



TO: News Media

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COALITION RELEASES PROPOSED UNIFIED GOAL FOR TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

Mar. 13, 2007 (Washington, DC) -- Culminating an 18-month consensus-building process, the National Traffic Incident Management Coalition (NTIMC) has released a Proposed National Unified Goal for Traffic Incident Management.

More than 20 national organizations representing the many disciplines that respond to typical traffic incidents are currently in the process of formally adopting the National Unified Goal — known as the "NUG" — as official policy. NTIMC member organizations represent emergency communications, emergency medical services, fire, law enforcement, transportation, and towing and recovery. The Proposed NUG marks the first time such a broad coalition of incident responders have joined together to develop common policies to address common concerns.

The Proposed National Unified Goal is:

- Responder Safety;
- Safe, Quick Clearance; and
- Prompt, Reliable, Interoperable Communications.

NTIMC will achieve the three major objectives of the NUG by implementing 18 strategies. There are 6 cross-cutting strategies that address all three major objectives of the NUG — responder safety; safe, quick clearance; and improved communications. The other strategies spell out next steps for achieving each the three major NUG objectives. Major strategies include:

- Recommended practices for multidisciplinary TIM operations and communications;

- Multidisciplinary TIM training;
- Goals for performance and progress;
- Promotion of beneficial technologies; and
- Partnerships to promote driver awareness.

Responder Safety: Responder Safety is Objective #1 of the National Unified Goal. There is growing concern about the number of responders who are injured or killed by careless drivers at traffic incident scenes, in what is known as "struck by" incidents. Every year, about half of the 300 law enforcement officers killed on duty die on the roadways, including many struck down while working on the roadside. More than 20 percent of firefighter deaths occur on the roadways. In just the first three months of 2006, the towing and recovery industry lost 5 of its own in struck-by incidents.

NUG strategies for improving responder safety include:

- Working through the NTIMC to develop, through a multidisciplinary consensus process, recommended practices to promote responder safety at traffic incident scenes. These practices will be promoted through multidisciplinary Traffic Incident Management training.
- Encouraging states to adopt and enforce "Move Over" laws that require drivers to move over, and/or slow down for emergency vehicles and emergency responders on the roadway. Definitions of "emergency vehicles" and "emergency responders" must include all traffic incident responders, both public and private sector.
- Forming broad partnerships for public awareness and education about "Move Over/Slow Down" laws and other ways that drivers can prevent secondary incidents.

Safe, Quick Clearance: The second major objective of the NUG is "Safe, Quick Clearance." Traffic congestion is a serious national concern, and more coordinated and efficient Traffic Incident Management is one of the major means available for managing traffic congestion.

About one-quarter of the traffic congestion in the United States is caused by non-recurring traffic incidents. Unexpected travel delay is especially destructive to the economy, ruining just-in-time delivery schedules, and meeting plans.

When traffic incidents occur, every minute counts. For every minute that an Interstate lane is blocked, four minutes of travel delay result.

Clearing the road quickly requires responders to work together efficiently to accomplish the many tasks involved in traffic incident management – emergency communications, emergency medical services (EMS), fire, law enforcement, transportation, towing and recovery, hazmat, and public information. The NUG's safe, quick clearance strategies are intended to clear the road more efficiently

without sacrificing safety, or other missions. TIM strategies for Safe, Quick Clearance include:

- Working with Traffic Incident Management partners at the state, regional and local levels to develop and adopt multidisciplinary procedures for coordination of Traffic Incident Management operations, based on national recommended practices and procedures. NTIMC will develop the recommendations, ensuring that all disciplines are involved. The guidelines will cover a broad range of issues that affect clearance operations at incident scenes.
- Encouraging TIM partners at the state and local levels to develop multidisciplinary goals for response times and clearance times, as part of broader goals for more effective Traffic Incident Management. Again, NTIMC will develop guidelines to help the state and local partners develop their own goals. Incident responders will be encouraged to commit to the goals in written agreements.
- Encouraging 24/7 availability of all traffic incident responders and resources that are needed to promptly and effectively manage emergency incidents occurring on the roadways.

Improved Incident Communications: Improving incident communications is essential to achieving other Traffic Incident Management goals. Incident communications is a very broad topic that involves complex technical and institutional issues. In order to highlight the importance of multidisciplinary cooperation in developing improved incident communications, this topic was highlighted as the third NUG objective.

NUG strategies to improve incident communications include:

- Developing and implementing standardized multidisciplinary traffic incident communications practices and procedures.
- Developing systems and procedures for prompt, reliable notification of traffic incident responders regarding incidents to which they are expected to respond.
- Encouraging state, regional and local Traffic Incident Management stakeholders to work together to develop interoperable voice and data networks.
- Encouraging development of more prompt and reliable traveler information systems that will enable drivers to make travel decisions to reduce the impacts of emergency events on traffic flow.
- Finally, encouraging TIM partners to actively partner with news media and information service providers to provide prompt, reliable incident information to the public.

Later this year, NTIMC member organizations plan to hold a joint press event to publicize official release of the final NUG. For more information about NTIMC and the Proposed NUG, see NTIMC's web site at <http://www.timcoalition.org>.