Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Emergency Traffic Control and Scene Management Guidelines

October 1, 2008
Wisconsin’s Traffic Incident Management and Emergency Responders

SUBJECT: Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) Emergency Traffic Control and Scene Management Guidelines

Dear Traffic Incident Management Partner:

In July of last year, WisDOT established a task force of transportation and public safety representatives to address the need to develop and document more consistent guidelines for managing incident scenes on the State’s highway system. I am pleased to present you with this document, “Emergency Traffic Control and Scene Management Guidelines”, which is the culmination of their hard work.

Working in and near traffic is dangerous. Tragically, more and more incident responders are struck by traffic on our nation’s highways each year, causing untold injuries, and even death. Having a uniform approach to, and guidelines for, emergency traffic control and scene management will help provide the safest possible work environment for all Wisconsin incident responders.

These guidelines are not to serve as a textbook nor are they a substitute for technical knowledge, experience, or effective judgment. In that no two traffic incidents are alike, the guidelines are general and broad-based. The Incident Commander will require an individual assessment for the specific conditions presented by each traffic incident. This assessment and corresponding actions require constant reevaluation to ensure that apparatus positioning and warning device placement are adequate and safe.

The guidelines found in this document will require ongoing review and updating as conditions, technology, and equipment change. As you apply these guidelines in the field, we encourage you to note any needed revisions and/or enhancements and transmit them to our State Traffic Incident Management Engineer, who can be contacted at (414) 227-2166 or timeprogram@dot.state.wi.us.

We value your continued support and efforts in enhancing traffic incident management in Wisconsin and remain committed to keeping you and our motorists safe on our highway system.

Sincerely,

Frank J. Busalacchi
Secretary of Transportation
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Background

These guidelines were developed under the direction of Wisconsin’s Statewide Traffic Incident Management Enhancement (TIME) Program. The TIME program is a comprehensive multi-agency, multi-discipline program, led by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), dedicated to coordinating and enhancing traffic incident management in Wisconsin. Originally initiated in 1995 in the SE Region of the state, the TIME program was expanded statewide in 2006 in an effort to coordinate traffic incident management activities that were occurring at various levels across the state. Additional information about the TIME program can be found online at: www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/stoc/time.htm.

In July 2006, WisDOT hosted the first Statewide Traffic Incident Management Conference in Wisconsin Rapids. The conference attracted a multi-disciplinary audience, which included representatives from law enforcement, fire, emergency management, towing and recovery, and transportation agencies from all over the state. Through discussion during conference breakout sessions the need for a document that provided a consistent approach to traffic control and scene management at incidents was identified.

After the conference, a multi-discipline task force was convened to start developing guidelines for emergency traffic control and scene management. A draft version of the guidelines was presented at the 2007 Statewide Traffic Incident Management Conference and all conference attendees were encouraged to review and provide comments on the guidelines. These guidelines are the final product of this effort.

Acknowledgements

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation, including the Wisconsin State Patrol, would like to thank the following agencies/organizations for their time, dedication and contribution to the development of these guidelines.

- Brown County Highway Department
- Columbia County Highway Department
- Delton Fire Department
- Fond du Lac County Sheriff’s Office
- Northeast Wisconsin Technical College
- Township Fire Department
- Waushara County Sheriff’s Department
- Winnebago County Highway Department
- Winnebago County Sheriff’s Office
- Wisconsin Towing Association
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Purpose

Each year, dozens of traffic incident responders are injured or killed while working on or near the nation’s roadways. These guidelines have been established to provide incident responders within the state of Wisconsin a uniform approach to emergency traffic control and scene management. Having a uniform approach will help provide the safest possible work environment for all Wisconsin incident responders, while minimizing the risk for secondary crashes. The guidelines presented in this document are intended to be dynamic and the application of methods presented may vary slightly based on the type of incident being responded to. Although these guidelines are in place, it is essential that proper judgment is used to assess each individual situation and to ensure the safety of all those involved.

When responding to an incident scene, a priority for first responders is protecting themselves from the dangers inherent to working in traffic. As illustrated in these guidelines, responders can enhance their safety by:

1. **Establishing a Traffic Incident Management Area (TIMA)** – Utilize all available equipment to set up emergency traffic control and provide positive guidance to the driver as to what is happening and where to drive.

