The Safety Benchmarks in the following presentation are taken from the University of Extrication “Safe Parking” SOP by Ron Moore.

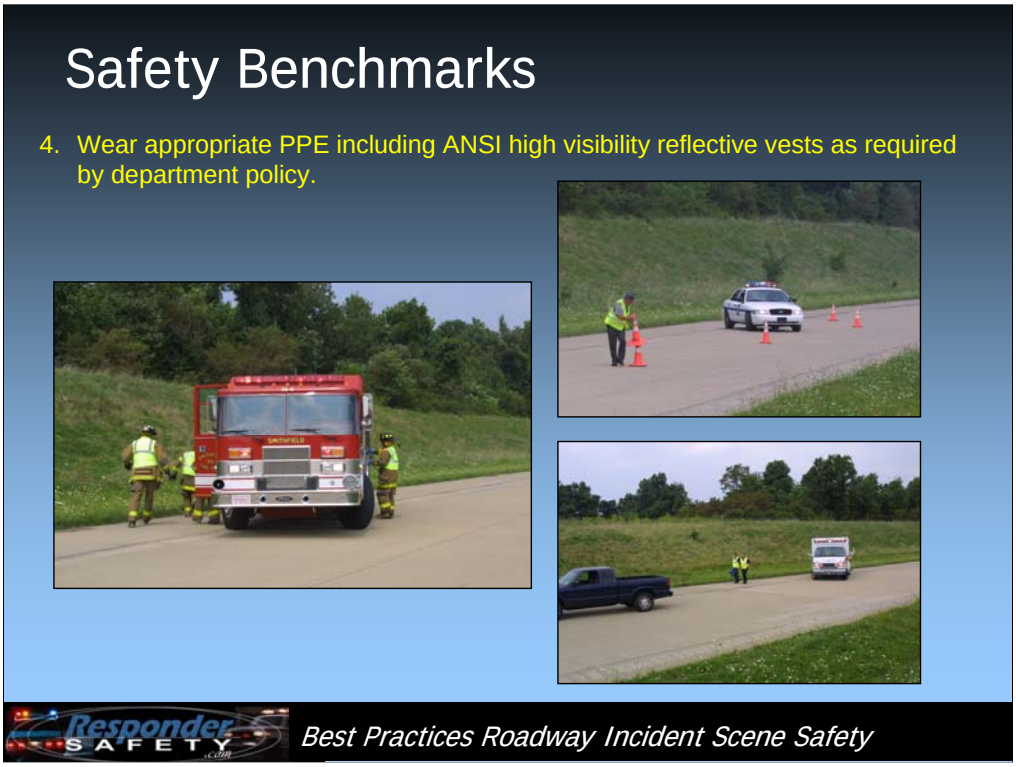
1. Never trust approaching traffic – It is important not to assume that approaching traffic is aware of the situation ahead (i.e. not paying attention or distracted) or that they do not understand what the traffic control devices are telling them to do. Therefore responders cannot trust traffic to do as expected.

2. Avoid turning your back to approaching traffic – See rule one, because traffic cannot be expected to do as desired, responders should avoid turning their backs to approaching traffic. This means positioning yourself so you can see approaching traffic as you work, alternating looking to traffic and ahead as you walk, and or having a spotter when in a position to monitor approaching traffic when you cannot monitor traffic yourself.

3. Establish an initial block with the first arriving emergency vehicle or fire apparatus.

A *Block* is defined as positioning of fire apparatus (or emergency vehicles) on an angle to the lanes of traffic creating a physical barrier between upstream traffic and the work area.

Note: While blocking provides some protection keep in mind that emergency vehicles are not designed as attenuators. Depending on the size and application of the vehicle it will provide varying protection from a vehicle strike. Obviously a police cruiser will provide considerably less protection than a fire engine carrying 500-1000 gallons of water. Another important consideration is that the blocking vehicle not only physically blocks traffic from the work area but it blocks the view of responders in the work area to monitor traffic.



