

Traffic stops are a danger zone for officers

Officers put life on line during each traffic stop
Being struck by car is their top cause of death

ROBERT STANTON, HOUSTON CHRONICLE | May 29, 2011

When Kevin Will donned his Houston Police Department uniform early Sunday, he joined 900,000 other peace officers around the nation who perform what the Bureau of Labor Statistics considers one of the most dangerous jobs in America — fighting crime.

Will, 38, was struck and killed by a suspected drunken driver while investigating an accident on the North Loop at 3:15 a.m. He was the first peace officer to die on duty in Houston this year, the 22nd to die in Texas in 2010-11, and the 77th to die nationally in 2011.

Every year in the U.S., about 150 police officers are killed in the line of duty, according to national Police Officers Safety Association. Every day, 150 officers are assaulted and 10 are shot at, the group reports.

Freeways especially bad

Nationally, being struck by a vehicle during a traffic stop is the leading cause of death for peace officers over the past decade, according to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund. Since 2001, 154 officers have lost their lives during traffic stops, the organization reports.

So far this year, 26 officers have died nationwide in traffic incidents, according to the memorial fund. That compares to 31 in 2010.

Gary Blankinship, who heads the Houston Police Officers Union, said highways are especially precarious places to work.

<http://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/article/Traffic-stops-are-a-danger-zone-for-officers-1688949.php>