

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
*Virginia Department of Transportation*  
**Traffic Incident Management – TOP 10 Best Practice Tools and Strategies**

Monday, April 10, 2017

**1. Attend Area Traffic Incident Management Meetings:**

The order of the Best Practices Tools and Strategies does not constitute priority. All are considered equal and important.

- Responding effectively to incidents on the highway requires a planned and coordinated effort by many different individuals and agencies. This includes Local and State Law Enforcement, Local Fire Departments, Local Emergency Medical personnel, Towing and Recovery companies, Private Hazmat/Spill Response firms, Local and State Emergency Management, Department of Health/Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Department of Environmental Quality, Local Department of Public Works, as well as VDOT and its Contract Interstate Maintenance forces. The VDOT Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Program brings together these partners to support quickly and safely clearing crashes from the roadway. Together, they strive to make incident management safer for the responders and motorists, as well as work to reduce the time needed to reopen travel lanes and get traffic moving again. Work in coordination with your appropriate Regional, Residency and Area Incident Management Coordinator for meeting dates, times and locations.

<b>Central Region (Richmond/Fredericksburg)</b>	<b>Eastern Region (Hampton Roads)</b>	<b>Northern Region (Northern Virginia)</b>
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Bruce McFadden – Residency Chesterfield (804) 640-4176 <a href="mailto:bruce.mcfadeen@vdot.virginia.gov">bruce.mcfadeen@vdot.virginia.gov</a>		Floyd Ellmore – Area Stafford & Spotsylvania Counties (703) 539-9143 <a href="mailto:floyd.ellmore@vdot.virginia.gov">floyd.ellmore@vdot.virginia.gov</a>
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<b>Northwestern Region (Staunton and Culpeper)</b>	<b>Southwestern Region (Bristol, Lynchburg and Salem)</b>	<b>Central Office (State)</b>
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**2. All first responders complete SHRP II TIM Interdisciplinary Training**

- The National TIM Responder Training Program was created as part of SHRP 2, which was authorized by Congress in 2005. SHRP 2 has four areas of focus -- safety, renewal, reliability, and capacity -- and the National TIM Responder Training Program was developed under the reliability focus area. The TIM training program was designed to establish the foundation for and to promote consistent training of all responders to achieve the three objectives of the TIM National Unified Goal (NUG):
  - Responder Safety
  - Safe, Quick Clearance
  - Prompt, Reliable, Interoperable Communications
- The National TIM Responder Training Program was developed and reviewed by professionals from all responder disciplines and those disciplines are the target audience for the training. Within VDOT, the following roles have been identified and targeted to receive the training:

<i>AHQ Transportation Operator</i>	<i>VDOT Interstate Maintenance Contract Monitor</i>	<i>Interstate Maintenance Contractor Operator</i>	<i>Transportation Operations Center Supervisor</i>
<i>AHQ Transportation Supervisor</i>	<i>Assistant Residency Administrator</i>	<i>Interstate Maintenance Contractor Area/Zone Manager</i>	<i>Safety Service Patrol Operator</i>
<i>AHQ Transportation Superintendant</i>	<i>Residency Maint. Operations Manager</i>	<i>Interstate Maintenance Contractor Safety Officer</i>	<i>Safety Service Patrol Supervisor</i>
<i>VDOT Interstate Maintenance Contract Administrator</i>	<i>Incident Management Coordinator</i>	<i>Transportation Operations Center Operator</i>	<i>Safety Service Patrol Manager</i>
<i>Additional - Designees May Include: Anyone designated to respond to a highway traffic incident</i>			

**3. Provide accurate and real-time traffic information, supplement existing PCMS's as appropriate**

- It is important to communicate incident-related information to motorists who are at the scene of the incident, approaching the scene of the incident, or not yet departed from work, home, or other location. This information serves to reduce traffic demand and improve responder safety at the incident scene, reduce the potential for secondary incidents for motorists approaching the scene, and allow motorists to alter their travel plans on the basis of current traffic conditions. When doing so, the following best practices should be considered:

- Advise motorists of the nature and extent of the problem so that they may make intelligent choices about alternative routes or delayed trip departures.
- Provide information on possible courses of action such as alternative routes.
- When motorists are required to take certain actions (e.g., change lanes, reduce speed, or divert), describe those actions clearly.
- Provide traveler information as early in the TIM process as possible and continue until the incident has been cleared and the traffic backup has dissipated.
- (PCMS) deployment should be based upon known information gaps, at/near higher at risk areas and based upon conditions.
- IMC's should work as a liaison between the Traffic Operations Center and the Local PSAP/State Police Division Communications Center to strengthen relationships and understanding on how both disciplines can coordinate to support field response.

#### **4. Appropriate resources respond to dispatched event (IIM OD-14-02, Steps 1.2 and 2.4)**

- As outlined in IIM-OD-14-02, timely notification and dispatch of appropriate personnel and equipment is essential to support quick clearance goals. Examples Include: Communications, Temporary Traffic Control (TTC), ANSI Compliant PPE, and appropriate tools support mitigation activities.

