February 25, 2010

News Release

For Immediate Release

January 2010 Crash Report Card

Public Works has released the January 2010 Crash Report Card for crashes from Jan. 1 through Jan. 31. Total reported crashes (627) are 15 percent higher than for the same time period in 2009. Injury crashes for January 2010 are also up by 22 percent compared the amount of injury crashes in January 2009. There were no fatality crashes in January 2010. Public Works attributes the increased number of crashes to the snow and ice on local streets during January.

February Safety Message – Defensive Driving

In 2009, there were more than 2,000 injury crashes on Springfield’s roads. Almost all traffic crashes are avoidable. Many result in tragic losses to families and all create an economic burden to the community.

“Defensive driving” is more than just another slogan, it’s a developed skill. Applying certain techniques and learning how to be aware of the conditions around you will help save lives, time and money. The idea is to not only to be responsible for you and your vehicle’s safety, but to be prepared to respond to other people’s driving errors.

Be proactive

- Always scan ahead, around, and behind when you are driving, to identify potential hazards.
- If there are curves ahead of you, slow down and stay close to the edge of the road.
- Avoid all distractions, such as cell phone use, and do not drive intoxicated. Keep a safe distance and keep your eyes on drivers who are distracted.
- Yield to pedestrians and give bicyclists as much room as possible. Train yourself to always check for nearby pedestrians and bikes when you make left and right turns.

Create a safety buffer

- If you are travelling on multi-lane roads, avoid staying in another vehicle’s blind spot.
- When a signal turns green and you’re the first one at the stop bar, wait two seconds with your foot on the brake and scan for red-light runners before you enter the intersection.
- Apply the 3-second rule to determine your following distance. For congested traffic, add one more second; for rain and snow add 2 seconds.
- On single-lane streets, stay slightly to the right of your lane, putting more distance between you and head-on traffic.
Be responsive

- If you are in a situation where you have to choose between a head-on crash or riding off the shoulder, ride off the shoulder because your odds of survival are better.
- If you leave the road, drive off the pavement and don’t swerve. Reduce your speed gradually. Aim for softer objects rather than hard structures if possible (aim for bushes rather than trees).
- Adjust your speed to the weather conditions. If you can’t see, don’t drive.
- Inform E-911 operators about road rage or motorists that clearly seem to be intoxicated. Give plenty of room to stopped or moving emergency vehicles.

Please drive alertly and responsibly. With your help, we can make Springfield a safer community.