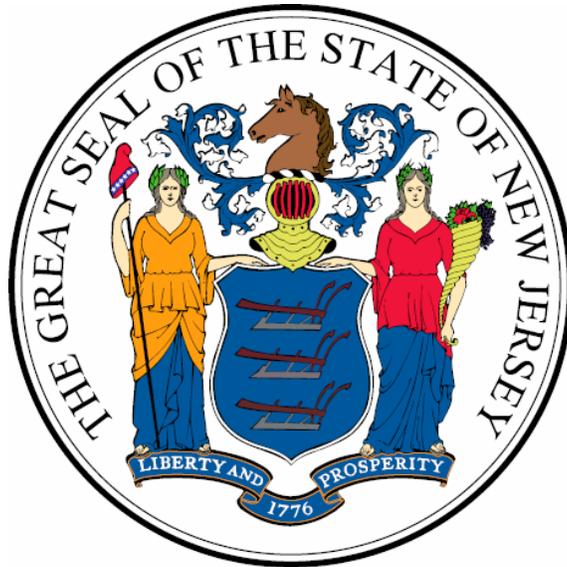


State of New Jersey

# Highway Incident Traffic Safety Guidelines for Emergency Responders



Endorsed by New Jersey Office of the Attorney General  
Date: June 1, 2010

## **Acknowledgments**

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission  
Morris County Alliance of Active Fire Chiefs  
NJ 42/55, I-76/676/295 Incident Management Task Force  
New Jersey Career Fire Chief's Association  
New Jersey Department of Transportation  
New Jersey Division of Fire Safety  
New Jersey State Fire Chief's Association  
New Jersey State Police Field Operations Section  
New Jersey State Police Incident Management Unit  
New Jersey Turnpike Authority  
South Jersey Transportation Authority

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this document is to provide uniform operational guidelines to ensure safe operations by emergency responders dispatched to incidents on limited access highways in the State of New Jersey. These operational guidelines were formulated based on nationally recognized practices and procedures, and input from representatives of those agencies listed under the State of New Jersey Highway Incident Traffic Safety Guidelines for Emergency Responders Committee and endorsed by the New Jersey Office of the Attorney General. This document should be used by emergency responders as a guideline for decision making. The decisions can be modified as necessary to address existing onsite conditions.

These guidelines identify vehicle safe positioning, common general safety and onsite practices for all emergency responders. Additionally, it provides maximum protection and safety for all emergency responders operating at limited access highway incidents. These guidelines also identify the need to provide mobility for the motoring public. All emergency responders should adhere to the standards set forth in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), Chapter 6I, which is listed in Appendix A. All emergency responders should understand and appreciate the special hazards and high risk that personnel are exposed to when operating at a highway related incident on a limited access highway with motor vehicle traffic, high vehicle speeds, adverse weather conditions, heavy trucks, and exposure to motorists with varying degrees of ability, with possible vision, alcohol, and drug impairment. All emergency responders shall understand that the objective is to get onto the highway, perform their duties, and get off the highway as quickly and efficiently as possible. This will reduce their high-risk exposure and help to get traffic patterns back to normal. Emergency responders should always operate within a protected environment at any type of incident on or near a highway, and when exposed to motor vehicle traffic.

The guidelines in this document are general since they cannot cover all incidents or unique site-specific conditions. This document is not intended to be a textbook, nor a substitute for training, technical knowledge, experience, or effective judgment. Local or geographic conditions may necessitate the need for additional sections to this document.

In order to manage highway incidents efficiently and safely on a consistent basis, it is important that emergency responders have an awareness of expected behavior from other responding agencies. All emergency responders should make every effort to increase communication and cooperation at a highway incident to reduce points of conflict and to better understand each agency's concerns.

## **2 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

The following terms shall be used during incident operations, post incident analyses, and training activities related to working in or near moving traffic:

**Advance Warning** – notification procedures that advise approaching motorists to transition from normal driving status to that required by the temporary emergency traffic control measures ahead of them.

**Blocker Vehicle** – the initial on-scene emergency vehicle, preferably a fire apparatus, positioned on an angle to the lanes of traffic creating a physical barrier between upstream traffic and the work area. This includes using the vehicle to “block to the left” or “block to the right”.

**Buffer Zone** – the empty, unoccupied space or distance between emergency responders and vehicles in the incident space and moving traffic.

**Downstream** – the area past the incident in the direction of normal traffic flow as it travels away from the incident space.

