

# FACE IT: Report Slides



Law Enforcement Officer – Motor Vehicle



## Trooper Struck By Vehicle While Investigating Crash on Interstate Highway—Oklahoma (NIOSH LEO 2015-01)

# Summary

- A 30-year-old Oklahoma Highway Patrol (OHP) trooper was fatally injured when he was struck by a passing motorist.
- The trooper had responded to a crash involving a tanker truck and was at the scene when the incident occurred.
- The tanker truck was overturned, blocking the left westbound lane of the interstate and extending into the median.



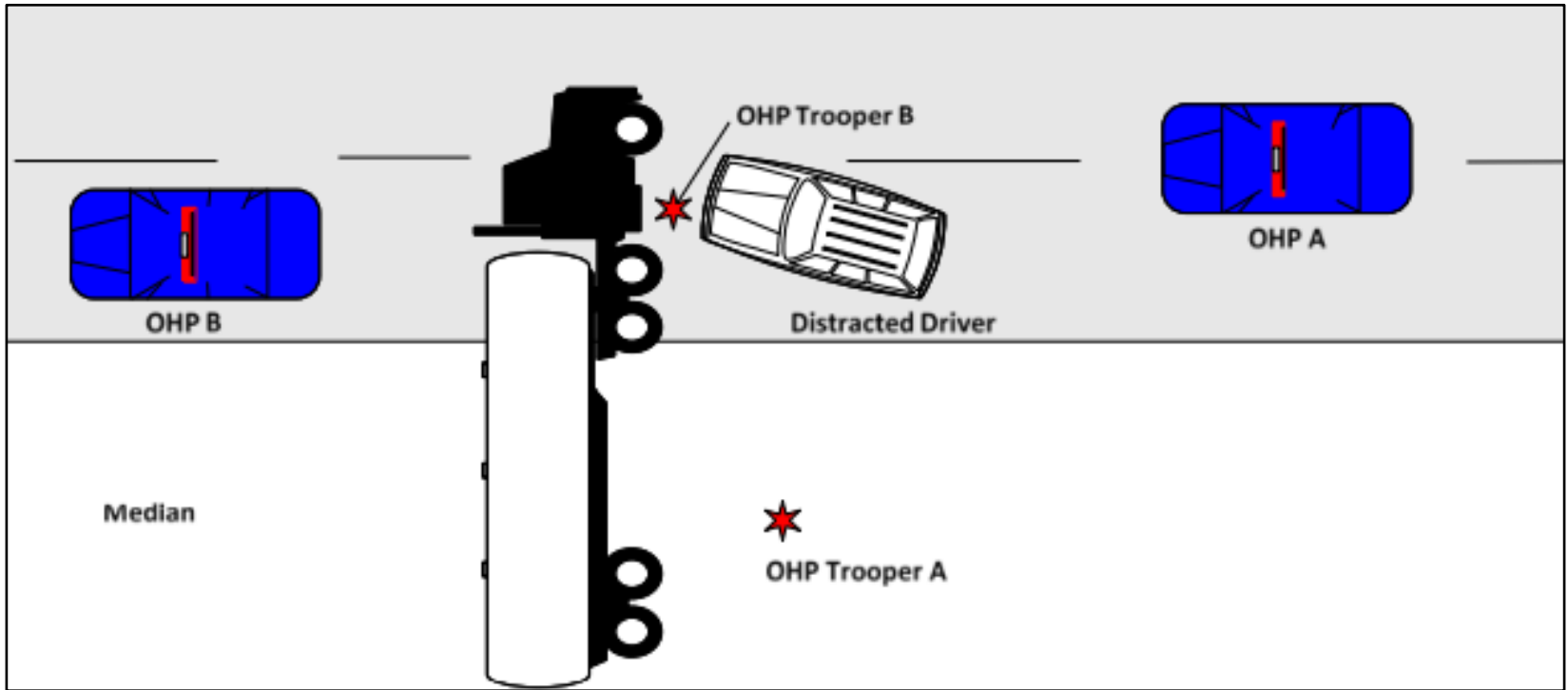
Crash scene. (Photo courtesy of Oklahoma Highway Patrol.)

