LAW OFFICER ROLL CALL

Traffic-Related Officer Deaths

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TOPIC Traffic-related officer deaths

INCIDENT

Preliminary figures show traffic-related officer deaths are up 34 percent this year, even as overall line-of-duty deaths fall. They now outnumber firearms-related deaths. The rise is in vehicle collisions. Struck-by deaths have not dropped. Officers have been killed on patrol, while responding with lights and sirens to a priority call, and as they diverted or directed traffic. In the struck-by deaths, the most common setting was an officer assisting a motorist or conducting a traffic stop.

KEY LESSONS

1. Wear your belt. The rise this year is in vehicle collisions, including officers who were on patrol. The belt goes on before the car moves, not after you clear the lot, and not only on a long run. Wear your belt.

2. Watch your speed. Officers have been killed responding with lights and sirens to a priority call. Lights and sirens do not clear the intersection for you. Use due regard, and arrive at a speed you can still see, stop, and clear each one. Watch your speed.

3. Wear your vest. You will get out of the car on a stop, at a disabled vehicle, and at a crash scene. The vest is not only for a gun call. Wear your vest.

4. WIN, What's Important Now? Before you step out, look at where you stand, where your exit is, where the patrol car sits, and what lighting you have. In the struck-by deaths, the most common setting was an officer assisting a motorist or conducting a traffic stop. Officers have also been killed as they diverted or directed traffic. Get the car into a blocking position and the lights working for you before you walk into a lane.

5. Remember, complacency kills. The work that is getting people killed looks like ordinary work: patrol, a priority response, a stop, a motorist, a traffic post. Fatigue and distraction make that worse on any shift. Stay ahead of the routine. Remember, complacency kills.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When is your belt on, and when are you tempted to roll without it?

2. On a lights and sirens response, how do you clear each intersection, and what speed still leaves you room to stop?

3. Before you get out on a traffic stop or walk up to a motorist, is your vest on, and where will you stand if a car drifts into your space?

4. At a crash scene or when you divert traffic, where does the patrol car go, what lighting do you want, and who watches the approaching lanes?

5. Late in a shift, when you are tired or your mind is on something else, what does complacency look like, and how does your partner call it out?

BOTTOM LINE

The overall count can fall and still hide the road. Wear your belt. Wear your vest. Watch your speed. WIN, What's Important Now? Remember, complacency kills.

SOURCES

Full article and sources: https://www.lawofficer.com/traffic-related-officer-deaths-up-34-percent/

Key lessons adapted from the Below 100 tenets. Learn more at below100.org.

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