Tools to Avoid Distraction

Distraction: Are we now too busy being bombarded with instant messages and e-mails requiring our im-
mmediate attention and response that we can no longer
tell when we are in danger? Are we too busy and dis-
tracted, not just when we drive, but in our daily life?

Have you stopped writing emails that make multiple
requests because you only get a reply to the first one
at the top of the page? Have we stopped having open-
ended conversations and discussions to work out solu-
tions, as a result of technology or, are we are too busy
now because of our own need for self-entertainment?

Margaret Wheatley asks in her latest article on distrac-
tion in Shambhala magazine “Are we so distracted that we can no longer pay
attention to where we are and where we’re going”? She reminds us that the
Titanic actually went down because of distraction. The radio operator received a
call from a ship surrounded by ice less
than an hour before the collision and he responded
“Shut up, shut up, I’m busy”. The ships momentum
could not be slowed to avoid the collision, by the time
the iceberg was spotted by look-outs.

Distraction can affect what happens in our Traffic Inci-
dent Management communications and how we re-
pond to crashes. Einstein said it best when he said “I
fear the day that technology will surpass our human
interaction...” If we allow technology to surpass our
human interaction as Einstein suggested and the Ti-

tanic demonstrates, we are in real danger of losing our
collective identity and the ability and inherent curiosity
to see any situation from another point of view.

There is a way to disrupt this
trend and that is “US”. By
meeting and training togeth-
er through TIM, turning off
the technology for a while,
we can regain the collective
spirit that comes from work-
ing together. Multi Agency first responder training is
an excellent opportunity to remind us of the opinions
of others, and to understand each other’s perspective
resulting in better decisions and improved response to
any incident or disaster. As mentioned earlier training is a
great tool to help in the team effort and goals of the TIM Team. There is a great event coming next
month, June 2013, which all Incident Responders
need to take advantage of. The Strategic Highway
Research Program 2 (SHRP-2) is a Nationwide First
Responder training your TIM Team has scheduled and
will continue to host this year. SHRP-2 is an indispen-
sable multi-agency training, to ensure responders from
varying agencies work together at an incident scene
and to clear the roadway as safely and as rapidly as
possible given any situation. Your local TIM Team of-
fers “Best Practices” in Incident Management. This is
a venue for First Responders to receive and discuss
“together” the latest training information “before” they get
to the incident scene. This course is geared at the “First
Responder” level and will involve lectures as well as
table top activities to reinforce proper techniques to
be used when operating on the interstate as well as
on other state and local roadways where traffic haz-

ards abound. We are attempting to get a variety of
disciplines to attend each session such as Fire and
Rescue, Emergency Management Systems (EMS),
Emergency Management (EM), Department of Trans-
portation (DOT), and Wrecker recovery. The more we
can diversify the group, the more it will en-
hance the learning experience for the partici-

pant.

Registration for the four (4) Hour First Re-
ponder SHRP-2 training event is now availa-
ble. The class will be available June 11th
and 12th in Bradenton, FL at the Manatee
Technical Institute (Criminal Justice Academy) and
also June 18th - 20th in Fort Myers at the SWIFT
SunGuide Center. The class is being offered either in
the morning or afternoon. Make sure to register
ASAP as these classes are limited and filling up fast!
To register for the event please visit the TIM team
website at the following address:

http://www.123contactform.com/form_577872/Train-The-Trainer-Registration-Form

If you have any further questions please contact Bill
Fuller at William.fuller@dot.state.fl.us or call (239)
225.9815.

Article by William Fuller, District One Traffic Incident
Management Project Manager.

Local Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Has
Been Signed

Your multi-agency Traffic Incident Management
(TIM) Team has taken the initiative to establish a
series of Agency Memorandums of Understanding
(MOU). We believe incident response agencies have
the responsibility to do whatever is reasonable to
enhance the safety of our transportation system.
Specifically, the agreement endorses the Statewide
Open Roads Guidelines, defines incident scene roles
and responsibilities, establishes a local incident
scene lighting guideline and establishes a local inci-
dent communication guideline. Furthermore, we
would like to announce “Great News” from our Dis-

tric-One Traffic Incident Management (TIM)
teams and announce that our TIM Local Agency
MOU has been signed and sent out to local agencies.
We are very proud of the Teamwork and Coordination it
took in completing this document. Thank you. As a result,
we hope more agencies join the TIM Team and take
advantage of national training opportunities that
come our way through the National TIM program.
Integrating TIM Response into the Local Emergency Management Process

The benefits of our work are very visible, tangible and appreciated by all! Traffic Incident Management (TIM) professional response activities save lives, time and money. We take much pride in executing our work, often within rapid response environments that are framed by multiple, concurrent and in some cases, potentially hazardous situations. As if dodging high-speed traffic was not enough, we sometimes respond to situations that potentially include a wide variety of other hazardous conditions such as bio-hazards, fuel spills, toxic metals, industrial chemical liquids and fumes. Yes, this is why we are so highly trained, hold all those certifications, and carry all the safety equipment!

As one of the first responders to some of the more challenging scenarios, we have also seen first-hand how these all progress from a chaotic state of pandemonium to a structured vertical team response. These successes are due to the individual responders as well as to the continued, careful and methodical planning for responding to such events by multiple emergency management organizations such as our TIM Team members and the diverse agencies we come from.

Coordinating the activities and contributions of many local, regional, state and federal agencies takes a great deal of effort and cooperation. The myriad of institutional and interjurisdictional barriers generate issues and challenges that are only overcome by the advocacy and leadership of organizations and coordinating committees such as our Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPC). These are organizations created by various congressional acts¹ and their enabling federal and state laws and statutes to assist first responders in dealing with public safety issues regarding hazardous materials. There are LEPCs in every state. There are eleven (11) LEPC Districts in Florida, funded via the Department of Community Affairs, part of the Division of Emergency Management and organized under the auspices of 11 statewide Regional Planning Councils.

Each LEPC is comprised of a variety of organizations and individuals extending from multiple fire departments, departments of environmental protection, marine port and aviation authorities, sheriff’s offices, U.S. Coast Guard and military bases, water management districts, news media outlets and private corporations, colleges and universities, hospitals, and even interested private individuals. Providing further perspective into the coordination involved in this task, District One includes three (3) LEPC Districts, Districts 7, 8 and 9. Overall, there were a total of 594 Hazardous Materials Incidents reported by these three LEPCs in 2007² alone.

It would seem like such a large aggregation of agencies and individuals would become an unmanageable bureaucracy, but we all have seen many instances demonstrating clearly how successful the unselfish dedication and cooperation of so many professionals working as one team has proven to be.

The future holds a potential threat for increased challenges to the TIM response community. Commercial Vehicle Operations (CVO) reported as far back as 2002 that there were approximately 12,000 commercial trucks a day operating along I-75 alone and that this statistic was expected to double in five years³. How many of those carry declared hazardous materials? Worse yet, how many travel with undeclared hazardous loads? The exposure to hazardous materials at a traffic incident is great and growing.

The District One TIM program proceeds aggressively towards continued support for the full integration of our TIM services into the local, regional and state incident and emergency management service provider organizations to maintain mobility and a high quality of traffic safety during all incidents and emergency response scenarios. Traffic Incident Management is such a major role of the entire emergency management and response process that the expertise of the TIM Teams is essential to include at all stages of response; from preparedness through response, recovery and mitigation.

¹ Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know (EPCRA), 42 USC 116.

Article by Scott Agans, Metric Engineering, Inc.