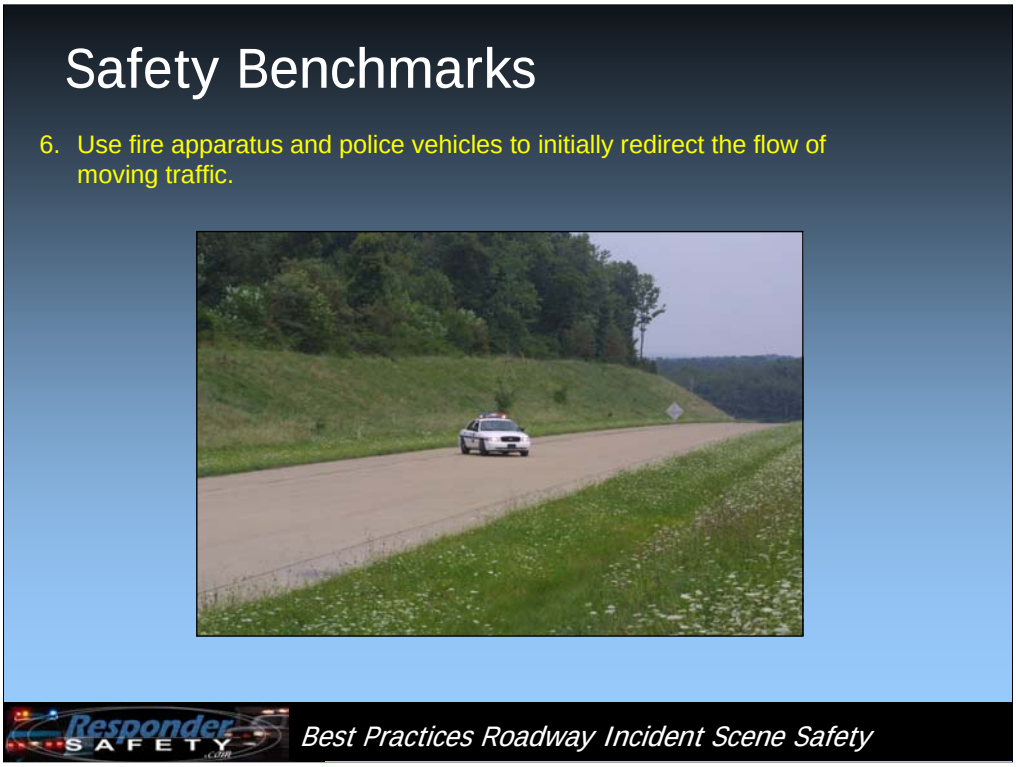
4. Wear appropriate PPE including ANSI high visibility reflective vests as required by department policy.

At the time this presentation was created the new ANSI emergency responder compliant vests were not readily available. However, this will be the standard for reflective clothing to be worn by emergency responders. The standard was created because the Class III requirements necessitated sleeves on the vest which are not practical for responders.

It is important for organizations to have department policy that stipulates what level of PPE is required at roadway incidents. Consideration should be given to the to wearing full structural fire fighting gear (bunker gear) including helmets. Police and EMS departments may have less to consider.

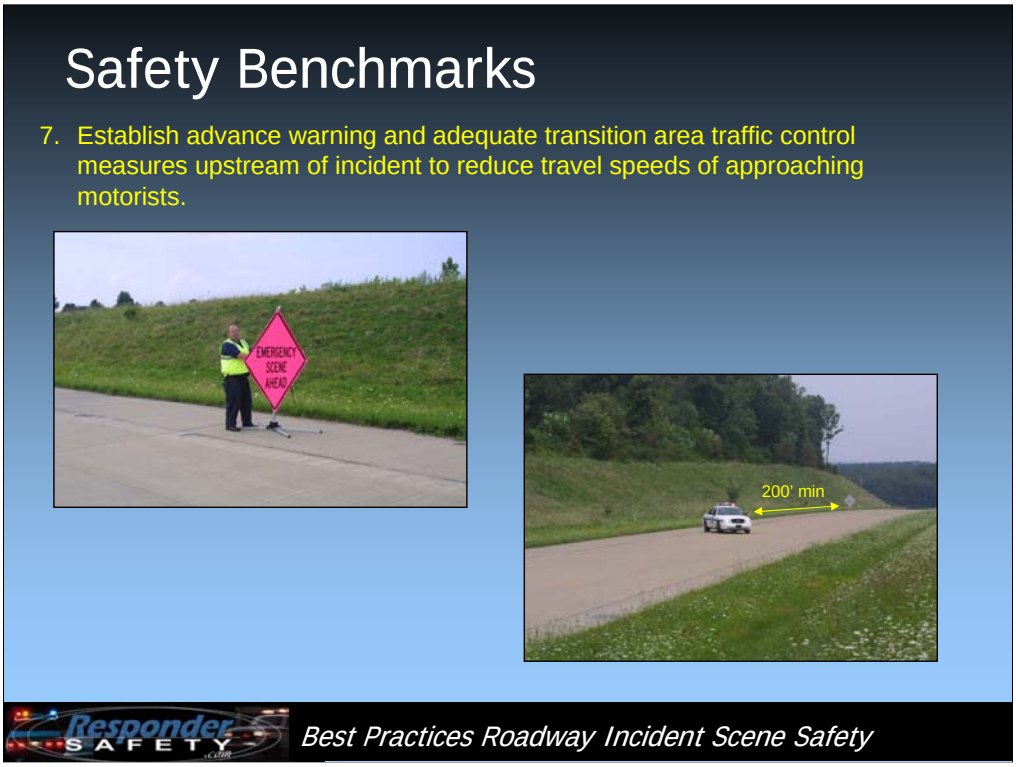
5. At nighttime incidents turn off all sources of vision impairment to approaching vehicles including vehicle headlights and spotlights.

