



South Strabane Township
Department of Fire & Emergency Management

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Ladder Truck Struck on I70 East by Motorist 4/29/23

At 8:26 PM on Saturday, April 29th, South Strabane Firefighters were dispatched for the report of a motor vehicle accident on I70 East involving an overturned camper and a pickup truck facing the opposite way in traffic. On-Duty career and volunteer firefighters responded immediately and confirmed the dispatch. The Officer in Charge (OIC) reported the incident to be located just after a blind bend with traffic passing them at a high rate of speed.

Truck 44, a 2013 Sutphen Aerial Tower responded shortly after the dispatch with three additional firefighters and positioned in a blocking pattern to provide early warning, slow traffic, and funnel traffic to a single lane to protect the crews working on the accident scene. Once Truck 44 was in place, the crew was unable to exit the vehicle due to the atrocious driving behaviors of approaching traffic.

While Truck 44 was in a blocking position with warning lights activated, on a roadway with a 55 MPH speed limit, it was struck by a passenger vehicle traveling well over the speed limit, with the crew still inside. Thankfully, there were no injuries to fire personnel, however the driver of the vehicle that caused the incident was transported to the hospital with injuries. Their vehicle was totaled, and Truck 44 sustained moderate damage to the driver side, affecting access to its compartments, safety components, and electrical system.

Shortly after this incident, as a firefighter was on the shoulder of the roadway placing flares to provide additional warning, he experienced a “near miss”, meaning he was nearly struck by a vehicle driving at an excessive rate of speed, that did not slow when they saw State Troopers or fire apparatus, then drove around flares, into the protected accident scene area.

This was the **SECOND** accident that occurred in the backlog of another incident in just four days due to distracted motorists with no regard, traveling at **HIGH** rates of speed.

We need the help of motorists, lawmakers, and enforcement officers because the actions of motorists, including commercial drivers, continues to decline and place our personnel in imminent danger on roadways every day:

- **MOTORISTS** need to wake up. Put your phone down, follow the speed limit, and **MOVE OVER**.
- **LAWMAKERS** need to authorize and fund PennDot to support local emergency services operating on accident scenes by providing sign trucks, blocking vehicles, and personnel.
- The **MOVE OVER** law in PA needs to be enforced on motorists that blatantly and continually show no regard for first responders, recovery workers, and construction crews.

OUR LIVES DEPEND ON IT