



# SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT (TIM) PROGRAM OPERATING GUIDELINES

Southwestern Pennsylvania TIM practitioners and partners are committed to promoting, developing, and sustaining a multidisciplinary, multijurisdictional Traffic Incident Management (TIM) program. All partners must work together to establish policies and procedures, promote training and the use of technology, and embrace relationship building to achieve common goals of the National Unified Goal for Traffic Incident Management.

## Who are the Southwestern PA partners in Traffic Incident Management?

- Public Safety Communicators
- Enforcement Officers
- Fire/Rescue/Hazmat Responders
- Emergency Medical Services
- Towing/Recovery Companies
- Planning Organizations
- Public Works/Transportation
- Utility Companies
- Coroners/Medical Examiners
- Emergency Management Agencies
- Freight And Personal Vehicle Drivers
- Traffic Management Centers

## The National Unified Goal (NUG) for Traffic Incident Management is focused on

### 1. Responder Safety

- Recommended practices for responder safety and traffic control at incident scenes
- Promotion of Move Over/ Slow Down law to increase driver awareness
- Promote driver understanding of safe travel practices before, at and after incidents

### 2. Safe, Quick Clearance

- Recommended practices to clear obstructions in unified TIM operations
- Establish goals for response and clearance times
- Work to ensure 24/7 availability of personnel and equipment resources

### 3. Prompt, Reliable, Interoperable Communications

- Develop dispatch, ingress, on-scene, and egress communication procedures
- Promote prompt, reliable information from beginning to end of response
- Provide real-time updated information for traveler information systems, and media

## The MUTCD and Temporary Traffic Control

The Manual on Unified Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) is national policy that governs traffic control requirements for planned events (Chapter 6), and for incidents (Chapter 6I). Using available personnel and equipment, all TIM stakeholders are required to work toward compliance with traffic control guidelines at the earliest possible time and opportunity. When an incident affects traffic longer than 24 hours, Chapter 6 rules apply.

**MINOR** incidents are those which affect traffic for 30 minutes or less.

**INTERMEDIATE** incidents are those that affect traffic for 30 to 120 minutes.

**MAJOR** incidents are those that affect traffic for 120 minutes or longer.

## GUIDELINES TO ENHANCE RESPONDER SAFETY AND PROMOTE MOBILITY



- Public Safety communicators should gather and disseminate as much information as possible to promote safety before arrival of responders, and guiding initial response ingress routes
- First arriving responders should estimate the magnitude of disruption, the expected time duration of the incident, and the expected vehicle queue length, and then should set up the appropriate Temporary Traffic Control (TTC) for these estimates
- TTC should include proper traffic diversions, tapered lane closures, and upstream warning devices to alert traffic approaching the queue and to encourage early diversion to an appropriate alternative route
- Advance alert and a well-defined path for traffic protects incident responders and motorists, reduces the likelihood of secondary crashes, and minimizes unneeded use of adjacent roads
- On-scene responders should move the incident off the roadway and/or provide appropriate warning following law enforcement direction in compliance with Pennsylvania law
- On-scene personnel should be visible at all times and wear high visibility apparel
- Emergency vehicles should be safely-positioned in a manner that protects responders and road users, minimizing disruption of adjacent traffic flow
- A blocking vehicle of appropriate size and striping should be used to protect the incident work area
- Keep one lane open if at all possible, more if available, to prevent traffic backups that contribute to secondary crashes
- No personal vehicles, or unneeded response vehicles, should arrive or remain on scene
- All emergency vehicles that arrive on scene should be positioned in a manner that does not interfere with the established temporary traffic flow.

### TEMPORARY TRAFFIC CONTROL CHECKLIST

- How serious is it?
- How long will it be?
- How much traffic?
- What else do I need?
- Can I remove it?
- Can I be seen?
- Am I parked safe?
- Do I have work room?
- Can I leave early?
- Is the queue any longer?
- Are there too many lights?
- How can I make myself safer?
- How can I help others be safe?

- Attention should be paid to the upstream end of the traffic queue such that warning is given to road users approaching the back of the queue, which may extend continuously as long as traffic is limited
- If manual traffic control is needed, it should be provided by qualified flaggers or uniformed law enforcement officers
- When light sticks or flares are used to establish the initial traffic control at incident scenes, channelizing devices (cones, barrels, delineators, e.g.) should be installed as soon thereafter as practical, and all devices removed after the incident is terminated.
- Reduce the use of emergency vehicle lighting as much as possible, especially after a traffic incident scene is secured, while not endangering those at the scene.
- Reduce or extinguish forward facing emergency-vehicle lighting, especially on divided roadways, to reduce distractions to oncoming road users. Floodlights or headlights not needed should be turned off at night.

