



The Next Level In Driver Training

Tactical Response Academy
3850 Portland Road
Salem, OR 97303

Don Crites, President
Paula Crites, Vice President
Stephen Buckley, Instructor
Bruce Hoffman, Instructor
Gary Workman, Instructor
Gary G. Miller, Training Consultant, Crash Reconstructionist

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Special points of interest:

- TRA provides professional driver training.
- TRA has certified EVOC instructors.
- TRA has a nationally accredited crash Reconstructionist.
- TRA is committed to your agency or organization and can accommodate any level of training.

Tactical Responses

Front Wheel Malfunction Leads to Crash

By Gary G. Miller



On Friday, March 17, 2006, an Oregon State Trooper, while on routine patrol, was negotiating a left curve at an estimated speed of 60mph. As the vehicle entered the curve a catastrophic tire failure occurred in the front right tire resulting in sudden air loss. The vehicle pulled to the right as the trooper attempted to steer to the left. The vehicle struck the

guardrail on the right shoulder and eventually came to rest between the vectors of the path of the curve and the path of travel. It is quite fortunate that both the operator of the vehicle and a passenger received only minor injuries.

What makes this case particularly unique is that the vehicle in question is a 2003 Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor and the subject of a NHTSA safety recall bulletin 3V279 and engineering analysis EA04034. The safety recall warns owners of police interceptors that this year, make, and model is subject to rim failure, sudden air loss, and injury and/or death resulting from control loss and subsequent vehicle crash. The rims on this vehicle were the subject of prior investigations (PE03009), safety recall (03V279000), and manufacturer extended warranty programs according to NHTSA Office of

Meet The President of TRA "Don Crites"

By Gary G. Miller



Don Crites is the owner and President of the Tactical Response Academy (TRA), a division of The Oregon Drivers Education Center, Inc.(ODEC).

Q: What was the motivation behind starting TRA?

A: "ODEC provided training for First Strike

Environmental after that business was involved in a tragic crash in eastern Oregon that claimed the lives of 8 wildland firefighters. It was soon thereafter that one of the instructors, Stephen Buckley, proposed using a driving simulator to take the training



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*"tire failure can and
does occur anytime
and for many reasons.
Proper response to
tire failure is
critical"...Gary G.
Miller*

Tire Malfunction leads to Crash (Continued)



Defects Investigations. The rims may crack or break at the weld, which joins the rim and wheel disk in the area where the outboard tire bead contacts the rim.

Unlike most rear tire air loss events, front tire air loss events significantly increase the chance of control loss from tire failure since the vehicle pulls sharply in the direction of the tire failure. The effect is similar to a brake that catches or grabs; as the brake is applied, the vehicle pulls either right or left depending on which tire is creating the most resistance. A front tire failure will dramatically pull the vehicle in the direction of the tire failure. The impulse to brake may magnify the effect and can lead to even greater control loss.

TRA has been providing statewide training in this area, utilizing a state-of-the-art driving simulator. One specific scenario is control loss from a front tire blowout and how to correct from this type of event. In this case it is unknown whether the officer correctly managed the event to minimize control loss. It is known, however, that the officer shouldn't have been placed in this situation in the first place.

TRA reminds you that tire failure can and does occur anytime and for many reasons. Proper response to tire failure is critical. TRA teaches to drive with two-hands, be prepared for the sharp pull in the direction of the air loss (right front air loss pulls to the right while left front air loss pulls to the left),



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Don Crites....."It gave me an opportunity to make a difference in the public safety sector"

Tire Malfunction leads to Crash (continued)

be prepared for (and resist) the sudden desire to overcompensate the steering in the opposite direction, to initially neutralize the throttle (do not brake and in some cases you may need to accelerate very briefly to help counter the control loss), and firmly control the steering of the vehicle. Once you have control of the vehicle one can then brake gently and pull off the road. Sudden, reactionary braking will further exacerbate the situation and pull the vehicle more towards the direction of tire failure.

Please review the NHTSA website at www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/problems/recalls for additional information on this and any other safety recalls and bulletins.

The information in this article was obtained with permission from the Oregon State Police. Many thanks to Southwest Region Collision Reconstructionist, Jeff Willis, for the photographs and documentation.

Meet The President Don Crites (continued).....

to the next level. Private and public entities were contacted to develop partnerships and to determine the viability of such training. It was soon apparent that there was a demand and need for the training. It gave me an opportunity to make a difference in the public safety sector."

Q: How would you evaluate your first year of business?

A: "Our first year exceeded my expectations in many ways. We have been extremely fortunate to round out our training staff with veteran Emergency Vehicle Operations Course (EVO) instructors Bruce Hoffman and Gary Workman. Retired OSP Lt and Collision Reconstruction expert Gary Miller has provided excellent training and leadership."

Q: Other than the instructors and students who were the biggest outside contributors behind TRA?

A: "The forward thinking of City-County Insurance Services (CIS) Executive Director Noel Kline has served as the backbone of our program.

Through the funding of CIS, police agencies throughout the state have been able to take advantage of state-of-the-art training without leaving their own town. Special Districts Association of Oregon (SDAO) Risk Management Director, Scott Neufeld, saw the need for firefighter training as well and has been the driving force for advanced vehicle operator training for their members."

Q:What do you see as one of the biggest challenges ahead?

A: "With such overwhelming positive responses from participating agencies; a number of public works and state agencies have requested training as well; including the City of Salem, City of Corvallis, Washington Co, ODOT, DMV,

OSP, etc. But for every agency that gets the training, there are 10 that want it, but lack the funding. "

Q: Where do you see TRA five years from now?

A: "Five years from now I expect that simulator-based training will be a standard component for recruits as well as the ongoing perishable skills training for all emergency vehicle operators. It will also become the standard training for transit drivers, public works employees, state workers, corporate drivers, and even dignitary protection units. We will see a reduction of crashes (and subsequently a reduction in fatal and injury crashes) and fewer risk management claims. Sim-based driver TRaining will be integrated with sim-based fire-arms training. "



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Future Training Dates

TRA continues to provide on and off site driver training. In July TRA will be in the Portland Metro area to provide Simulator-based Emergency Vehicle Operations Training to various law enforcement and firefighter agencies.

- August—Lane County Area
- September—Klamath Falls Area
- October —LaGrande/Ontario Areas

If you are interested in setting up future training dates please call us.

Future Issues/Articles

Fall Issue
Speed—What does it really mean?



Tactical Responses is a quarterly public service newsletter that is freely available either by including yourself on the TRA email newsletter list or by reviewing it on the website www.tacticalresponseacademy.com.

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