**Emergency Responder** – Fire, Police, EMS and any other personnel responding to assist at an emergency scene.

**Incident** – any non-recurring event that causes a reduction of roadway capacity due to motor vehicle crashes, vehicle fires, natural disaster, or other unplanned event that affects or impedes the normal flow of traffic.

**Incident Space** – the area that includes the incident, and the necessary space around the incident required to manage the event, including vehicles and personnel.

**Limited Access Highway** – refers to the following roads: New Jersey Turnpike, the Garden State Parkway, the Atlantic City Expressway, I-76, I-78, I-80, I-95, I-195, I-280, I-287, I-295, and I-676.

**MUTCD** – The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, published by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) under 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 655, Subpart F. The most current edition on the MUTCD can be found at <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/>.

**Shadow Vehicle** – the second due fire apparatus or other emergency responder vehicle, which positions upstream of the blocker vehicle at an angle, to create the beginning of the buffer zone.

**Taper** – the action of merging several lanes of traffic into fewer lanes, utilizing traffic control devices. This action begins upstream of the shadow vehicle.

**Temporary Incident Control Zone** – this zone extends from the first warning device to an area where the moving traffic returns to original traffic patterns and is clear of the incident. Consideration should be given to include the area which is part of the police investigation.

**Transition Zone** – the area/lane of roadway where approaching motorists change their speed and position to comply with the traffic control measures established at an incident scene.

**Upstream** – the area prior to the incident in the direction of normal traffic flow as the vehicles approach the temporary incident control zone.

### **3 INCIDENT COMMAND**

- 3.1 The first arriving emergency responder will establish command of the incident and remain in control until command is transferred or the incident is stabilized and terminated.
- 3.2 If State Police arrive on an established scene, the trooper shall interface with the Unified Command or Incident Commander for an incident briefing and the transfer of command if appropriate. The State Police have statutory authority over all incidents that occur on state highways and shall have final decision in all traffic control matters. The senior trooper on the scene is the Incident Commander.
- 3.3 Unified Command – for incidents involving multiple highway emergency response agencies, a Unified Command structure should be implemented. Under a Unified Command, all responding agencies will cooperate and work together. Responding agencies will make decisions based on their experience and expertise in their respective fields to contribute to the successful conclusion of the incident. Any decisions made will be communicated to the other agency representatives to ensure coordination of efforts.
- 3.4 State Police will remain the Incident Commander within the Unified Command structure.

### **4 RECOMMENDED EQUIPMENT**

In compliance with the MUTCD and where applicable, agencies responding to incidents on limited access highways should have the following equipment. However, a sufficient number of Class II Safety Vests for responding personnel is required.

- 4.1 A minimum of six (6) NJDOT approved reflective traffic cones;
- 4.2 A minimum of one (1) case of traffic flares or strobes;
- 4.3 A lighted arrow stick or sign board;
- 4.4 NJDOT approved reflective striping to the rear and sides of the appropriate emergency response vehicles;

- 4.5 A minimum compliment of Basic First Aid equipment;
- 4.6 A 48" x 48" retro-reflective pink sign stating "Emergency Scene Ahead".

## **5 INCIDENT RESPONSE**

Response to limited access highway incidents should be made by the agency that has the safest and most efficient access to the incident. This may require agreements to be executed so a municipality can cover incidents that are in another municipality or geographical area. Consideration should be given to using mutual aid to cover the opposite direction of the highway. Mutual aid should be considered to share and provide an adequate response and adequate resources. Once the location and scope of the incident are determined, **only essential vehicles should be committed to respond out onto the highway**. All other apparatus should be returned or staged off the highway in an uncommitted location.

*\*SPECIAL NOTE\* If emergency responders are cancelled by the State Police/Incident Commander while en route to any highway assignment, they shall go available and return.*

- 5.1 Only official vehicles will be permitted on the highway. Under no circumstances will personal vehicles respond to incidents on any limited access highways.
- 5.2 A sufficient crew of emergency responders is recommended for units responding to incidents on the highway to limit the number of apparatus on scene.
- 5.3 Companies will be assigned responsibility for a specific area of the highway and may be directed to enter the highway via a designated ramp. Absent extenuating circumstances or specific orders to the contrary, companies will utilize their assigned entry ramp whenever responding to incidents.
- 5.4 As a general rule, full size fire apparatus should utilize normal entrances and exits to reverse their direction of travel. Use of the median or paved U-Turns should be reserved for life threatening emergencies and extenuating circumstances.
- 5.5 As a last resort, it may be necessary for emergency vehicles to travel against the normal traffic flow to access an incident scene. **NO units or vehicles will employ this maneuver unless they receive specific approval from the State Police.** Once approval is received, the emergency vehicle shall proceed with extreme caution utilizing the shoulder portion of the roadway if possible.

