



# RURAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS AND BEST PRACTICES

Rory Howe

Delcan Corporation / Atlanta  
Emergency Transportation Operations Division



# Urban Freeway Incident Management



- ▣ Ample Law Enforcement, Fire, EMS and Towing Resources
- ▣ Rapid Response – 2 to 8 minutes
- ▣ Quick Clearance - 30 to 60 minutes
- ▣ Multiple Detour Options
- ▣ High Percentage of Local Motorists

# Rural Freeway Incidents



- Few Law Enforcement Personnel
- Typically Volunteer Fire Departments
- Limited EMS Coverage
- Heavy Duty Towing/Recovery Equipment Often Limited
- Poor Detour Opportunities
- High Percentage of Unfamiliar Motorists



# Rural Freeway User Profile



- ▣ Vehicle approach speeds 70+ mph
- ▣ High percent of commercial traffic
- ▣ No expectation of stopping or delay
- ▣ Often mildly distracted

# Rural Incident Problems



- ▣ Freeway often closes
- ▣ Motorists stuck in queue
- ▣ Motorists initiate haphazard u-turns or cut-thru's
- ▣ Trucks detour down dead end roadways
- ▣ Freeways become small temporary communities of trapped people

# Rural Incident DOT Priorities



- ❑ Provide warning to approaching motorists
- ❑ Establish a viable detour
- ❑ Remove the trapped traffic
- ❑ Re-evaluate the traffic control as situations improve



# Advance Warning



- ▣ Provide advance warning using portable signs or message boards
- ▣ Warning placed well before decision points where possible



# Re-routing Traffic



- ▣ Detouring motorists is just as vital for the first car as the last
- ▣ Missouri's "Incident Bypass Route" signing



# Removing Trapped Traffic

- ▣ Pass by the Scene
- ▣ Controlled median U-turn
- ▣ Contra-flow on closed section



# Median U-Turn Method



- ❑ Must be done at an established crossover
- ❑ Requires lane drop in opposing direction
- ❑ Does not accommodate tractor trailers



