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# NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Yielding to emergency vehicles can save lives, property

PROSPER (January 20, 2015) As the number of vehicles in and around Prosper continues to increase, the potential for the utilization of emergency vehicles increases proportionately, says Fire Chief Ronnie Tucker.

“Plus add the number of young, inexperienced drivers into the mix, and the potential increases even more,” he said. “So, more vehicles can translate into more traffic accidents, but more importantly, the additional traffic presents problems for emergency vehicles.”

Whether the emergency vehicle is a fire truck, police cruiser or ambulance, motorists should remember the rules of the road as they pertain to emergency vehicles responding to an emergency.

Texas traffic laws mandate that drivers must yield the right-of-way to police cars, fire trucks, ambulances, and other emergency vehicles that have their sirens or lights activated. Drivers must pull to the right edge of the roadway and stop in a safe manner, not obstructing an intersection. If traffic is so congested that pulling to the right is not possible, drivers must slow down and leave a clear path for the emergency vehicle.

“Police officers sometimes risk injury to themselves and others when drivers do not adhere to these rules,” adds Police Chief Doug Kowalski. “Some drivers mistakenly stop in the middle of the road, expecting the officer to take evasive action. At a high rate of speed, that maneuver can be costly.”

Drivers of fire trucks have the most difficult time when motorists do not follow protocol, says Chief Tucker. “Our drivers are highly-skilled and undergo constant training, but the fire trucks are heavy with equipment and personnel, and making them drive through a slalom or making them guess which way you’re going to turn makes it extremely difficult for them and for the firefighters.”

Worse, adds Tucker, is the motorist who impedes the progress of an EMS unit. “Those 15-20 seconds that it takes EMS drivers to get around stopped cars or wait for cars to get out of the way could mean the difference between life and death.”

The use of common sense when seeing an approaching emergency vehicles with lights or sirens activated should take priority over personal urgencies, agree the Chiefs. Arriving a little late to work or a soccer game is well worth it when lives are at stake.

Additionally, the Texas “move over” law requires drivers nearing a stopped emergency vehicle with lights activated to vacate the lane closest to the emergency vehicle, if the road has at least two lanes in the direction of the emergency vehicle; or reduce speed by 20 mph when the posted speed limit is 25 mph or higher; or reduce speed by 5 mph when the posted speed limit is less than 25 mph.

“Think to yourself, what if it was my house on fire or my child in the ambulance or my spouse in an accident,” said Chief Tucker. “If we look at it in that light, we can better appreciate the need to comply.”

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**ABOUT THE TOWN OF PROSPER** – The Town of Prosper is a fast-growing suburb with small town charm, located 30 miles north of Dallas at the crossroads of U.S. 380, Preston Road and the Dallas North Tollway in Collin and Denton Counties. Prosper sits on 27 square miles and is home to more than 15,000 people. A home-rule municipality, governed by a council-manager form of government, the town has full-time fire and police departments, including its own dispatch service. As the Town grows to its projected build-out population of 70,000 residents, Prosper’s vision is to remain a “Place Where Everyone Matters.”