2. **Avoiding the errant or distracted driver** – Do not turn your back to traffic. Face traffic and remain alert at all times; utilize another person as a lookout or spotter to watch for dangers and provide warnings. Always have an escape plan to get out of the way of errant drivers.

3. **Using protective equipment** – Being seen by motorists is extremely important when working in and near traffic, especially during nighttime and inclement weather. Always wear appropriate high-visibility safety apparel (i.e. vest, jackets, pants, etc.).

Key points to remember when using this document are:

- This document serves as a guideline for incident responders and is not a procedure.
- These guidelines were developed with input from a multi-discipline group and are intended for use by all incident responders.
- The majority of the information contained in these guidelines is applicable to any traffic incident that occurs on any highway.
- These guidelines are flexible and can be adapted based on the type of incident being responded to. As no two traffic incidents are the same, experience and judgment should be applied in each emergency situation.
- These guidelines use the Incident Command System (ICS) as a foundation and support that the use of ICS at every incident scene is absolutely necessary.
Process for Requesting Revisions/Updates to the Guidelines

Due to the dynamic nature of traffic incident management and corresponding guidelines, it is recognized and expected that periodic revisions to these guidelines will be required. Emergency responders are encouraged to submit suggestions and/or recommended changes as these guidelines are applied in the field. Also, any errors or omissions that responders may encounter when using these guidelines should be promptly brought to the attention of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation’s State Traffic Incident Management Engineer. An Error/Omission Notification and Revision Request Form can be found at the end of this document. The notification/request form is also available online at: www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/stoc/time.htm.

A Record of Revisions table can be found on the inside of the back cover of the guidelines document. This table documents all revisions made since the first version of the guidelines, which was dated May 1, 2008, was published.

Process for Obtaining Additional Copies of the Guidelines and Other Related Materials

In addition to the Emergency Traffic Control and Scene Management Guidelines document, supplemental materials have been developed to assist with both training and outreach efforts. These materials include:

- **Quick Reference Visor Card** – This 8.5” x 5.5” laminated visor card highlights key points of the guidelines and is intended to provide responders an easy to use quick reference if needed while on-scene at a traffic incident.

- **Informational Overview Presentation** – This PowerPoint presentation, complete with video clips, highlights the impacts of traffic incidents and provides an overview of the need, purpose and content of the Emergency Traffic Control and Scene Management Guidelines.

- **Training Presentation** – This comprehensive PowerPoint presentation covers all the material found in the guidelines and may be used for training purposes. An instructor manual is included with the presentation.

All of these materials, including the guidelines, are being offered free of charge from WisDOT and can be obtained using the Materials Order Form found on the last page of this document. The Materials Order Form is also available online at: www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/stoc/time.htm.
Glossary of Terms

**Activity Area** – Section of the highway where incident response activities take place. The activity area is comprised of the upstream buffer space and the incident space.

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

**Advance Warning Area** – Section of highway where motorists are informed about the upcoming incident area.

**Block** – Positioning of an emergency vehicle to create a physical barrier between upstream traffic and the incident space.

**Block to the Left** – Positioning of an emergency vehicle where traffic is being diverted to the left.

**Block to the Right** – Positioning of an emergency vehicle where traffic is being diverted to the right.

**Buffer Space** – A lateral and/or longitudinal area that separates personnel and vehicles in the protected incident space from nearby moving traffic.

**Command** – The act of directing, ordering, or controlling by virtue of explicit statutory, regulatory, or delegated authority.

**Command Staff** – Consists of Public Information Officer, Safety Officer, Liaison Officer, and other positions as required, who report directly to the Incident Commander.

**Communications/Dispatch Center** – Agency or interagency dispatch centers, 911 call centers, emergency control or command dispatch centers, or any naming convention given to the facility and staff that handles emergency calls from the public and communication with emergency management/response personnel.

**Crash Reconstruction** – The objective analysis of physical evidence present in a collision event that serves to establish how the collision occurred, factually and objectively.

**Downstream** – Roadway or traffic flow beyond the incident space, when considered from the perspective of a passing motorist.

**Flagger(s)** – Personnel assigned to control stop and go traffic or direct traffic in conformance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).
**Helispot** – See Landing Zone

**Highway** – A general term for denoting a public way for purposes of travel by vehicular travel, including the entire area within the right-of-way.