## **6 ARRIVING ON SCENE**

- 6.1 Standard practice will be to position emergency response vehicles in such a manner that best protects the incident space and passing motorists.
- 6.2 Consideration should be given to traffic flow and to providing an avenue for additional resources to access the incident space.
- 6.3 When possible, crew members should enter/exit their units on the side opposite the traffic flow. Emergency responders should always check for approaching traffic before exiting their vehicle.
- 6.4 The magnitude of the incident should be estimated within the first fifteen (15) minutes of arrival using the criteria set below:
  - Minor – 30 minutes or less
  - Intermediate – 30 minutes to 2 hours (contact Highway Agency)
  - Major – more than 2 hours (contact Highway Agency)All incidents should be updated every 15-30 minutes.
- 6.5 Emergency responders should always be aware of their visibility to oncoming traffic and take measures to move the traffic incident as far off the traveled roadway as possible or to provide for appropriate warning. Emergency vehicles should be safe-positioned in such a manner as to optimize traffic flow through the incident scene. All subsequent arriving emergency vehicles should be positioned as to not interfere with the established temporary traffic flow.
- 6.6 EMS units should routinely be positioned downstream of the incident within the incident space.
- 6.7 If a second fire apparatus responds to the scene as a shadow vehicle, it should safe-position at least 50 feet upstream of the blocker vehicle to help ensure an adequate buffer zone. The crew in the shadow vehicle shall abandon the vehicle and report to the incident space. The shadow vehicle assumes a fend-off position to deflect any high speed impact that would otherwise crash into the incident space.
- 6.8 Unit operators shall cancel any warning lights which impair the vision of approaching traffic (i.e., headlights, spotlights, clear warning lights).
- 6.9 Position emergency vehicles on the same side of the roadway as the incident.

## **7 TRAFFIC CONTROL**

Emergency responders shall control oncoming traffic prior to turning their attention to the incident. Understanding that there is no absolute means to protect emergency responders at the scene of an incident on a limited access highway, responders are urged to constantly keep in mind the “three guiding principles” when operating in or near moving traffic. Recognizing these principles will increase the margin of safety. The three guiding principles are:

### **Provide Advance Warning**

Use traffic control devices such as signs, other emergency vehicles, or any other appropriate device that will warn or direct motorists away from an approaching incident.

### **Protect the Scene**

Position vehicles and traffic control devices in such a way that allows for adequate space between the point where the traffic is diverted and the actual incident space. Fire apparatus should position in a manner that best protects the incident space. Such positioning affords protection to responders from the hazards of working in or near motor vehicle traffic.

### **Be Visible**

All responders operating at the incident on a highway with moving traffic shall wear highly visible, highly reflective garments to increase the ability of motorists to see the emergency responders during day and night operations.

- 7.1 Traffic control is primarily the responsibility of the State Police, transportation, or highway authorities.
- 7.2 If the above agencies are not present, it is the responsibility of initial responders to establish a safe incident space. Traffic cones, flares, and/or emergency vehicles may be used for this purpose until appropriate equipment becomes available.
- 7.3 Scene conditions may necessitate the closure of the lane next to the affected lane, commonly referred to as a “buffer lane”, to provide an additional margin of safety for emergency workers, motorists, or any other unforeseen circumstances which would expose emergency workers to increased risk from passing traffic.
- 7.4 Placement of traffic control devices should be utilized with consideration given to drivers’ reaction time and visual obstructions. The advance warning may need to be extended upstream when factors such as topography, time of day, and weather are present and therefore increase the potential for secondary crashes.
- 7.5 Responders should face traffic at all times when placing and retrieving traffic control devices. Placement of cones shall begin at the corner of the blocker or shadow vehicle,

while moving upstream, tapering at an angle. An “Emergency Scene Ahead” retro-reflective pink sign should be deployed upstream of all apparatus and cones on the shoulder as per MUTCD guidelines.

