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THE PEORIA POLICE EMERGENCY CAR

O. F. Brinkman

Mr. O. F. Brinkman, an experienced police reporter on the staff of the Peoria Journal, Peoria, Illinois, has supplied us with a clear description of the safety-emergency car now used by the Peoria Police Department. Combining in one unit, a light Dodge truck, the features of a patrol car and emergency truck, it would seem that here is a unit which can serve moderate size cities adequately and usefully. Police readers, who desire additional information as to the effectiveness of this unit are invited to correspond with Capt. E. J. Lavin, Director of the Traffic Bureau, Peoria Police Department, Peoria, Illinois.—EDITOR.

The Peoria Police Department boasts of having in service one of the nation's best equipped safety-emergency cars. Manned by three trained crews under the supervision of Capt. Edward J. Lavin, head of the Traffic Bureau, the car is ready for service at all hours of the day. Because of its general adaptability to diversified traffic and police duty the car, its uses, and its equipment will be described briefly in this article.

The emergency car was equipped and designed so that it could be dispatched by police radio to all automobile accidents, large fires, and other disasters. Under such conditions and by reason of its construction it can be converted into an ambulance to remove the injured to a hospital in the case of extreme emergency. For more routine work the car is equipped with a public address system, independent of the two-way police radio hookup,



Figure 1.

The Peoria Police Emergency Car.

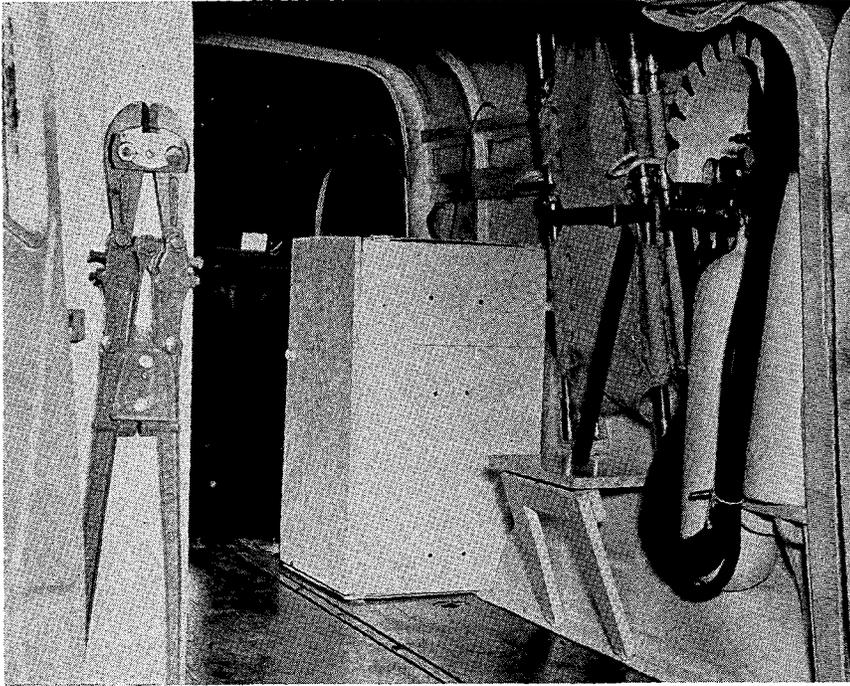


Figure 2.
An Interior View of the Emergency Car Showing
Arrangement of a Portion of the Equipment.

which address system is used daily to warn pedestrians against downtown jaywalking and to obey the automatic traffic signals.

The car itself is a light Dodge truck which is painted white and trimmed with gold lettering so that it may be readily recognized at accident scenes or on other duties. (See Figure 1.) A series of cabinets and racks have been built in the truck (Figure 2) to house the following equipment: A fireman's ax, sledge hammer, two iron chisels, four metal splints, a crow bar, shop coats to protect the uniforms of the officers, heavy leather gloves, and similar equipment. There is also included fire extinguishers containing chemicals for use in fighting gasoline fires and 20 feet of steel tow rope which can be used to right overturned motor vehicles or to remove wreckage from the streets. The car carries a cutting torch with two 250-foot lengths of hose to cut away parts of automobiles, trucks, buses, or other objects in which persons are pinned or trapped due to the accident.

The car also has a complete OCD medical field kit containing sufficient instruments and medical supplies to give emergency

treatment or to allow a surgeon to perform an emergency operation at the scene of the accident. There are in addition six rubber sheets, two rubber pillows, a box of ammonia capsules, first aid remedies for burns, and bandages. An auxiliary stretcher for moving injured persons prior to the arrival of an ambulance is a part of the medical equipment.

In cases where an inhaler is necessary the officer in charge of the car sends in a radio call for the fire department's squad which is trained in this type of emergency work.

The latest addition to the car is a portable drunk-o-meter operated on a battery set or with regular house electric hookup. With this kind of apparatus tests can be made at the scene of an accident, a hospital, or wherever required. It should be understood that tests are not given unless the subject volunteers for otherwise the tests would have no legal status. This procedure is a new endeavor on the part of the Peoria Police Traffic Bureau, but the successful record of the Evanston Police Department over a period of years has convinced officials of its value.

This briefly describes the Peoria Police Emergency Car. It should be noted in conclusion that all crews have been thoroughly trained to use the equipment of the car and further to properly handle a camera and to prepare accident reports. In this way the traffic bureau is able to maintain constant routine patrols while at the same time to always have in the field a crew ready for any common type of emergency or accident.