



## DEPARTMENT VEHICLE OPERATIONS- ACCIDENT AVOIDANCE

### PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Bulletin is to draw attention to officer deaths attributed to vehicle accidents and their reported causes.

### BACKGROUND:

Nationwide this year, twenty-four officers have died while operating a police vehicle. Twenty died while operating a Police Cruiser and four died while operating a Police Motorcycle. (Visit the Officer Down Memorial Page at [www.odmp.org](http://www.odmp.org) )

### OFFICER RESPONSIBILITY:

Although not all the deaths mentioned above involved vehicle pursuits, it would be consistent with good driving habits to remember what is demanded of us in the Port Police Policy Manual § 314.2 of the Vehicle Pursuit Policy (**OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES**). It reads in part, *"The following policy is established to provide officers with guidelines for driving with due regard and caution for the safety of all persons using the highway."*

Over half of the deaths were caused due to a traffic collision involving another vehicle. Good driving habits include being aware of your surroundings, defensive driving mind set, and driving within the limits of your skill set. These habits could help avoid collisions.

Of the twenty-four vehicle related deaths referred to on the Officer Down Memorial Page, at least six were not wearing seat belts or were ejected from their vehicle. Port Police Policy Manual § 1022.2 (**WEARING OF SAFETY RESTRAINTS**), requires all personnel to wear properly adjusted safety restraints when operating or riding in a Department or City owned vehicle.

In seven of the reported deaths the vehicle action was described as, "left the roadway". Several factors *may* have contributed to this including; fatigue, weather conditions, overconfidence in driving ability, and inattention to traffic conditions.

Officers can make individual personal choices that help combat some of the above factors. Making healthy lifestyle choices can help in all around physical and mental fitness leaving less of a fatigue factor. Also, understand what your driving abilities are and how to best use them in a "defensive" driving mindset, and please drive to what the roadway conditions safely allow you to do.

RWA:NCB:JN:arl