



Priming the Pump – 5 minute Lesson Plans For Fire Fighters

Date: _____ Shift: _____ Presenter _____

Case Study – Pennsylvania Volunteer Firefighter POV Crash, July 2010

The following information was taken from various news reports of the incident. The circumstances are given as points for discussion and should not be taken as 'factual'.



Richard Springman, 20, a volunteer firefighter with the Trout Run Volunteer Fire Company (PA), crashed in his personal vehicle while responding to a motor vehicle crash. Police and newspaper reports give the following account:

- Just before 1600, two vehicles were involved in a crash on Route 15. Hepburn Township and Trout Run Fire Companies were dispatched to the incident. Weather was sunny and hot. Roads were dry.
- Within minutes of the initial dispatch, Trout Run firefighters were redirected to their fire station. A third fire company had to be dispatched to the two scenes.
- Firefighter Springman was traveling south on Route 15. As he approached the scene of the crash, his Dodge Ram pickup truck apparently struck the guardrail alongside the right shoulder. State troopers believe Firefighter Springman may have over-steered, causing his truck to travel sideways across both southbound lanes and up onto a guardrail along the northbound lanes. After sliding along the guardrail, the pickup rolled once or twice and came to rest, upright, back in the middle of the southbound lanes. The truck's resting place was approximately 300 yards from the original crash site.
- Firefighter Springman was reportedly NOT wearing his seatbelt. He was ejected from the vehicle, landing about 15 feet away. He died at the scene.
- State Police believe speed was a factor in the crash.

"This is something none of us should have to deal with," Trout Run Fire Chief Robert Whitford said at the crash scene as he wrestled with his emotions. He quickly left to notify the young firefighter's family of the tragedy. Both parents were reported as active members of the fire company. Firefighter Springman has been a member since joining the company as a junior firefighter, about 6 years previously. Trout Run firefighters met privately at their station with the company's chaplain and other counselors.

According to the NFPA, about 6% of firefighter injuries and 25% of firefighters' fatalities occur during response / returning. Volunteers responding in their personal vehicles are especially at risk. Officers and firefighters are encouraged to discuss the following points:

1. What additional risks are faced when responding in a POV? What policies are in place concerning POV's? Beyond the state law, does the fire company encourage, enforce or require seatbelt use. What, if any, guidelines are in place regarding speed of responding POV's?
2. A Line of Duty Death (LODD) is a tragic event that is a chief's biggest fear. What policies are in place to guide the department's response to such an event?
3. Are Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Teams available? Does the fire company encourage or require participation by members? A volunteer fire company is often likened to a family. Will counseling be offered to the extended fire company family?



NOTE: Attach this lesson plan to signed attendance sheets for your training records

For additional info call: J.A. Montgomery Risk Control @ 1-877-398-3046