- 7.6 Traffic should not be allowed to pass the incident space on both sides of emergency responders unless approved by the Incident Commander. Traffic should be diverted to the left or the right of the scene.
- 7.7 The closure of any part of the traveled portion of the roadway must first be approved by the Incident Commander.
- 7.8 If State Police arrive on scene and determine that a previously closed lane must be opened to traffic, State Police will order lanes reopened in consultation with the fire department and/or EMS at the scene. A reasonable amount of time will be afforded for responders to move to a safe area before the lane is opened.
- 7.9 If the senior fire or EMS officer does not feel adequate safety measures are in place, they should direct their personnel to a safe area until the situation is resolved with the Incident Commander at the scene.
- 7.10 The closing of additional lanes not affected by the accident, to include on and off ramps, shall require the approval of the State Police, transportation, and highway authorities.
- 7.11 When communicating with other personnel responding to an incident, it is important to note the exact location of the incident and the most efficient route to access the incident.

For purposes of uniformity, traffic lanes shall be considered from the approaching motorist’s direction of travel and shall be designated as follows:

- Three lanes in each direction:  
Left Lane, Center Lane, Right Lane.
- Four lanes in each direction:  
Left Lane, Left Center Lane, Right Center Lane, Right Lane.
- Five lanes in each direction:  
Left Lane, Left Center Lane, Center Lane, Right Center Lane, Right Lane.
- Shoulders will be designated as Left Shoulder or Right Shoulder.

Exits:

The term “Off-Ramp” will be used to describe a lane(s) which leads from the highway to another roadway. The term “On-Ramp” will be used to describe a lane(s) which leads from another roadway onto the highway; i.e., the crash is located on the Northbound Off-Ramp at Exit 10A.

## **8 GENERAL OPERATIONS**

- 8.1 In accordance with Federal Regulation 23 CFR 634, all workers within the right-of-way of a federal-aid highway who are exposed either to traffic (vehicles using the highway for purposes of travel) or to construction equipment within the work area shall wear high-visibility safety apparel. All limited access highways in New Jersey operate under federal-aid. The Federal Highway Administration has determined that Class II Vests complying with ANSI/ISEA 107, 2004 or 2006 and Public Safety Vests complying with ANSI/ISEA 207, 2006 meet the intent of this rule.
- 8.2 For fire department members, full PPE (coat, pants, helmet) should be worn. Class II vests shall be worn over the fire coat for increased visibility and must be worn when the coat is removed with the exception of emergency responders who are potentially exposed to heat, flame, or hazardous materials.
- 8.3 Responders should be acutely aware of traffic at all times when on the scene.
- 8.4 Responders shall **never** operate in a live lane. Crossing a live lane should be done with extreme caution and should be avoided when possible.
- 8.5 Hose lines/equipment should be deployed from the apparatus from the protected, downstream side opposite live traffic lanes.
- 8.6 It is recommended that an apparatus in each direction will enter the highway and the remainder of responding apparatus is to stage off the highway in the area of their assigned entry ramp. Once the location of the incident is verified, the apparatus traveling in the opposite direction shall pass the scene, exit the highway, and stage until receiving further instructions.
- 8.7 Once the incident has been stabilized and traffic control measures are in place, consideration should be given to time of day, traffic concerns, and traffic back-ups, etc. Based on these factors, when conditions permit, consideration should be given to re-opening a blocked traffic lane to improve the flow of traffic.
- 8.8 Treat all incidents as if they were a crime scene. This means consideration should be given to the preservation of vehicle and roadway evidence.

## **9 DEMOBILIZATION**

- 9.1 Demobilization of the incident must be managed with the same aggressiveness as initial actions. Apparatus and equipment should be removed from the highway promptly to reduce exposure to moving traffic and minimize traffic congestion.
- 9.2 Demobilization begins at the downstream termination area and ends at the furthest most upstream advance warning device. All responders and apparatus should clear the highway before the last device is picked up and secured.
- 9.3 Vehicles which must merge into traffic traveling at highway speeds and shall use the shoulder as an acceleration lane and emergency warning lights should be cancelled only after the vehicle has completely merged into traffic.

## **10 GUIDELINE MAINTENANCE AND UPDATES**

A significant effort was exerted to make this document as comprehensive as possible in identifying appropriate and applicable highway incident traffic safety guidelines. However, it has been acknowledged that this must be a living and evolving document that will be strengthened and enhanced over time as it is exercised and tested.

