



32nd Edition

Polk County Traffic Incident Management Team

May 2010



2010 Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Self-Assessment (SA)

Traffic Incident Management (TIM) programs continue to play a vital role in the safe and quick clearance of traffic incidents while providing a framework for reducing congestion and maximizing the use of existing transportation infrastructure. A critical component of capitalizing on the success of existing programs and aiding the development of new TIM programs is periodic evaluation of the components of successful multi-agency TIM programs. The TIM Self-Assessment (TIM SA) was designed to provide an easy-to-use tool for measuring TIM program performance.

Since its inception in 2002, a number of federal initiatives have evolved to the point where synergies between those initiatives and the progress of individual TIM programs should be evaluated and captured in the TIM SA. Among these initiatives:

- The National Traffic Incident Management Coalition and its National Unified Goal;
- FHWA's Traffic Incident Management Performance Measures Focus States Initiative;
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security National Incident Management System (NIMS) requirements
- State Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) requirements

Please plan to join us at the next regularly scheduled TIM Team meeting as we begin to identify areas of improving the team's FHWA Self-Assessment scores.

Traffic Incident Management Teams Best Practice Report

The I-95 Corridor Coalition released results of a study named *Traffic Incident Management Teams Best Practice Report*. The primary purpose of this report is to facilitate the sharing of innovative ways to strengthen Traffic Incident Management (TIM) operations and coordination, by providing access to information in order to build initiatives without having to do so from the ground up. This report is unique and significant in that active TIM Team stakeholders in each Coalition state were thoroughly interviewed to compile an extensive list of best practices related to all aspect of TIM. A copy of this report is available on the TIM Team website located at <http://www.swftim.org>.

OEC Trains 1,600 First Responders as COMLs

Office of Emergency Communications: Emergency responders across the nation are communicating more effectively during large planned and emergency events thanks to the All-Hazards Type III Communications Unit Leader (COML) training program. The COML course has trained over 1,600 people to coordinate on-scene emergency communications during a multi-jurisdictional response. Since May 2008, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) has offered 66 courses nationwide, ensuring that there is at least one trained COML in every state and territory. The emergency response community identified the need for COML training, and with DHS support, helped create a formal program to train COMLs on operational and technical aspects of communications and procedures to use during incidents. For more information, please visit http://www.dhs.gov/xabout/structure/gc_1189774174005.shtm.

SWIFT SunGuide Center is Online!

District One maintains a website hosting 511, Weekly Roadwatch Reports, Travel Information and other various resources regarding the new SWIFT SunGuide Center. Check it out at <http://www.swiftsunguide.com/>.

Quick Clearance Toolkit & Workshop

The I-95 Corridor Coalition has developed a Quick Clearance Toolkit to help in initiating or improving Quick Clearance programs and activities in jurisdictions. The contents of this easy to use, "A-Z" quick clearance implementation guide are provided on the following site: <http://www.i95coalition.org/i95/Training/QuickClearanceWorkshop/tabid/188/Default.aspx> and include a downloadable Quick Clearance Toolkit, Quick Clearance Videos, Quick Clearance Documents and Quick Clearance Workshops.



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Upcoming Events:

TIM Team Meeting :

Thursday

July 15th, 2010

10:00 am

University of South Florida Polytechnic
3433 Winter Lake Rd
Lakeland, FL 33803



WHO'S IN CHARGE & WHERE ARE THEY?

A broad range of agencies, departments, organizations, and individuals may be called upon to respond to incidents on the highway. The driving motives, missions, and methods vary among each member of a regional response force. Nevertheless, they are called to work together with little notice and compelled by circumstances to manage stressful and dangerous problems in what is often a hazardous working environment.¹ This environment led to the development of an Incident Command System in the early 1970's that continues to evolve today.

According to a 2002 FHWA funded study;² only 64% of surveyed agencies use an ICS to manage highway incidents and only half of those who use it have a formal agreement or state regulation mandating who is in charge. By reviewing these numbers we can see that only about 30% of critical incidents will have a single focal point for directing a coordinated effort for resolution.

The first thing everyone needs to know when arriving on scene for an incident of this type is **who is in charge?** That is a question that must be decided by the stakeholders and governing agencies involved long before the event occurs. Due to the diverse nature of these policies and agreements, we won't try to address them here. But with the "who is in charge?" answered by policy, the second question is just as critical in the smooth handling of serious events. That question is "**where are they?**"

During the 1980's, I served as a volunteer firefighter/EMT and rescue diver, achieving the rank of Captain. I remember my first incident where I was the duty officer and as such, the incident commander until the Chief arrived. I did everything by the book except for one thing. I didn't make my presence on site obvious. The inter-agency SOP called for our Rescue Squad Vehicle to be the designated command post regardless of which agency was in charge. As such, a green strobe light had been placed on the roof to be used as an indicator that the ICS was in effect and that the commander was present. I took my command from near the scene and never turned on the green light. So while I was taking effective steps, they were not all carried out in an efficient manner because some responders never knew where to report for inter-agency coordination.

Regardless of the severity; during and following an emergency, transportation is there: at the incident scene, in the Transportation Management Center, and at the Emergency Operations Center. You are prepared, trained, equipped, and able to communicate. You are participating as equals with other responders. And your resources offer a collective power of information that is of great value to incident commanders. Who else can bring the power of real-time video, pre-planned alternative routes, and remote command and control of a large network of traffic control devices and incident management tools? So, in fact, your location and identity is just as important as that of the incident commander. Make yourself aware of the various ID tools in the incident management system such as identifying clothing, color codes, badges, radio call signs and designated site locations.

In closing, whether you're the commander or a responder to a critical incident, having a clearly identified command post is necessary to successfully coordinate the efforts of all involved. Having an agreement or policy in force as to **who is in charge** is very important. But that role will be greatly diminished if no one knows where to find him or her!

¹ Simplified Guide to the Incident Command System for Transportation Professionals

http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/ics_guide/index.htm

² 2002 FHWA Study on ICS Use

http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/ics_guide/index.htm

- Article contributed by Steve Johnson, Metric Engineering, Inc.



New & Improved TIM Team Website! www.swfitim.org

The Polk County TIM Team is committed to implementing the Quick Clearance principles of Florida's Open Roads Policy through the "3 Cs" of TIM: Communication, Cooperation and Coordination, and providing the public with the best real-time Motorist Information available. Team membership draws from state, regional, and local transportation agencies, public safety providers, and other organizations and companies that service the traveling public. The Teams, sponsored by the FDOT, meet bi-monthly.



Mission

The TIM Team Program brings together all agencies involved in clearing the roadway crashes with the objective of improving detection, verification, response, and clearance times to expeditiously remove a motor vehicle crash or incident from the roadway while providing the best real-time information to motorists, resulting in a safer highway environment for both incident responders and motorists.

If you have any questions regarding this newsletter, or would like to submit an article, please contact Bill Fuller at william.fuller@dot.state.fl.us.