**Incident Command** – Responsible for overall management of the incident and consists of the Incident Commander, either single or Unified Command, and any assigned supporting staff.

**Incident Command Post** – The field location where the primary tactical-level, on-scene incident command functions are performed.

**Incident Command System (ICS)** – A standardized, on-scene, all-hazard incident management concept that is based upon a flexible, scalable response organization providing a common framework within which people can work together effectively.

**Incident Commander** – The individual responsible for all incident activities, including the development of strategies and tactics and the ordering and release of resources. The Incident Commander has overall authority and responsibility for conducting incident operations and is responsible for the management of all incident operations at the incident site.

**Incident Space** – Physical area of the roadway within which the emergency responders perform their EMS, fire, law enforcement, and recovery tasks at a vehicle-related incident.

**Landing Zone** – A designated location where a helicopter may safely take off and land. Landing zones may be used for medical evacuation and loading of supplies, equipment or personnel.

**Lane 1, 2, 3, etc.** – Naming convention for lane identification. Lanes are numbered starting with the left most lane as seen from the motorist’s direction of travel (the lane nearest the median) being Lane 1. See example below for a 3 lane highway:

Lane 1 - left lane nearest the median  
Lane 2 - middle lane  
Lane 3 - right lane nearest the shoulder

**Liaison Officer** – A member of the Command Staff responsible for coordinating with representatives from cooperating and assisting agencies or organizations.

**Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)** – The MUTCD is the national standard for all traffic control devices used during construction and maintenance activities. MUTCD Chapter 6I covers the use of traffic control devices at an incident scene.
National Traffic Incident Management Coalition (NTIMC) – The NTIMC is a forum of national organizations representing EMS, fire, law enforcement, public safety communications, towing and recovery, and transportation communities working together to promote multi-disciplinary, multi-jurisdictional Traffic Incident Management (TIM) programs and activities.

National Unified Goal (NUG) – The NUG for Traffic Incident Management is responder safety; safe, quick clearance; and prompt, reliable, interoperable communications. The NUG was developed by the NTIMC.

Officers – The ICS title for the personnel responsible for the Command Staff positions of Safety, Liaison, and Public Information.

Public Information Officer – A member of the Command Staff responsible for interfacing with the public and media and/or with other agencies with incident-related information requirements.

Responders – All personnel who have a responsibility in managing an incident and mitigating its impacts. Most responders arrive on the scene and are there to assist those involved in the incident. Traffic incident responders may include, but are not limited to: law enforcement, fire, EMS, towing and recovery, coroner or medical examiner, county maintenance/highway, city/village/town public works, transportation officials, insurance investigators and engineers.

Retroreflectivity – A property of a surface that allows a large portion of the light coming from a point source to be returned directly back to a point near its origin.

Safety Officer – A member of the Command Staff responsible for monitoring incident operations and advising the Incident Commander on all matters relating to operational safety, including the health and safety of emergency responder personnel.

Shadow – The protected incident space at a traffic incident that is shielded by the block from an emergency vehicle(s).

Spotter(s) – Emergency personnel assigned to monitor approaching traffic and activate an emergency signal if the actions of a motorist do not conform to established traffic control measures in place at the incident scene.

Staging Area – Location established where available resources can be temporarily housed or parked while awaiting operational assignment.

Tapers – Used to move traffic out of or into the normal path through the use of a series of channelizing devices.
Task Force – Any combination of resources, with common communications and a designated leader, assembled to support a specific mission or operational need.

Temporary Traffic Control (TTC) Zone – An area of a highway where road user conditions are changed due to a work zone or incident by the use of temporary traffic control devices, flaggers, uniformed law enforcement officers, and other authorized personnel/emergency responders.

Termination Area – Area used to return motorists to their normal path. The termination area extends from the downstream end of the incident space to the last temporary traffic control device.

Traffic Incident – An emergency road user occurrence, a natural disaster, or other unplanned event that affects or impedes the normal flow of traffic. A traffic incident requires a response to protect life or property, and to mitigate its impacts. Traffic incidents, for example, include motor vehicle crashes, fires, hazardous materials release, disabled vehicles, infrastructure damage, major disasters, terrorist events, and other occurrences that require an emergency response.