Continued collaboration, coordination, and communication among stakeholders are critical to reinforcing and maintaining the New Jersey Statewide Highway Incident Traffic Safety Guidelines for Emergency Responders. The guidelines should be reviewed on at least an annual basis. Collaborative and regular review keeps the plans current and relevant, incorporates new partners or processes, and retires obsolete content.

No change shall be made to this document unless coordinated through the State of New Jersey Highway Incident Traffic Safety Guidelines for Emergency Responders and Feedback Committee Members and the New Jersey Office of the Attorney General and communicated to all organizations impacted by these guidelines.

Each revision will be numbered and documented. As new versions are created and distributed to the participants, older versions will be replaced. This will assure that all users are working from the same version of the guidelines. The table below will keep a record of revisions made to the plan since it was first published.

### **10.1 Record of Changes**

<b>Change Number</b>	<b>Date of Change</b>	<b>Section of Plan</b>

## **10.2 Statewide Highway Incident Traffic Safety Guidelines for Emergency Responders and Feedback Committee**

This committee shall consist of members of the following agencies:

- New Jersey Career Fire Chief's Association
- New Jersey Department of Health EMS Advisory Council
- New Jersey Department of Transportation – Statewide Traffic Operations
- New Jersey Division of Fire Safety
- New Jersey Division of State Police
- New Jersey State Fire Chief's Association
- New Jersey Turnpike Authority
- South Jersey Transportation Authority

## **11 FEEDBACK AND RESOLUTION PROCESS**

Level I Feedback & Resolution:

Feedback and issues that arise during incidents on limited access highways which are not adequately addressed or resolved by these guidelines should be addressed at the local level. This should be conducted with representatives from all concerned parties at an agreed upon date and location. The specifics of this session should be forwarded to the New Jersey State Police Incident Management Unit for their reference and processing.

Level II Feedback & Resolution:

Issues that cannot be resolved through the Level I process will be forwarded to the New Jersey State Police, Incident Management Unit, for review and further direction. Personnel within the Incident Management Unit will examine the specifics of the issue and attempt to resolve the matter through formal personal dialogue with the supervisors/commanders of the entities in question. They will work in conjunction with personnel from the Feedback Committee to render a binding decision. If necessary, they will enhance their Incident Management training program to include the recommended best practices gleaned from this particular incident. All decisions made by the Feedback Committee will be deemed final. Issues which require additions to training or amendments to these guidelines will be addressed during the annual committee meetings.

The Feedback Committee will be comprised of select personnel who are assigned to the entities represented in section 10.2 of this document.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **CHAPTER 6I. CONTROL OF TRAFFIC THROUGH TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT AREAS**

(from Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), 2009 Edition)

#### **Section 6I.01 General**

Support:

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) requires the use of the Incident Command System (ICS) at traffic incident management scenes.

A traffic incident is an emergency road user occurrence, a natural disaster, or other unplanned event that affects or impedes the normal flow of traffic.

A traffic incident management area is an area of a highway where temporary traffic controls are installed, as authorized by a public authority or the official having jurisdiction of the roadway, in response to a road user incident, natural disaster, hazardous material spill, or other unplanned incident. It is a type of TTC zone and extends from the first warning device (such as a sign, light, or cone) to the last TTC device or to a point where vehicles return to the original lane alignment and are clear of the incident.

Traffic incidents can be divided into three general classes of duration, each of which has unique traffic control characteristics and needs. These classes are:

- A. Major—expected duration of more than 2 hours,
- B. Intermediate—expected duration of 30 minutes to 2 hours, and
- C. Minor—expected duration under 30 minutes.

The primary functions of TTC at a traffic incident management area are to inform road users of the incident and to provide guidance information on the path to follow through the incident area. Alerting road users and establishing a well defined path to guide road users through the incident area will serve to protect the incident responders and those involved in working at the incident scene and will aid in moving road users expeditiously past or around the traffic incident, will reduce the likelihood of secondary traffic crashes, and will preclude unnecessary use of the surrounding local road system. Examples include a stalled vehicle blocking a lane, a traffic crash blocking the traveled way, a hazardous material spill along a highway, and natural disasters such as floods and severe storm damage.

