Winter Driving Fatality File

Youth Reserve Recruit Killed in Automobile Collision While Traveling on Duty

A 17-year-old male Marine Reserve recruit was a passenger in a vehicle that went out of control as it attempted to pass a large truck.

At the time of the incident, the two-lane highway was snow-packed and icy, and had a posted speed limit of 55 mph (89 kph).

When the driver moved the car into the other lane to pass the truck, he realized there was oncoming traffic and immediately tried to steer the vehicle back into his lane.

But the car began to slide on the icy road, positioning itself crossways, where it was struck on the passenger side by an oncoming vehicle.

The young reserve recruit was pronounced dead at the scene.

Witnesses estimate that prior to the collision, both vehicles were going the posted speed limit.

The other recruits and the driver of the oncoming vehicle survived the collision and were taken to the hospital. The FACE investigator concluded that, to prevent similar occurrences, employers should:

- establish a policy that provides for postponement of nonessential travel during hazardous conditions. Additionally, employers should establish a method for notifying workers of schedule changes due to hazardous travel conditions.
- contact the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment Standards Administration Wage and Hour Division and the state agency responsible for child labor for guidance in complying with child labor laws which prohibit certain types of work by

workers less than 18-years-old.

- ensure all travelers are trained in the proper use of vehicle safety features and drivers are trained in safe driving practices.