# Contra-flow Method

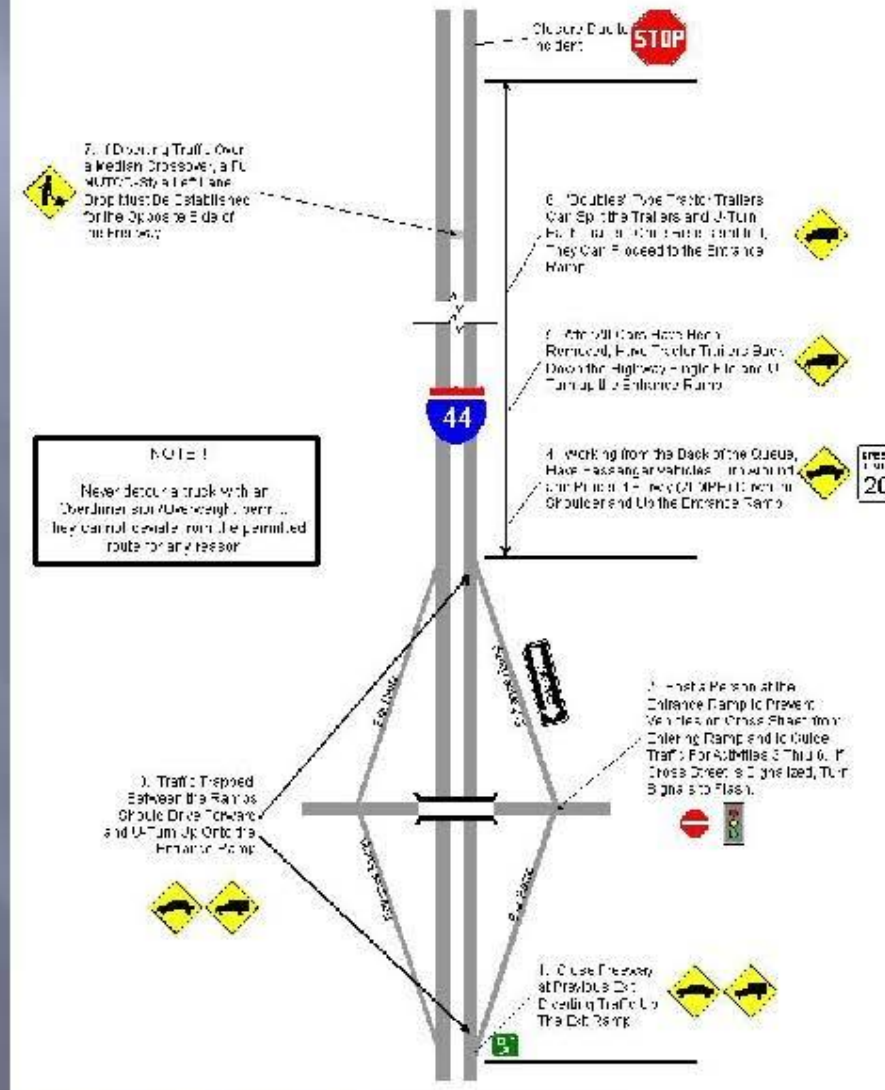


- ❑ Close highway at previous interchange
- ❑ Traffic trapped between the ramps clears first
- ❑ Traffic downstream of the on-ramp turns around
- ❑ Cars first, tractor trailers second



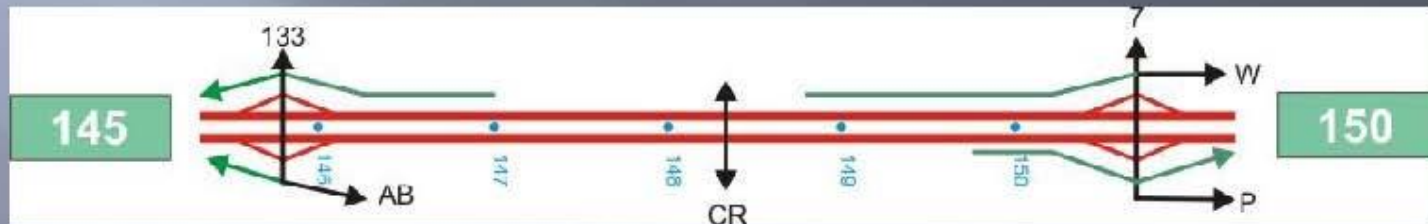
# Evacuation Plans

## Removing Trapped Traffic From an Interstate Highway Missouri Department of Transportation Emergency Response



# Incident Pre-Plans

## I-44 D9 Plan 2A



### SITUATION

- All eastbound lanes of I-44 are closed between Route 133 & AB (Exit 145) and Route 7 & P (Exit 150)
- Traffic delays are expected to exceed one hour.
- All westbound lanes are open to traffic.

### ALTERNATE ROUTE(S)

- **ALT-1E** Eastbound traffic exit at Route 133 & AB (Exit 145), turn right and go east on Route AB for approximately 6 miles to Route 17. Turn left and go north 2 miles to I-44 (Exit 153.)
  - Total bypass length 8 miles. (See Route Map Figure 1)

# Working the Incident



- ❑ Specially equipped vehicles minimize DOT response time
- ❑ Put salvage and property rights where they belong – at the bottom of the list
- ❑ Treat the highway the same as we would a utility and get it restored as soon as possible



# Incident Response Trucks



- ▣ Dedicated  $\frac{3}{4}$  or 1 Ton Trucks
- ▣ Equipped with traffic control and other basics
- ▣ Taken home by the assigned personnel
- ▣ Located approx. every 30 miles along corridor
- ▣ Consistent operating procedures and level of service to other responders

# Large-Scale Clean-up Truck



- ❑ Roll-off truck, preferably with pup trailer
- ❑ 2 or more roll-off dumpsters
- ❑ 10 Ton+ Knuckle boom crane
- ❑ Track-type skid-steer loader with attachments



# Commercial Truck Crashes



- ❑ Truck and trailer are a loss
- ❑ Cargo is a loss
- ❑ Salvage of damaged property is not a reason to maintain a freeway closure
- ❑ Salvage and Recovery is a planned event and not an emergency



# Rural TIM Teams



- ▣ Local responders – Fire, Tow, Law Enforcement and EMS
- ▣ Quarterly meetings/debriefings
- ▣ Traffic and incident pre-plans
- ▣ Mutual Training on removal and detours
- ▣ Cross-deployment of traffic control resources

# Basic Steps



- ❑ Take inventory of your assets
- ❑ Identify detour routes
- ❑ Build relationships and communicate with Emergency Responders
- ❑ Identify expectations for quick clearance
- ❑ Be willing to participate in the solution