*Guidance:*

*In order to reduce response time for traffic incidents, highway agencies, appropriate public safety agencies (law enforcement, fire and rescue, emergency communications, emergency medical, and other emergency management), and private sector responders (towing and recovery and hazardous materials contractors) should mutually plan for occurrences of traffic incidents along the major and heavily traveled highway and street system.*

*On-scene responder organizations should train their personnel in TTC practices for accomplishing their tasks in and near traffic and in the requirements for traffic incident management contained in this Manual.*

*On-scene responders should take measures to move the incident off the traveled roadway or to provide for appropriate warning. All on-scene responders and news media personnel should constantly be aware of their visibility to oncoming traffic and wear high-visibility apparel.*

*Emergency vehicles should be safe-positioned (see definition in Section 1A.13) such that traffic flow through the incident scene is optimized. All emergency vehicles that subsequently arrive should be positioned in a manner that does not interfere with the established temporary traffic flow.*

*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.*

Option:

Warning and guide signs used for TTC traffic incident management situations may have a black legend and border on a fluorescent pink background (see Figure 6I-1).

Support:

While some traffic incidents might be anticipated and planned for, emergencies and disasters might pose more severe and unpredictable problems. The ability to quickly install proper temporary traffic controls might greatly reduce the effects of an incident, such as secondary crashes or excessive traffic delays. An essential part of fire, rescue, spill clean-up, highway agency, and enforcement activities is the proper control of road users through the traffic incident management area in order to protect responders, victims, and other personnel at the site. These operations might need corroborating legislative authority for the implementation and enforcement of appropriate road user regulations, parking controls, and speed zoning. It is desirable for these statutes to provide sufficient flexibility in the authority for, and implementation of, TTC to respond to the needs of changing conditions found in traffic incident management areas.

Option:

For traffic incidents, particularly those of an emergency nature, TTC devices on hand may be used for the initial response as long as they do not themselves create unnecessary additional hazards.

## **Section 6I.02 Major Traffic Incidents**

Support:

Major traffic incidents are typically traffic incidents involving hazardous materials, fatal traffic crashes involving numerous vehicles, and other natural or man-made disasters. These traffic incidents typically involve closing all or part of a roadway facility for a period exceeding 2 hours.

*Guidance:*

*If the traffic incident is anticipated to last more than 24 hours, applicable procedures and devices set forth in other Chapters of Part 6 should be used.*

*Support:*

A road closure can be caused by a traffic incident such as a road user crash that blocks the traveled way. Road users are usually diverted through lane shifts or detoured around the traffic incident and back to the original roadway. A combination of traffic engineering and enforcement preparations is needed to determine the detour route, and to install, maintain or operate, and then to remove the necessary traffic control devices when the detour is terminated. Large trucks are a significant concern in such a detour, especially when detouring them from a controlled-access roadway onto local or arterial streets.

During traffic incidents, large trucks might need to follow a route separate from that of automobiles because of bridge, weight, clearance, or geometric restrictions. Also, vehicles carrying hazardous material might need to follow a different route from other vehicles.

Some traffic incidents such as hazardous material spills might require closure of an entire highway. Through road users must have adequate guidance around the traffic incident. Maintaining good public relations is desirable. The cooperation of the news media in publicizing the existence of, and reasons for, traffic incident management areas and their TTC can be of great assistance in keeping road users and the general public well informed.

The establishment, maintenance, and prompt removal of lane diversions can be effectively managed by interagency planning that includes representatives of highway and public safety agencies.

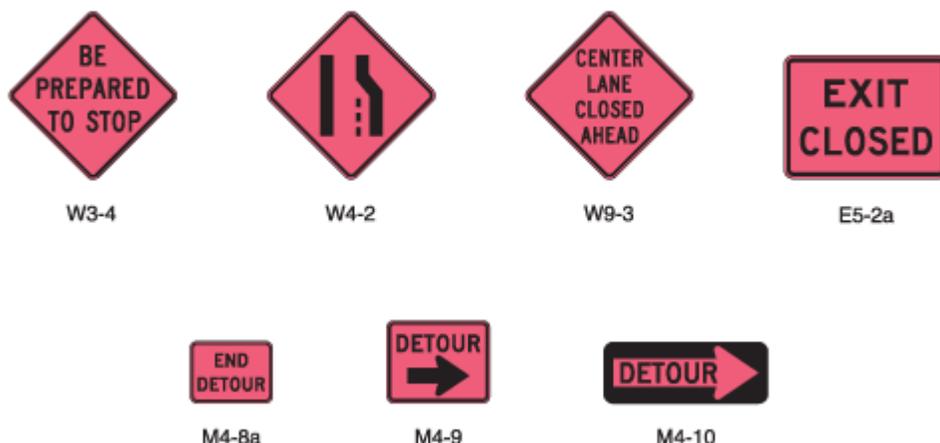
*Guidance:*

*All traffic control devices needed to set up the TTC at a traffic incident should be available so that they can be readily deployed for all major traffic incidents. The TTC should include the 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.*