External: [http://www.virginiadot.org/business/resources/LocDes/OD\\_IIM\\_Table\\_Of\\_Content.pdf](http://www.virginiadot.org/business/resources/LocDes/OD_IIM_Table_Of_Content.pdf)

- As outlined in VAWAPM Section 6I.08 Initial Traffic Incident Management Temporary Traffic Control

##### **Standard:**

- 07. Traffic incidents shall be reported to the appropriate Transportation Operations Center as soon as practical once the on-scene evaluation has been performed.
- 08. To assist with identifying the location of incidents on the roadway with emergency personnel in a clear manner, lanes shall be identified.

External: [http://www.virginiadot.org/VDOT/Business/Const/asset\\_upload\\_file171\\_80343.pdf](http://www.virginiadot.org/VDOT/Business/Const/asset_upload_file171_80343.pdf)

#### **5. Expand Safety Service Patrols**

- Using established guidance to promote the expansion of the Safety Service Patrol program in order to reduce incident duration, enhance responder and public safety, reduce the potential for secondary collisions, and improving incident management.

External: [http://www.virginiadot.org/vtrc/main/online\\_reports/pdf/07-r17.pdf](http://www.virginiadot.org/vtrc/main/online_reports/pdf/07-r17.pdf)

#### **6. Implement Towing and Emergency Relocation Program**

- Secure Towing and Relocation operations to clear the roadway quickly and safely of disabled and/or damaged vehicles and their cargos restoring the Interstate roadway to it full capacity. Secure timely dispatch of appropriate towing and relocation assets to an incident scene. Provide multiple tools/options to field personnel to solve unique operational issues.

- Dispatch tow immediately when 911 call received (Instant TOW)

- With an “instant tow” concept, a tow truck and the Trooper are dispatched simultaneously. The tow truck does not have to wait for the Trooper to respond and verify the call. The tow truck can save an average of 15 to 20 minutes of time getting to the incident scene.
- Contract/Staged Wrecker Services
  - Establish Towing service contracts in support of emergency relocation and recovery services within the Region. Examples: Pre-Weather, Holidays, Construction, System Capacity Changes, Special Events, and Special Facilities
- Incentive Tow Program
  - Towing Recovery Incentive Program is a Quick Clearance program to pay heavy-duty recovery companies a monetary bonus for clearing commercial vehicle wrecks within 90 minutes.

## 7. Augment existing On-Scene Recovery Resources:

- VDOT and TAMS contractors typically have readily available assets or resources pre-staged which could be deployed in support of safe quick clearance goals. Examples: Rubber tire Front-End Loader, Back-Hoe, Bobcat, Sweeper, Skid Loader, Dump Truck, Crash Attenuator, Message Boards, & Materials such as Absorbents, Abrasives, Sand or Salt.
  - Follow VDOT Department Memorandum DPM 17-1

Emergency Operations and Traffic Management

Internal: <https://insidevdot.cov.virginia.gov/Docs/Documents/DPM17-1.pdf>

Can be located under Governance Documents, Authority, Commissioner

## 8. Defer cleanup to off-peak hours:

- When a collision or dispersed cargo is blocking the roadway and endangering public safety, consider planned recovery in lieu of immediate scene mitigation. In accordance with VA Code 46.2 -1212.1, explore reasonable and prudent options to open the travel lane, by relocating the damaged assets and/or cargo to a safer location in support of planned recovery operations when public safety impacts are lessened.

<http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title46.2/chapter12/section46.2-1212.1/>

## 9. Develop, Maintain and Revise Interstate & Limited Access Incident Detour Maps

- Work with your Local, Regional and State stakeholders and partner in developing alternate and detour routes for your Interstate and Limited Access route segments.
- Develop alternative routes that support the positive movement of people and commerce.
- Develop plans that allow for ingress and egress of the affected area without bringing it to gridlock.
- Develop standard processes for emptying queued vehicles.

- Develop routes in coordination with your Local and State DOT Traffic Signal partners and obtain awareness of any Adaptive Traffic Control and Signal Pre-emption technologies that afford positive opportunities in safely moving traffic.
- Pay special attention to existing Evacuation routes in those identified areas so your plan does not contradict.

[Refer to the Draft IIM “Incident Detour Plan”.](#)

## **10. Dispatch a back-up vehicle to warn motorist about end of queue**

- Work Area Protection Manual Section 6I.08, Initial Traffic Incident Management Temporary Traffic Control, provides the following guidance: Responders arriving at a traffic incident should estimate the magnitude of the traffic incident, the expected time duration of the traffic incident, and the expected vehicle queue length, and then should set up the appropriate temporary traffic controls for these estimates.

*For additional best practice and scene mitigation documents use the following link:*

Internal: Statewide Incident Management Collaboration Site

<https://insidevdot.cov.virginia.gov/div/OSD/FOER/IncidentMgmt/Default.aspx>

External: The Virginia Statewide Traffic Incident Management Committee

[www.vastim.org](http://www.vastim.org)