

Intersection Accident

INCIDENT DETAILS

An Officer who was operating a marked Ford sedan police interceptor pursuit vehicle (PPV) responded as the fourth car to a reported fight. His emergency lights and sirens were activated as he traveled westbound to the dispatched location. The posted speed limit in the area was 30 mph. The witness statements are consistent in reporting that the officer had a red traffic signal as he entered the intersection and that the police cruiser had its emergency lights and sirens activated. One of the witnesses indicates that the cruiser was moving very fast.

It was determined through examination of the physical evidence that the approximate speed of the police cruiser was 67 mph. The civilian vehicle was traveling at about 19 mph, and any braking only occurred after the vehicles entered the intersection, fractions of a second before impact.

RISK ANALYSIS

Evidence and statements indicate that the Officer did not slow in response to the red traffic light to safely clear the intersection and **in failing to do so was the cause of this collision.**

LIABILITY

There were six occupants in the civilian vehicle. Each of the occupants suffered injuries ranging from minor to serious, including fractures requiring surgical repair. Because the Officer did not continue to drive with the safety and due regard of others and endangered life and property, the liability rests with the Officer and the department.

LESSONS LEARNED

Although Connecticut General Statute (CGS) 14-283 provides discretion on how an officer proceeds through an intersection, it clearly states that officers must continue to drive with safety and due regard for the safety of others.

- Sec. 14-283. (b) The operator of any emergency vehicle may (1) park or stand such vehicle, irrespective of the provisions of this chapter, (2) proceed past any red light or stop signal or stop sign, but only after slowing down or stopping to the extent necessary for the safe operation of such vehicle, (3) exceed the posted speed limits or other speed limits imposed by or pursuant to section 14-218a or 14-219 **as long as such operator does not endanger life or property by so doing,...**

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

Evidence and statements indicate that the Officer did not slow his response to the red traffic light to safely clear the intersection to the extent necessary to proceed safely and **in failing to do so was the cause of this collision.**

- COME TO A COMPLETE STOP AT ALL INTERSECTIONS.
- Do not exceed the posted speed limit. Exceeding the posted speed limit only reduces response time on average by 20 seconds.

Questions? Ask your Supervisor or contact your CIRMA Risk Management Consultant at (203) 946-3700.