*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.*

*If manual traffic control is needed, it should be provided by qualified flaggers or uniformed law enforcement officers.*

**Figure 6I-1. Examples of Traffic Incident Management Area Signs**



**Option:**

If flaggers are used to provide traffic control for an incident management situation, the flaggers may use appropriate traffic control devices that are readily available or that can be brought to the traffic incident scene on short notice.

**Guidance:**

*When light sticks or flares are used to establish the initial traffic control at incident scenes, channelizing devices (see Section 6F.63) should be installed as soon thereafter as practical.*

**Option:**

The light sticks or flares may remain in place if they are being used to supplement the channelizing devices.

**Guidance:**

*The light sticks, flares, and channelizing devices should be removed after the incident is terminated.*

**Section 6I.03 Intermediate Traffic Incidents**

**Support:**

Intermediate traffic incidents typically affect travel lanes for a time period of 30 minutes to 2 hours, and usually require traffic control on the scene to divert road users past the blockage. Full roadway closures might be needed for short periods during traffic incident clearance to allow traffic incident responders to accomplish their tasks.

The establishment, maintenance, and prompt removal of lane diversions can be effectively managed by interagency planning that includes representatives of highway and public safety agencies.

**Guidance:**

*All traffic control devices needed to set up the TTC at a traffic incident should be available so that they can be readily deployed for intermediate traffic incidents. The TTC should include the 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.*

*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.*

*If manual traffic control is needed, it should be provided by qualified flaggers or uniformed law enforcement officers.*

**Option:**

If flaggers are used to provide traffic control for an incident management situation, the flaggers may use appropriate traffic control devices that are readily available or that can be brought to the traffic incident scene on short notice.

**Guidance:**

*When light sticks or flares are used to establish the initial traffic control at incident scenes, channelizing devices (see Section 6F.63) should be installed as soon thereafter as practical.*

**Option:**

The light sticks or flares may remain in place if they are being used to supplement the channelizing devices.

**Guidance:**

*The light sticks, flares, and channelizing devices should be removed after the incident is terminated.*

## **Section 6I.04 Minor Traffic Incidents**

**Support:**

Minor traffic incidents are typically disabled vehicles and minor crashes that result in lane closures of less than 30 minutes. On-scene responders are typically law enforcement and towing companies, and occasionally highway agency service patrol vehicles.

Diversion of traffic into other lanes is often not needed or is needed only briefly. It is not generally possible or practical to set up a lane closure with traffic control devices for a minor traffic incident. Traffic control is the responsibility of on-scene responders.

**Guidance:**

*When a minor traffic incident blocks a travel lane, it should be removed from that lane to the shoulder as quickly as possible.*

## **Section 6I.05 Use of Emergency-Vehicle Lighting**

### **Support:**

The use of emergency-vehicle lighting (such as high-intensity rotating, flashing, oscillating, or strobe lights) is essential, especially in the initial stages of a traffic incident, for the safety of emergency responders and persons involved in the traffic incident, as well as road users approaching the traffic incident. Emergency-vehicle lighting, however, provides warning only and provides no effective traffic control. The use of too many lights at an incident scene can be distracting and can create confusion for approaching road users, especially at night. Road users approaching the traffic incident from the opposite direction on a divided facility are often distracted by emergency-vehicle lighting and slow their vehicles to look at the traffic incident posing a hazard to themselves and others traveling in their direction.

The use of emergency-vehicle lighting can be reduced if good traffic control has been established at a traffic incident scene. This is especially true for major traffic incidents that might involve a number of emergency vehicles. If good traffic control is established through placement of advanced warning signs and traffic control devices to divert or detour traffic, then public safety agencies can perform their tasks on scene with minimal emergency-vehicle lighting.