Consider the effect on approaching traffic of all emergency lighting. The high intensity lights that are so effective for emergency warning can also be blinding and confusing to approaching traffic in darkness, especially white light.



6. Use fire apparatus and police vehicles to initially redirect the flow of moving traffic.

Early on in a roadway incident it may not be possible to deploy traffic control devices in an effective manner. However response cannot be delayed until these devices are completely set up. Therefore, vehicles can be used, similarly to blocking position, to redirect the flow of traffic.

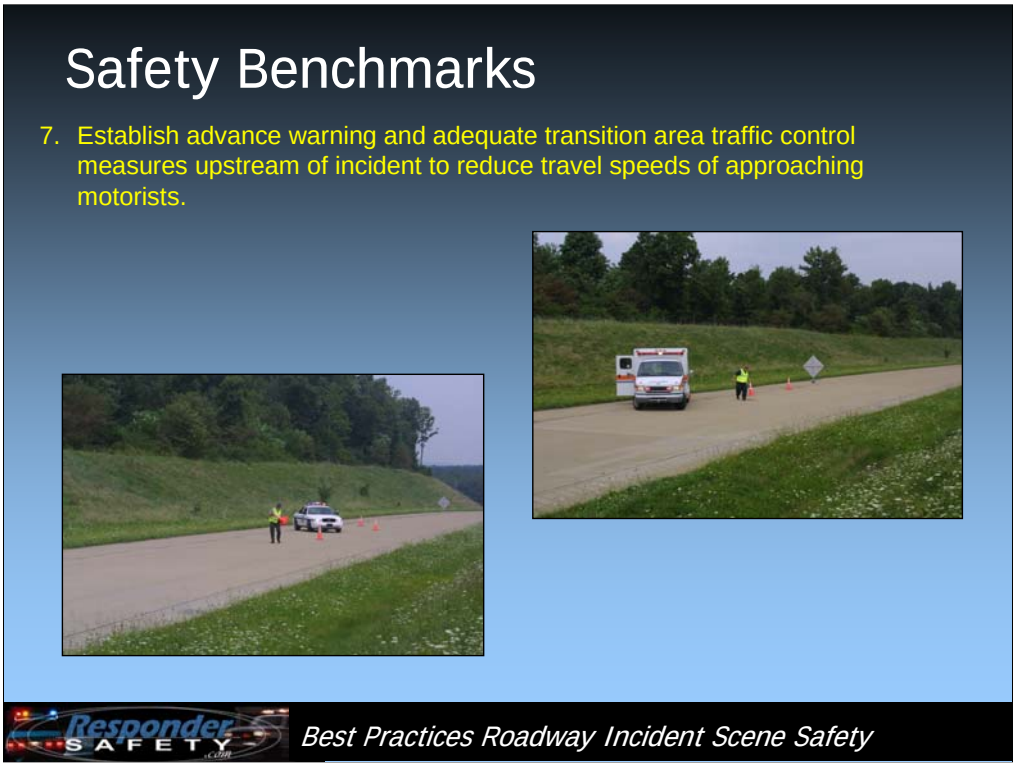


7. Establish advance warning and adequate transition area traffic control measures upstream of incident to reduce travel speeds of approaching motorists.

Advance warning is defined as notification procedures that advise approaching motorists to transition from normal driving status to that required by the temporary emergency traffic control measures ahead of them.

Section 6I-1 Warning and guide signs used for TTC traffic incident management situations may have a black legend and border on a fluorescent pink background (see Figure 6I-1).