Traffic Incident Management (TIM) – Systematic, planned and coordinated use of human, institutional, mechanical and technical resources to reduce the duration of traffic incidents, and improve the safety of motorists, crash victims and incident responders.

Traffic Incident Management Area (TIMA) – Area of a highway where temporary traffic controls are imposed by authorized officials in response to an incident. A TIMA is a type of TTC Zone and extends from the first warning device (such as a sign 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. The components of a TIMA include an advance warning area, a transition area, an activity area and a termination area.

Traffic Incident Scene – Location at which a traffic incident occurred including the TIMA.

Traffic Space – Portion of the highway in which traffic is routed through the activity area.

Transition Area – The section of the highway where motorists are redirected out of their normal path. The transition area is the area in which approaching motorists should change their speed and position to comply with the emergency traffic control measures established at an incident scene.

Unified Command – An ICS application in which responding agencies and/or jurisdictions with responsibility for the incident work together to establish a common set of objectives and strategies.

Upstream – Roadway or traffic flow prior to the incident space, when considered from the perspective of a passing motorist.
1. National Incident Management System / Incident Command System

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) is a comprehensive, national approach to incident management that is applicable at all jurisdictional levels and across functional disciplines. The intent of NIMS is to:

- Be applicable across a full spectrum of potential incidents and hazard scenarios, regardless of size or complexity.
- Improve coordination and cooperation between public and private entities in a variety of domestic incident management activities.

One of the key features of NIMS is the Incident Command System (ICS). ICS consists of procedures for controlling personnel, facilities, equipment and communications. It is a system designed to be used or applied from the time an incident occurs until the requirement for management and operations no longer exists. **ICS should be established and used for every incident.**

ICS under single command has an Incident Commander who has complete responsibility for incident management. The Incident Commander must account for all personnel working at the scene. This includes those that arrived on the scene initially (law enforcement, fire, EMS, etc.) as well as those who arrive later to assist with the scene (highway department personnel, insurance investigators, engineers, etc.). It is recommended that when command is established or transferred from one person to another, this information, as well as the location of the command post, be communicated for all responders to hear. In many instances, difficulties in communication may exist with not all on-scene responders being able to hear important information. In such cases, it is necessary that the Incident Commander ensure that all parties have been made aware of any pertinent information.

Additionally, ambiguous codes and acronyms have proven to be a major obstacle in communications at incidents that involve multiple agencies. As such, NIMS requires that all responders use plain English, or clear text, when responding to an incident, which means that radio codes, agency-specific codes and/or jargon should not be used.

As often as possible, the guidelines of Unified Command should be followed. A Unified Command allows agencies with different legal, geographic, and functional authorities and responsibilities to work together effectively without affecting individual agency authority, responsibility or accountability. Under a Unified Command, a single, coordinated incident action plan will direct all activities. This allows responding agencies to set up and follow a common method of operation and a single set of objectives for clearing and managing the scene. Use of Unified Command helps minimize duplication of efforts and confusion on the scene.

The principles of ICS are carried through the remainder of this document.
2. Incident Response Priorities

Priority 1: Life Safety – Initial efforts will be directed to preserving lives, including those of responders, injured persons and passing motorists. Safety will be the first priority throughout the incident.

Priority 2: Incident Stabilization – To enhance operational safety, actions must be taken to prevent fire, eliminate ignition sources and stabilize the crash vehicles.

- Prevention of Secondary Crashes – To minimize the risk of another motor vehicle crash involving response units and personnel, responders must properly warn approaching traffic that there is a hazard ahead, to slow down and use caution. Responders should utilize available traffic control devices and, if possible, position apparatus to divert traffic around the crash scene. Special attention should be paid to the end of the traffic queue such that warning is given to motorists approaching the end of the queue.

- Protection of Evidence – Responders will make every effort to minimize the impact of their presence on the crash scene. For example, responders will not cause damage to vehicles beyond what is necessary for extrication purposes or remove debris not in an actively flowing traffic lane. Crash scene investigators rely upon scene evidence to reconstruct the event. These reconstructions are often used to hold the involved persons accountable for their actions during potential criminal proceedings. Responders should understand that any crash is a potential crime scene and must be treated accordingly.