## GUIDELINES PROMOTING SAFE, QUICK CLEARANCE OF ROADWAYS



- Incident Command System (ICS) and an Incident Command Post (ICP) location should be established immediately
- The location of the ICP should be communicated to all arriving responders by the dispatching agencies
- A unified command structure should be used on all multi-agency or multi-jurisdictional incidents
- All responders should communicate priorities and capabilities upon arrival, and update status regularly to ICP
- Look ahead to the need for specialized towing/recovery or hazardous materials contractors and work with law enforcement to alert them or dispatch them early enough
- Follow direction of law enforcement officers who have authority to remove or direct removal of any cargo or vehicle from the road or shoulder in PA, regardless of severity, unless it is a fatal crash
- Coroners/medical examiners must approve removal of bodies unless there is imminent public danger
- Quick clearance is helped when the number of vehicles and personnel is limited to those needed at the time; Reduce roadway danger to responders by limiting the number of responders and vehicles on the highway at all times
- Locating staging areas on ramps and adjacent roadways is an appropriate way to reduce time of traffic disruption
- When requesting resources, be specific about the resource, the time it will be used, and its reporting location, being mindful that staging may help reduce clearance time

### QUICK CLEARANCE CHECKLIST

- Where is the ICP?
- How can I move the obstacles?
- Who is expected on scene?
- How can I reduce the number of vehicles responding or on scene?
- Will I need to help with collecting evidence to assist law enforcement?
- Did I contact the towing company early enough?
- Can spilled cargo recovery be delayed to a less congested time?
- What can I do to assist other agencies?
- How can other agencies help me?
- How can I make myself safer?
- How can I help others be safe?

- Short-term full closures to accomplish specialized tasks should be done to reduce overall clearance time
- Concurrent work on different activities is encouraged; Communication of that priority is important; Commitment to that concept is lifesaving
- Sharing work responsibilities across agency and department lines is a sign of appropriate use of ICS and achievement of incident objectives
- Never talk in jargon, or use acronyms when working a scene
- Understand the importance of evidence and the documentation of a scene should law enforcement investigation activities be delayed

# GUIDELINES FOR PROMPT, RELIABLE, INTEROPERABLE COMMUNICATIONS



- Plan, train and exercise together for the types of incidents that are common to your area
- Agree on procedures that should be followed at all times and follow them
- Agree on a specific way for any responder to call for a review of activities (informal or formal after action reviews) to improve response and/or modify procedures
- Work side-by-side with public safety communications professionals to give them the information they need, and tell them what you need as responders heading to a scene, on scene, and departing from a scene
- Trust public safety communicators with information they need to maintain situational awareness
- Establish effective communications protocols with Traffic Management Center personnel, who can help provide information to drivers via message boards and highway advisory radio

## COMMUNICATIONS CHECKLIST

- Have we planned together?
- Have we trained together?
- Have we exercised this type of event?
- Did I provide information that helps responders arrive safely?
- Did I provide information to the 9-1-1 center, dispatcher, and Traffic Management Center so they can maintain situational awareness?
- Is there someone on scene who does not know how we plan to do things?
- How can I make myself safer?
- How can I help others be safe?

- Plan to improve communications when rerouting to alternate routes (detours) by preparing “strip tickets” that delineate approved detour routing, for use by fire police and others providing on-the-road traveler information

## THESE GUIDELINES ARE INTENDED FOR USE BY ALL INVOLVED IN TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES IN SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA.

### URBAN/HIGH VOLUME LIMITED ACCESS ROADWAYS:

1. Reduce the number of vehicles and personnel responding, and remaining on scene, to improve responder safety and promote quicker clearance of all obstructions
2. Maintain a lane or more of traffic whenever possible to mitigate traffic queues and maintain ingress for additional responders and support personnel
3. Improve safety by sharing responsibility with all responders on scene and motorists on roadway

### RURAL/LOWER VOLUME LIMITED ACCESS ROADWAYS:

1. Understand that motorists directed off roadways have fewer detour options and may have limited communications available to them
2. Make use of the easiest rerouting options that minimize impacts to surrounding roadways
3. Improve safety by sharing responsibility with all responders on scene and motorists on roadway