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News Release

For Immediate Release

Police, Fire departments step up educational efforts on fire lane violations

After stepping up enforcement last week against motorists who park in front of fire hydrants and in designated fire lanes downtown, City officials are pleased the attention has created awareness about the dangerous practice. They hope the awareness leads to compliance, especially in high-risk areas where officials are finding it difficult to provide emergency services when and where they are needed.

After noticing a growing problem, officials decided to deploy fire marshals and police officers in a concentrated effort to stem the practice of illegal parking in fire zones in high-risk areas. After weeks of issuing warnings, they began to issue tickets last week.

The fine for parking in a fire lane is \$25.

Per fire code, it is illegal to obstruct fire lane in any manner. However, officers use their discretion, taking the circumstances of each situation into account, before determining whether or not to issue a citation.

In the last three years, the Fire Department has provided emergency response to Park Central Square, for example, more than 250 times. Parking or stopping in fire zones can disrupt firefighting efforts and put life and property at risk, said Fire Chief David Hall.

"There have been incidents of our response being delayed due to drivers illegally parking or stopping in fire lanes," he said. "And in an emergency situation, every second counts."

Fire Chief Hall and Police Chief Paul Williams say their two departments will continue to work together to focus enforcement efforts on the highest risk areas where there have been ongoing problems with fire lane violations. Some examples include bars and nightclubs, sororities, fraternities, major retail establishments, in addition to efforts around the Square.

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