- Safe, Quick Clearance – It shall be the goal to clear the scene as soon as practical to restore traffic flow and limit the diversion of traffic to less desirable and more hazardous routes. It is important to note that Wisconsin’s Incident Clearance Law (also known as the “Steer It, Clear It” law) requires motorists involved in crashes where the vehicle is able to be driven and no one is injured, to move the vehicle to a location where it will obstruct traffic as little as possible. (Reference: 1997 Wisconsin Act 258)

The priority of safe, quick clearance also aligns with the National Unified Goal (NUG) for Traffic Incident Management. Additional details about the NUG can be found at: timcoalition.org.

Priority 3: Protection of Property and the Environment – Responders will attempt to protect or save property by limiting damage to vehicles to what is necessary to stabilize and remove trapped persons. Property salvage operations will also be conducted as soon as safely possible. For hazardous materials and/or potential hazardous materials scenes, responders with the proper personal protective equipment and training will strive to contain the spilled product while minimizing exposure.
3. Incident Classification

All traffic incidents will be classified in one of the following three categories:

- **Major** – expected duration of more than 2 hours.
  - 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 two hours.
  - Examples include:
    - Chain reaction crashes
    - Crashes that require a significant medical response, a coroner response, and/or a crash reconstruction response (e.g. fatalities)
    - Incidents involving advanced, prolonged environmental clean-up (e.g. incidents involving hazardous materials)
    - Structural damage
    - Wild fires near the roadway
    - Acts of terrorism

- **Intermediate** – expected duration between 30 minutes and 2 hours.
  - Intermediate traffic incidents typically affect travel lanes for a time period of thirty minutes to two 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.
  - Examples include:
    - Roadway debris
    - Overturned truck/trailer
    - Rollover or multi-vehicle crashes
    - Commercial carrier crashes

- **Minor** – expected duration of less than 30 minutes.
  - Minor traffic incidents are typically disabled vehicles and minor crashes that result in lane closures of less than 30 minutes. On-scene responders typically include law enforcement and towing companies, and occasionally WisDOT service patrols.
  - Examples include:
    - Disabled vehicles in a travel lane or on the shoulder
    - Minor crashes
    - Minor roadway debris
4. Initial Scene Response

4.1 Arrival and Vehicle Positioning

The first responder to arrive at an incident scene should position their vehicle to establish an initial block. Parking the vehicle in a blocking position will provide a protective buffer between personnel and traffic. Vehicle positioning is further discussed in Section 9.1. Additionally, as soon as practical, implement advance warning signs.

The first responder to arrive at an incident will typically also be responsible for stabilizing the scene and providing initial medical attention to injured persons.

4.2 Scene Size-Up

As soon as practical upon arriving at the scene of a traffic incident the responder should provide their communications/dispatch center with the information outlined below in Sections 4.2.1 through 4.2.6. Ideally, as much information as possible should be provided before initially exiting the response vehicle.

4.2.1 Location – It is critical to relay the exact location (including highway name, direction, cross street and/or mile marker, etc.) of the incident to the communications/dispatch center, as well as to all other responding units. This information will assist other responders in planning response routes, as well as emergency alternate routes should they be needed.

Enhanced Reference Markers – Enhanced reference markers, also referred to as enhanced reference location signs, provide motorists and responders an additional tool for accurately identifying their location on the highway. Enhanced reference markers are signs posted along the highway that provide the name, direction and mile marker of the highway. Enhanced reference markers are typically placed every one-tenth of a mile along the median of the highway. Currently enhanced reference markers are installed in the Madison and Milwaukee areas - mainly along urbanized freeways. An example of an Enhanced Reference Marker can be found in Figure 1 below.

![Enhanced Reference Marker Example: I-94 EB at Mile Marker 301.2](image)

Figure 1 - Enhanced Reference Marker Example: I-94 EB at Mile Marker 301.2
System Interchanges – The term system interchange is typically used to denote the intersection of two or more freeways. When an incident occurs in a system interchange, it is imperative that the location of the incident be correctly identified. Examples of system interchanges in Wisconsin include the Marquette Interchange (between I-43, I-94 and I-794) in Milwaukee and the Badger Interchange (between WIS 30, I-39, I-90 and I-94) in Madison. When referring to ramps within a system interchange the nomenclature “from the direction to the direction” should be used. For example, if a motorist traveling on I-43 SB takes the ramp to I-94 WB this ramp should be identified as the ramp from the north to the west.