# Summary



Law Enforcement Officer – Motor Vehicle

- One additional OHP trooper and two officers from the local county sheriff's office also responded to the crash.
- The two OHP troopers were standing in a westbound lane upstream of the lane closure in an area that was partially blocked to traffic, with their backs toward oncoming traffic, assessing the scene.
- At that time, a motorist driving in the westbound lane partially left the roadway, went around a patrol car, and struck both troopers. One OHP trooper died on impact; the other OHP trooper was critically injured and transported to a Level 1 trauma center.



Location of vehicles at time when officers were struck.



# Contributing Factors

- Distracted motorist
- Visibility/Weather— dark, raining, wet roadway
- LEOs standing in partially blocked lane of traffic, upstream of the lane closure
- LEOs positioned with back to the direction of oncoming traffic
- Positioning of patrol cars—one before, one beyond
- Incident occurred during scene size-up
- Roaming civilians distracting LEOs
- 911 communication system



Law Enforcement Officer – Motor Vehicle

# Recommendations

- State, county and municipal authorities should consider promoting public awareness campaigns for distracted driving laws and the risks law enforcement officers face while responding to highway/roadway incidents
- State, county, and municipal law enforcement agencies should consider developing a standard operating procedure (SOP) for establishing safe work areas for emergency responders at highway/roadway incidents.
- State, county, and municipal law enforcement agencies should consider maximizing the use of patrol units and other responding emergency vehicles in the design of the temporary traffic control area as they arrive (i.e., deploying the vehicles).
- State, county, and municipal law enforcement agencies should consider developing a standard operating procedure (SOP) that includes guidance on how to properly establish a temporary traffic control plan, including advance warning and transition areas for highway/roadway emergency incidents.

# Recommendations



Crash scene. (Photo courtesy of Oklahoma Highway Patrol.)

- State, county, and municipal law enforcement agencies should consider developing and implementing a standard operating procedure (SOP) for response and vehicle/resource deployment protocols for highway/roadway incidents involving hazardous materials.
- State, county, and municipal law enforcement agencies should ensure all officers wear suitable high-visibility, retro-reflective vests when operating at highway/roadway incidents.



# Trooper Struck By Vehicle While Investigating Crash on Interstate Highway—Oklahoma (NIOSH LEO 2015-01)

Law Enforcement Officer  
Vehicle Struck-by Investigation

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**LEO 2015-01**  
July 10, 2017

**Trooper Struck By Vehicle While Investigating Crash on Interstate Highway—Oklahoma**

*Revised August 4, 2017 to update Federal Highway Administration references and discussion text for recommendation # 6.*

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

On January 31, 2015, a 30-year-old Oklahoma Highway Patrol (OHP) trooper was fatally injured when he was struck by a passing motorist. The trooper had responded to a crash involving a tanker truck and was at the scene when the incident occurred. The tanker truck was overturned, blocking the left westbound lane of the interstate and extending into the median. One additional OHP trooper and two officers from the local county sheriff's office also responded to the crash.



The two OHP troopers were standing in a westbound lane upstream of the lane closure in an area that was partially blocked to traffic, with their backs toward oncoming traffic, assessing the scene. At that time, a motorist driving in the westbound lane partially left the roadway, went around a patrol car, and struck both troopers. One OHP trooper died on impact; the other OHP trooper was critically injured and transported to a Level 1 trauma center.

**Crash scene.**  
*(Photo courtesy of Oklahoma Highway Patrol.)*

**CONTRIBUTING FACTORS**

- Distracted motorist
- Visibility/Weather—dark, raining, wet roadway
- Law enforcement officers (LEO) standing in partially blocked lane of traffic, upstream of the lane closure
- LEOs positioned with back to the direction of oncoming traffic
- Positioning of patrol cars—one before, one beyond
- Incident occurred during scene size-up
- Roaming civilians distracting LEOs
- 911 communication system

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Download the full report: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/leo/pdfs/L201501.pdf>





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