Section 6F.16 Position of Advance Warning Signs Guidance: Where highway conditions permit, warning signs should be placed in advance of the TTC zone at varying distances depending on roadway type, condition, and posted speed. Table 6C-1 contains information regarding the spacing of advance warning signs. Where a series of two or more advance warning signs is used, the closest sign to the TTC zone should be placed approximately 30 m (100 ft) for low-speed urban streets to 300 m (1,000 ft) or more for freeways and expressways. Support: Various conditions, such as limited sight distance or obstructions that might require a driver to reduce speed or stop, might require additional advance warning signs. Option: As an alternative to a specific distance on advance warning signs, the word AHEAD may be used. Support: At TTC zones on lightly-traveled roads, all of the advance warning signs prescribed for major construction might not be needed. Option: Utility work, maintenance, or minor construction can occur within the TTC zone limits of a major construction project, and additional warning signs may be needed. Guidance: Utility, maintenance

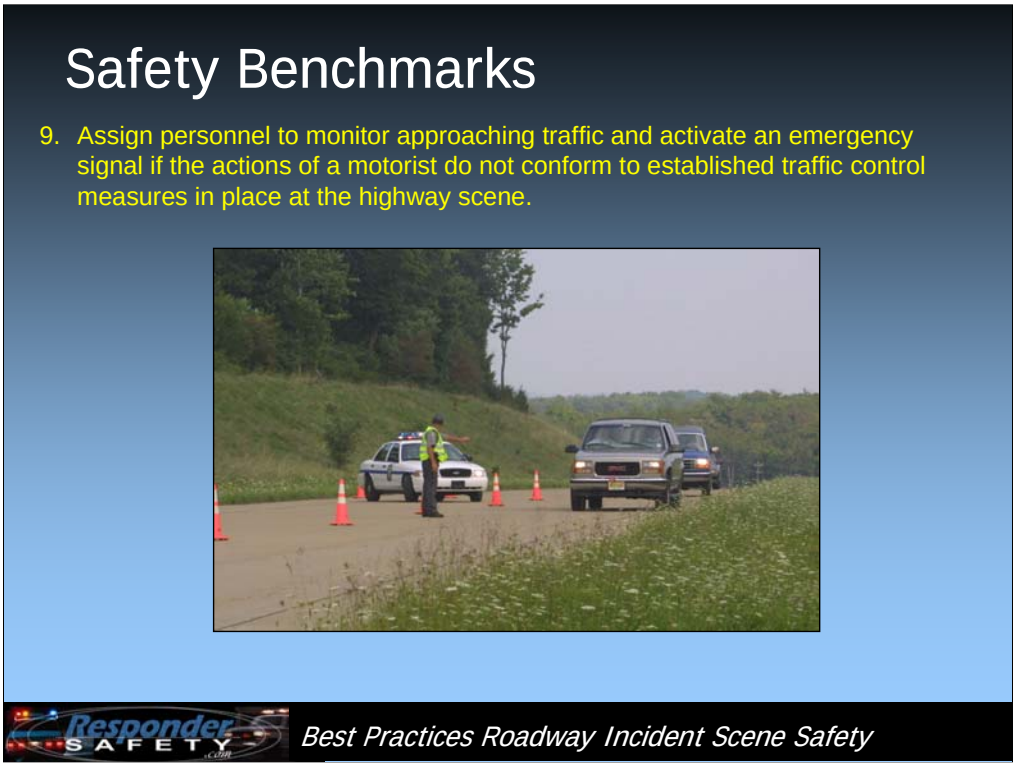


7. Establish advance warning and adequate transition area traffic control measures upstream of incident to reduce travel speeds of approaching motorists.

A transition area or zone is defined as the lanes of a roadway within which the approaching motorists change their speed and position to comply with the traffic control measures established at an incident scene.

8. Use traffic cones and/or cones illuminated by flares where appropriate for sustained highway incident traffic control and direction.

As a roadway incident progresses more traffic control devices can be set up and may be required to maintain traffic flow. This includes traffic cones and other control devices such as emergency signage, arrow boards, and attenuators.



9. Assign personnel to monitor approaching traffic and activate an emergency signal if the actions of a motorist do not conform to established traffic control measures in place at the highway scene.

Due to the fact that approaching traffic cannot be trusted to conform to the traffic control measures established at a scene it is recommended that one or more responders be assigned to monitor traffic. All responders are responsible for monitoring traffic, however due to blocking vehicles and responsibilities on scene this may not always be easily accomplished. A dedicated monitor of approaching traffic can warn all other responders of a threat and possibly take action to alert the motorist of the problem.