4.2.2 Incident Type – The incident type, as described in Section 3, should be relayed to the communications/dispatch center to assist in resource allocation and planning. An initial approximation will be adequate, as it can always be upgraded or downgraded as necessary.

- Major (2 hours or more)
- Intermediate (between 30 minutes and 2 hours)
- Minor (under 30 minutes)

4.2.3 Request for Public Works and/or Highway Department Support – For an intermediate or major incident, the public works and/or highway department should be notified. The public works and/or highway department can assist by providing the additional traffic control devices necessary for proper temporary traffic control, which should release other first responder personnel and vehicles to help clear the scene and assist in other ways necessary. It should be noted that the county highway department should be contacted when an incident occurs on a state or county facility and that the city/village/town public works department should be contacted when an incident occurs on a city/village/town road.

4.2.4 Vehicles – The number and type of vehicles involved in the incident should be relayed to the communications/dispatch center.

4.2.5 Injured Persons – The number of people injured, including the extent of their injuries and whether or not extrication will be necessary should be communicated. This information is critical to responding fire and EMS personnel and will allow them to begin planning for additional resources if necessary. Follow up will likely be required as additional information, such as victim condition and level of consciousness, becomes available.

4.2.6 Other Conditions – Any important information regarding other conditions present at the scene that may affect the safety of additional responders needs to be relayed. For example, fires on the scene, the potential need for a hazardous materials response, downed wires, or adverse weather conditions such as ice or fog are important to communicate.
As soon as practically possible, and preferably within the first ten minutes on the scene, the information outlined in Sections 4.2.7 through 4.2.10 should be provided to the appropriate communications/dispatch center to ensure that all additional resources needed are dispatched in a timely manner.

4.2.7 Hazardous Materials – It is necessary to quickly identify the presence or potential presence of hazardous materials at an incident scene in order to maintain the safety of all responders. If hazardous materials are present, or are suspected to be present, the fire department should be notified to ensure they can respond with the proper equipment to handle the clean up and disposal of any materials. For some hazardous materials it may be necessary to bring in specialized resources for clean up and disposal.

4.2.8 Towing and Recovery – If it appears that one or more of the vehicles involved in the incident are impacted such that they cannot be driven, towing and recovery personnel need to be notified. When contacting towing and recovery agencies it is very important to provide them with accurate incident details to ensure they are able to respond with the proper equipment. Incident clearance can be significantly delayed when towing and recovery agencies respond with the incorrect equipment due to inaccurate information. Appendix A includes a Towing and Recovery Call-Out Checklist that should be followed any time towing and recovery services are needed.

4.2.9 Traffic Conditions – Traffic conditions, as well as alternate response routes for additional personnel, must be relayed to the communications/dispatch center. Traffic related information, such as the length of traffic backups, will help responding units ensure they use an appropriate response route and can be used to identify locations where responders may need to set up additional traffic control. Also, all impacted agencies should be notified when an emergency alternate route is activated. When the communications/dispatch center receives traffic condition information, they should relay this information to WisDOT's Statewide Traffic Operations Center as outlined in Section 4.4.

4.2.10 Additional Resources – Information pertaining to any additional resource needs should also be relayed to the communications/dispatch center. Some examples include the need for medical helicopter services, requests for crash investigation/reconstruction services, requests for a medical examiner/coroner, requests for a State Patrol or County Motor Carrier Inspector for an incident involving a truck or tractor trailer, and/or Department of Natural Resources (DNR) notification.

An Emergency Traffic Control and Scene Management - Quick Reference Visor Card has been developed to assist responders with the scene size-up. A copy of the visor card can be found in Appendix B. Visor cards can be obtained using the Materials Order Form found on the last page of this document.
4.3 **Role of a Communications/Dispatch Center**

Communications/dispatch centers serve a key role in traffic incident response. When an incident occurs, communications/dispatch centers are often the first to receive notification and are responsible for facilitating the assessment of the situation and dispatching an appropriate response based on their knowledge of available resources.

Traffic incident information received by communications/dispatch centers comes from many sources and is often received simultaneously via telephone, mobile data computer, two-way radio and, in some centers, from observing real-time video.

