

PPE: The Missing Piece



Program Length: 1 Hour

Method of Presentation: Classroom Lecture

Program Abstract:

Every year, the number of fatalities and serious injury to first responders struck by vehicles while working along the highway continues to rise. Though much of the discussion on safety focuses on proper scene set-up and quick clearance, there is often a disparity between disciplines (police, fire, EMS, towing & recovery, etc.) as to the correct Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to be worn which can afford a responder protection from secondary incidents.

As agencies have begun to increase their issue of high-visibility garments, the one critical safety item which may be overlooked is the Roadway Helmet. Emergency service providers regularly furnish their personnel with protective helmets designed specifically for a particular hazard, such as a structure fire or protection from gunfire, but that same equipment may not necessarily provide adequate coverage when the pedestrian responder is involved in a “struck-by” collision.

PPE: The Missing Piece discusses that worst-case scenario of the first responder being struck by a vehicle or flying debris while at the scene of an emergency incident. We will examine the frequency with which those types of incidents occur, and the current research being done to emphasize the need for all responders to consider adding an approved helmet to their personal equipment already in use at highway scenes. This program will review the steps that the governing bodies of sporting organizations have taken to improve the safety of their participants and compare the lessons learned with the need to provide stronger protection for all first responders.

Sergeant (Ret.) Robert E. Bemis is a 30-year law enforcement veteran and trainer who travels to raise attention to the hazards present to emergency responders along the highway. In March 2015, Sgt. Bemis received serious injury after being struck by a vehicle while assisting a disabled motorist. Following months of hospitalization and rehabilitation, Sgt. Bemis returned to his duties as an Academy Instructor, and continued teaching for more than a year before retirement. He shares the experience of his final 22 months in law enforcement in hopes that the lessons learned will inspire others to increase their own situational awareness.

For additional information, please contact:

Sgt. (Ret.) Robert “Bob” Bemis

Hershey, Pennsylvania

Phone: 814-449-0297 Email: bob6958@verizon.net