OBJECTIVE 3.3 Identify factors in route selection for an emergency response.

INTRODUCTION

An officer responding to an emergency will want to reach the desired destination as quickly as possible. The officer must do everything possible to ensure a prompt arrival. This means selecting the route that is the safest and one that will ensure the quickest arrival.

CONTENT

ROUTE SELECTION FACTORS

1. Response management is most directly affected by traffic density. Avoid roads where heavy or uncooperative traffic patterns exist, especially commercially zoned areas. Avoid roads frequented by slow moving or large vehicles such as tractor-trailers or farm equipment.

2. Avoid locations of heavy pedestrian traffic, such as school zones, busy intersections, bus loading and unloading zones, and parked cars.

3. Avoid slow moving traffic conditions, such as construction zones, special entertainments events, bumper-to-bumper traffic, and rough pavement roads or roads that have potholes, multiple bumps, and non-paved surfaces.

4. Select roads having acceptable line-of-sight conditions. Avoid roads with hills and curves, poor visibility at intersections, or poor visibility due to parked vehicles.

5. One-way streets offer the advantage of avoiding oncoming traffic, but the disadvantage of approaching all vehicles from their rear - the area they tend to be least aware of while driving.

6. Traffic density, day of the week, road, weather, and visibility conditions are other factors to be considered.

7. An officer responding to an emergency should try to select a route which will offer the following:

    a. The least amount of steering and speed adjustment requirements.

b. Approaches to intersections offering acceptable line-of-sight and legal right-of-way.

c. The quickest, most direct route.

d. The route that will give the least interference to the emergency warning devices being seen and heard.

e. The route which is the widest and has available escape paths to the sides.

f. The route which will assure safe arrival.

SUMMARY

Route selection is often a low priority for a non-emergency response. However, proper route selection is critical during emergency response. When an officer "practices" route selection during non-emergency driving, the chance that the best route decision for an emergency response will be made increases. The emphasis should be on arrival at a destination, with speed as the second consideration.

SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

LECTURE WITH VIDEO

Create a videotape of two routes familiar to the class. One route will be considered desirable, offering conditions encouraged in the content of the lecture. The other route will have conditions which have been discouraged. Ask the class to list why one route is more desirable, compared to the other. List the results of the discussion.

INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING

1. Create a simulated emergency response condition. Give each student the challenge of driving from their respective headquarters to a predetermined location. Each student should identify a route, why it is the most desirable, and what problems can be expected. The challenge can be increased by adding additional factors such as time of day, weather conditions, or day of the week.

2. Encourage the students to consider emergency response route selection in their respective communities while they are driving in non-emergency of off-the-job conditions.

RESOURCES AND AIDS

1. Current street or road maps of a patrol district or community

2. Video equipment for filming on a public roadway

SUGGESTED EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

STUDENTS

1. Written or verbal responses to questions regarding factors affecting route selection during emergency response

2. Observe demonstration of route selection during simulated emergency response on a public roadway

COURSE

Analysis of on-the-job performance during actual emergency conditions

Route Selection Factors

- Most directly affected by traffic density.
- Avoid heavy pedestrian traffic areas.
- Avoid slow-moving traffic areas such as construction, schools, special events, etc.
- Select roads with acceptable line of sight conditions.
- Time of day, weather, and visibility will also effect route selection.

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