

# Chief's Corner

By CHIEF HARRY RICH,  
ILLINOIS VALLEY FIRE DISTRICT

In order to help firefighters and paramedics get to emergencies more quickly, keep noise down in your vehicle so that you can hear sirens -- and when you hear a siren, remember:

\*Look in all directions for emergency vehicles to plan your next move, and be aware that there may be more than one responding crew.

\*If you are at a green light and hear sirens, look for emergency vehicles before proceeding through the intersection.

\*Don't slam on your brakes.

\*Don't pull over suddenly.

\*Use your blinkers to show emergency crews the direction you are moving.

\*On the freeway, carefully move out of the lane used by emergency crews: again, use your directional signals.

\*Don't try to outrun emergency vehicles.

\*Don't follow emergency vehicles too closely.

\*Don't stop at a spot where an emergency vehicle can't get around you.

\*After the crew passes, carefully merge back into traffic.

Illinois Valley Fire District and American Medical Response crews are seeing a growing number of motorists who don't yield for the lights and sirens of fire engines and ambulances. It's not only unlawful to impede the response of emergency vehicles: you could be delaying life-saving medical help.

The U.S. Dept. of Transportation's National Hwy. Traffic Safety Administration has a program designed to educate the public about the importance of yielding to emergency vehicles. To learn more about "Let Them Through ... It Could Be You," see the Website.



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Here are the appropriate Oregon statutes:

\*811.145 Failure to yield to emergency vehicle or ambulance; penalty. (1) A person commits the offense of failure to yield to an emergency vehicle or ambulance if an ambulance or emergency vehicle that is using a visual or audible signal in a manner described under ORS 820.300 and 820.320 approaches the vehicle the person is operating and the person does not do all of the following:

(a) Yield the right-of-way to the ambulance or emergency vehicle.

(b) Immediately drive to a position as near as possible and parallel to the right-hand edge of the curb of the roadway clear of any intersection.

(c) Stop and remain in such position until the emergency vehicle or ambulance has passed.

(2) A person is not in violation of this section if the person is acting as otherwise directed by a police officer.

(3) This section does not relieve the driver of an emergency vehicle or ambulance from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons using the highway, nor does this section protect the driver of any such vehicle from the consequence of an arbitrary exercise of the right-of-way granted under this section.

(4) The offense described in this section, failure to yield to an emergency vehicle or ambulance, is a Class B traffic violation.

\*811.147 Failure to maintain safe distance from emergency vehicle or ambulance; penalty. (1) A person operating a motor vehicle commits the offense of failure to maintain a safe distance from an emergency vehicle or ambulance if the person approaches an emergency vehicle or ambulance that is stopped and displaying required warning lights and the person:

(a) On a highway having two or more lanes for traffic in a single direction, fails to:

(A) Make a lane change to a lane not adjacent to that of the emergency vehicle or ambulance; or

(B) Reduce speed of the motor vehicle, if making a lane change is unsafe.

(b) On a two directional, two-lane highway, fails to reduce the speed of the motor vehicle.

(2) The offense described in this section, failure to maintain a safe distance from an emergency vehicle or ambulance, is a Class B traffic violation.

\*Note: 811.147 was added to and made a part of the Oregon Vehicle Code by legislative action, but was not added to ORS chapter 811 or any series therein. See Preface to Oregon Revised Statutes for further explanation.

\*811.150 Interference with emergency vehicle or ambulance; penalty. (1) A person commits the offense of interference with an emergency vehicle or ambulance if the person does any of the following:

(a) Drives a vehicle following at a distance closer than 500 feet any emergency vehicle or ambulance; that is traveling in response to a fire alarm or emergency.

(c) Drives over an unprotected hose of a fire department laid down on any highway, private road or driveway to be used at any fire, alarm of fire or emergency.

(2) The following exemptions apply to this section:

(a) Nothing in this section prohibits a driver of an emergency vehicle or ambulance from following within 500 feet of an emergency vehicle or ambulance traveling in response to a fire alarm or emergency, or from driving into or parking a vehicle in the area or vicinity where such vehicles have stopped in response to an alarm or emergency.

(b) Nothing in this section prevents any person from driving over an unprotected hose of a fire department if the person first obtains the permission of a fire official or police officer at the scene of the fire, alarm of fire or emergency.

(3) The offense described in this section, interference with an emergency vehicle or ambulance, is a Class B traffic violation.



## ODOT announces Bear Camp Road open for travel

Oregon Dept. of Transportation (ODOT) crews finished plowing Bear Camp Road on Monday, May 15 so that the single-lane road with turnouts may be available for travelers during Memorial Day weekend.

The popular road links the communities of Galice and Agness, running parallel to Rogue River.

"Mother Nature really helped us out this year with the warmer temperatures," said ODOT District Manager John Vail. Near the summit, snowplows and blowers cut through snow drifts more than 8 feet deep. Stretches along the flats had up to 6 feet of snow.

With snow-plowing completed, Bear Camp Road still remains closed and blocked by a slide.

U.S. Forest Service engineers said that contractors hired by the agency have started the temporary slide repair work needed on Forest Road #23 (Bear Camp Road) at milepost 34 on the Gold Beach side. This temporary fix will realign this segment of the road and stabilize it. Numerous hazard trees also will need to be removed for safety purposes.

During June, the public will encounter maintenance work being completed on Bear Camp Road. Next year the forest service will schedule permanent repair work to fix the slide area.

With Bear Camp Road closed, travelers can take either the Eden Valley road

(Forest Road 3348), which is cleared of snow and passable at this time, or U.S. Hwys. 199 or 101.

BLM engineers said that two access roads leading to Bear Camp also should be open on Memorial Day weekend.

The 6.5 mile Peavine-Serpentine Springs route is the primary travel route to access Bear Camp. This is a two-way travel route, narrow and steep in places with a 10-ton load limit. The agency plans for the Peavine-Serpentine Springs route to be open on Memorial weekend.

In early June, BLM managers will close the road for approximately 45 days to complete final road improvements. They will include chip-sealing, culvert replacement and roadside clearing for improved sight distance on the remainder of the Peavine Road.

By Memorial weekend, the Galice Access Road may

also be open providing a second access route to Bear Camp Road. Currently, this road is undergoing construction and has remained blocked by a landslide some 4.5 miles from the junction with Merlin-Galice Road.

U.S. Hwys. 199 and 101 are the recommended routes for trailers, motor homes and oversized vehicles, as well as for all winter travel. All drivers are reminded to drive cautiously and with their lights on.

### Laurel Cemetery Association

Annual Meeting and Potluck  
Sunday, May 28

Meeting: 10:30 a.m.

Laurel Cemetery Chapel

Potluck: 11:00 a.m.

Senior Center

520 E. River, Cave Junction



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Bring your family, friends, neighbors and picnic gear. Everyone is welcome but please no dogs.

Proceeds will help fund free-admission swim days at the Cave Junction Pool & the continued renovation of the Cave Junction Skatepark & other projects supported by The Shining Stars.

The Shining Stars is a grassroots, non-profit organization committed to bringing arts, music and recreational opportunities to the children of the Illinois Valley.

Phone to join us, volunteer or donate:  
**541-592-2236.**