

Law Enforcement Technology

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Equipment Review

by Ed Sanow

(Quotes from the article - full article available.)

An estimated 20,000 police cars are involved in some form of property damage or personal injury accident each year. The National Safety Council indicates police officers are more likely to be injured in an auto accident than shot or otherwise violently wounded. Municipalities pay out more in claims related to the patrol car than all other liabilities combined, including firearms.

The landmark failure-to-train case, *Canton v. Harris*, has put all of law enforcement on notice. The decision handed down says that officers must be trained how to respond to usual and recurring situations that could affect the civil rights of another person. The motorskill areas most affected by this Supreme Court decision are firearms, defensive tactics and emergency driving.

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The SkidCar makes it possible to have realistic training in the proper dynamics of vehicle control without high speeds, expenses and risks. Better described as a skid avoidance car platform, the SkidCar teaches controlled driving techniques for use at all vehicle speeds and under all road conditions.

In fact, the driving area can even contain lightpoles, buildings or other obstacles. The result is a realistic, high-stress training environment. Yet the vehicle is under the complete and failsafe control of the instructor. The hydraulic controls allow the instructor to instantly drop the vehicle to full pavement contact. This gives the student the very real sensation of impact risk and near-misses without the reality of the danger.

This visual risk, in turn, is quite effective in teaching a critical aspect of the SkidCar training. The driver must be taught to look where he wants the car to go and not at the obstacle he is about to impact. What makes this realism possible is the low actual vehicle speeds and the safety and risk-avoidance that comes from low speed training.

According to the Virginia Division of Training and Standards, the most common driver errors are too much throttle, braking too much, steering too much, being too rough or aggressive with the vehicle and the improper use of the eyes while driving. An estimated 85 percent of loss-of-control accidents are from over use of the steering and brakes. Most drivers fail to look in the right direction during a skid or far enough ahead while driving.

The SkidCar gives an immediate feedback to all of these faults. It will spin like a top if driven wrong, or instantly recover from a near-guardrail experience if the driver simply shifts his eyes to where he wants the car to go.

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