

Alton Police respond to dozens of accidents over the weekend

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON - As many as 81 vehicle accidents were reported between Friday afternoon and Sunday morning in Alton, **Alton Police Chief Jason "Jake" Simmons** said.

Two of those incidents involved minor collisions with police vehicles, and one involved a fire truck, Simmons said. Of those many accidents, Simmons said there were several injuries, but none were life-threatening. Besides responding to more than 80 accidents, Simmons said the department also provided as many as 13 motorist assists, during which an officer waits with a motorist whose vehicle has become stuck as they await further assistance, such as a tow.

"Public service took some blows over this weekend, also," Simmons said. "We called in additional officers to alleviate wait times for people following accidents."

Due to the sheer amount of collisions and other weather-related incidents, Simmons said the department told many motorists who experienced accidents on private property to respond to the police department itself to finalize their accident reports, after giving the department their license plate numbers. Simmons said that was protocol in emergency weather situations for Alton as well as other large departments.

"When we were so overwhelmed Friday evening, we had people call their plate numbers into the department and, if their cars were still able to move, to report to the station for their final accident reports," he said.

Despite the amount of accidents, Simmons said as few as six citations were given throughout the weekend. He said Alton drivers were driving very well given the circumstances. Simmons said practice driving on slick brick hills in the winter time has given many drivers the experience and necessary caution to navigate most winter storms. This one, however, took many motorists by surprise.

"People were being very careful," he said. "People need to be more careful in winter precipitation. Most of Alton's drivers are very good. There were not too many citations or charges filed. Usually in situations like this, it's an act of God when weather is related. Normally, if people slide through intersections and stop signs, it warrants a citation, but when ice and snow are involved, it becomes an act of God."

Simmons also said people should be more understanding of the priorities of the Alton Public Works Department. He said public works needs to clear high-traffic main thoroughfares of Alton for first responders to get to emergency situations in a timely fashion. People living in neighborhoods outside the main routes of Alton have roads not treated until after the main roads have been cleared.