

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** \_\_\_\_\_

November 24, 2021



**Contact:**

Diana L. Klink

Office: 757.514.4104

Mobile: 757.359.1845

### **HAMPTON ROADS' TOP COP IS ONE OF SUFFOLK'S FINEST**

SUFFOLK, VA (November 24, 2021) The 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Greater Hampton Roads Regional Crime Lines, Inc. Top Cop Awards took place Saturday, November 20, 2021, at the Smithfield Center.

The Suffolk Police Department is proud to announce that one of our very own, Officer Zachary Hyman, was named "Top Cop" for the entire Greater Hampton Roads Region.

The details of the harrowing accident that he responded to on February 25, 2021 that earned him this prestigious honor are described in the following award consideration entry:

"On February 25,2021, Officer Zachary Hyman responded to a single vehicle crash in the 1900 block of Portsmouth Boulevard. This is a six-lane highway with a divided median that has a very large ditch and trees. Information was relayed to Officer Hyman by Suffolk Emergency Communications that the vehicle was partially submerged in the water, was sinking, and had occupants entrapped. Officer Hyman arrived on scene, observing a vehicle pulled over with its flashers on, and a male subject standing next to the guardrail. Officer Hyman quickly exited his vehicle and heard the subject frantically state that his daughter was in the vehicle. Officer Hyman immediately took action. He

took off his duty belt, unclipped his portable radio, and jumped into the water. There were two other bystanders attempting to help. One bystander was sitting on top of the trunk, and the other partially inside the back of the vehicle with access through the back-left window. Inside the vehicle were two occupants still entrapped: an older adult female seated in the front passenger seat, and a child, possibly between the ages of 1 and 2, seated in back-right passenger seat. Both occupants still had their seatbelts on and the child was secured in a children's car seat. The bystander on the trunk was trying to hold the child's head above the water through the broken out rear windshield, due to the rising water. A second bystander was still partially inside the vehicle trying to un-hook the car seat. Utilizing department issued Resqme tool (a window punch tool), Officer Hyman broke out the rear-passenger window to gain access to the child. Due to being in water up to his neck, his lapel flashlight was not functioning, and there was little-to-no lighting on scene. Officer Hyman had only his sense of touch to feel around within the seat to attempt to unlock the three-point harness on the car seat. Officer Hyman was unable to get the harness unlocked, but was able to utilize his pocket knife and carefully cut the harness in two separate locations, finally freeing the child. At one point while cutting the harness, the child started choking on water, due to it slowly rising. The bystander on the trunk then pulled the child through the rear windshield, while the second bystander swam around the side, to assist in getting the older female out. Officer Hyman again utilized the Resqme tool and broke out the front-passenger window to gain access to the older female. Using his pocket knife, he cut the shoulder strap section of the seatbelt and the female was starting to be pulled through the window. The bystander and Officer Hyman were able to partially get the female out before Officer Hyman cut another section of the seatbelt, and untangled it from her waist and leg. It was at this point that the vehicle was completely submerged and filled with water. Officer Hyman sustained numerous lacerations to his hands and arms from the broken glass, and was treated for hypothermia. The temperature at the time of this rescue was approximately 43 degrees Fahrenheit. Officer Hyman risked his personal safety to save the lives of a very young child and his senior female. This incident would have undoubtedly had a different outcome had Officer Hyman not arrived on scene timely and taken the swift action he did.”

The Suffolk Police Department is honored to have Officer Zachary Hyman within its' ranks, and appreciates the recognition that the Greater Hampton Roads Regional Crime Lines, Inc. provides to law enforcement across this region.

Below are links to view or download the 21st Annual Greater Hampton Roads Regional Crime Lines, Inc. Top Cop Awards. Please feel free to use and distribute.  
(Runtime = 44:23)

Youtube: <https://youtu.be/YmuV2RvTyvU>

Download: <https://cityofsuffolk.sharefile.com/d-e1db1a182d0d43648450a01efdde1ec1>

###