### **Guidance:**

*Public safety agencies should examine their policies on the use of emergency-vehicle lighting, especially after a traffic incident scene is secured, with the intent of reducing the use of this lighting as much as possible while not endangering those at the scene. Special consideration should be given to reducing or extinguishing forward facing emergency-vehicle lighting, especially on divided roadways, to reduce distractions to oncoming road users.*

*Because the glare from floodlights or vehicle headlights can impair the nighttime vision of approaching road users, any floodlights or vehicle headlights that are not needed for illumination, or to provide notice to other road users of an incident response vehicle being in an unexpected location, should be turned off at night.*

**APPENDIX B  
TRAA Vehicle Identification Guide**

**TRAA VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION GUIDE<sup>®</sup>**

**CLASS 1 • LIGHT-DUTY • (6,000 lbs. or less GVW - 4 tires)\***



**CLASS 2 • LIGHT-DUTY • (6,001 - 10,000 lbs. GVW - 4 tires)\***



Classes 1 and 2 include passenger vehicles, light trucks, minivans, full size pickups, sport utility vehicles and full size vans.

**CLASS 3 • MEDIUM-DUTY • (10,001 - 14,000 lbs. GVW - 6 tires or more)\***



**CLASS 4 • MEDIUM-DUTY • (14,001 - 16,000 lbs. GVW - 6 tires or more)\***



**CLASS 5 • MEDIUM-DUTY • (16,001 - 19,500 lbs. GVW - 6 tires or more)\***



**CLASS 6 • MEDIUM-DUTY • (19,501 - 26,000 lbs. GVW - 6 tires or more)\***



Classes 3 through 6 include a wide range of mid-size vehicles, delivery trucks, utility vehicles, motorhomes, parcel trucks, ambulances, small dump trucks, landscape trucks, flatbed and stake trucks, refrigerated and box trucks, small and medium school and transit buses.

**CLASS 7 • HEAVY-DUTY • (26,001 - 33,000 lbs. GVW - 6 tires or more)\***



**CLASS 8 • HEAVY-DUTY • (33,001 lbs. and over GVW - 10 tires or more)\***



Classes 7 and 8 include a wide range of heavy vehicles, large delivery trucks, motor coaches, refuse trucks, cement mixers, all tractor trailer combinations including double trailers.

**Information Needed  
To Correctly  
Dispatch Towing  
and  
Recovery Units:**

- Year, Make and Model of Vehicle to be Towed or Recovered
- DOT Classification (Class 1 – 8 based on GVW)
- Location of Vehicle
- Type of Tow (impound, accident, recovery motorist assist, etc.)
- Additional Vehicle Information
  - 2 wheel drive, 4 wheel drive, all wheel drive
  - damage to vehicle, tire condition
  - vehicle loaded or empty
  - cargo contents
  - does the vehicle have a trailer
  - are the keys with the vehicle

**Note:** Any vehicle may carry hazardous materials. Advise if placarded.

**\* Note:** The Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) of the vehicle to be towed or recovered can be found on the identification label on the vehicle's driver's side doorframe. The number of pounds listed on the label can then be compared with the DOT Classification Vehicle Type Chart for the correct DOT class.

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Law enforcement communications with towing and recovery operators describing an incident and the vehicles involved can insure quick and efficient clearing of these scenes and less disruption to traffic flow. In an effort to standardize communications, the towing industry is adopting the federal vehicle class standards as outlined herein.

## VIN CODES

The year of the vehicle is critical information for towing operators in order for them to reference correct towing procedures. The diagrams on the front are examples of classifications. The following information about vehicle identification numbers affixed to the chassis will help determine the vehicle's year. As noted, the vehicle's year, identified by a letter or number in the VIN sequence, is the eighth character from the right.

**1P8ZA1279SZ215470**

**EXAMPLE 1995 VIN NUMBER:** \_\_\_\_\_ ↑

1980.....A	1987.....H	1994.....R	2001.....1	2008.....8
1981.....B	1988.....J	1995.....S	2002.....2	2009.....9
1982.....C	1989.....K	1996.....T	2003.....3	2010.....A
1983.....D	1990.....L	1997.....V	2004.....4	2011.....B
1984.....E	1991.....M	1998.....W	2005.....5	2012.....C
1985.....F	1992.....N	1999.....X	2006.....6	
1986.....G	1993.....P	2000.....Y	2007.....7	

## TOW TRUCK/CAR CARRIER CLASSIFICATION

<p><b>LIGHT-DUTY</b></p> <p>TOW TRUCK                      CAR CARRIER</p> 	<p><b>HEAVY-DUTY</b></p> 
<p><b>MEDIUM-DUTY</b></p> <p>TOW TRUCK</p>  <p>CAR CARRIER</p> 	<p><b>LOW BOY TRAILER</b></p> 

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