, or maybe Goldsboro Rescue) and the patient dies in the Harnett County MVC.

Here in Wake County, I remember when Beacon rolled Unit #7 downtown, I think on Morgan Street, after it was hit. There have been plenty of other ambo MVCs since. There was even a Selma unit that rolled after hitting the curb in 1998-1999 I believe it was.

Without passing judgement on anyone, most of these MVCs involving emergency vehicles ahve either involved speed or what I call a "lack of appreciation", that being for the dynamics of the vehicle, the unpredictability of the motoring public, etc.

I say it again- it ain't your/our fault the world is combustible or that people die. Slow down...it/they will be there when we get there. As a colleague says, "when seconds count we are minutes away".

And I agree- quit talking and start doing.

**DJ** ([Email](#)) ([Web Site](#)) - 08/26/09 - 13:21