Effective and efficient dispatch of emergency responders mandates that all communication between the field and the center be clear, concise and accurate. Furthermore, proper response requires that communications/dispatch centers be educated as to what resources and assets are available and how and when they should be deployed. For example, to facilitate response to traffic incidents, personnel working in communications/dispatch centers should have easy access to items such as the Towing and Recovery Call-Out Checklist, emergency alternate route guides and highway/public works department contact information.

4.4 **WisDOT's Statewide Traffic Operations Center**

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation’s Statewide Traffic Operations Center (STOC) monitors, operates and maintains traffic management and traveler information systems around the state, including Dynamic Message Signs (DMS), Portable Changeable Message Signs (PCMS), Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras, Ramp Meters (RM), the Highway Advisory Radio (HAR) and the WisDOT Web site’s Incident Alert page. The STOC is a 24/7/365 operation. Additional information about the STOC can be found at: www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/stoc/.

*The STOC should be contacted for any incident that is anticipated to have at least one Interstate/state highway lane or ramp blocked for more than 30 minutes.* Additionally, agencies should contact the STOC to report transportation infrastructure problems that occur on state-maintained highways, such as signal knockdowns, bridge hits, flooding, etc.

To simplify incident notification and response, the STOC has a single contact number: 1-800-375-7302. Please note that this number is to be used by first responders and emergency personnel only. This number is **NOT** to be distributed to the general public.

For major and/or intermediate traffic incidents, the STOC uses the information they receive to post Incident Alerts to the WisDOT Web site. Therefore, it is essential that agencies provide the STOC with updates as an incident progresses (i.e. additional lanes are opened or closed) and when the incident has been cleared.
Additionally, in the fall of 2008, Wisconsin’s 511 Traveler Information System is scheduled to be deployed. In July of 2000, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) designated 511 as the national traveler information number. The objective of 511 is to provide convenient access to real-time, route-specific traveler information including congestion, construction activity, road weather conditions, incident, emergency alerts and special event notices via the Internet or by dialing 511 from any phone. To date, 511 programs have been deployed in more than half the states in the country. Wisconsin’s 511 program will be based out of the STOC and provides an additional tool for disseminating traveler information on a statewide basis. Wisconsin’s 511 Web site can be accessed at: www.511wi.gov.

5. Initial Traffic Incident Management Area Establishment

A Traffic Incident Management Area (TIMA) should be established as soon as practically possible following arrival at an incident scene. TIMAs are used to provide the traffic control and advance warning necessary to provide a safe working area for first responders at an incident scene. In the early stages of an incident, responders should use all equipment on hand to set up traffic control, realizing that the TIMA will be expanded/enhanced as additional responders arrive and additional resources become available. Also, responders should keep in mind that as the incident progresses, the scene may escalate (go from a 1-lane closure to multiple lane closure) or de-escalate (go from a multiple lane closure to a 1-lane or shoulder closure).

All TIMAs should conform to the standards established in Chapter 6I of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). A copy of MUTCD Chapter 6I can be found in Appendix C. Chapter 6I provides guidance on the types of temporary traffic control devices that should be used at a TIMA based on the incident type. For Major and Intermediate incidents, Chapter 6I states that temporary traffic control should include proper traffic diversions, tapered lane closures, and upstream warning devices to alert approaching traffic of the end of a queue. For Minor incidents, Chapter 6I recognizes that it is not generally possible or practical to set up a lane closure with traffic control devices and recommends that when a minor incident blocks a travel lane, it should be removed from that lane to the shoulder as quickly as possible.

It is important to note that motorists have become increasingly accustomed to the types of traffic control measures used in work zones, and are familiar with how to react to them. TIMAs and corresponding traffic control devices that are not similar to work zones tend to confuse drivers.

Figure 2 illustrates the components of a TIMA, which are discussed in detail in the following sections.
Figure 2 - TIMA Components  (Source: Modified from 2003 MUTCD)
5.1 Advance Warning Area

The advance warning area is established upstream of the incident in order to warn oncoming traffic of the upcoming incident scene and to promote a reduction in travel speeds. Warning signs and or response vehicles should be placed according to the following guidelines with special care as this will most likely be the motorist’s first warning of the incident:

- Incidents on the Interstate system or other high speed divided roadways should have advance warning signs placed approximately 1,000 – 2,600 feet in advance of the beginning of the transition area. It should be noted that delineator posts are commonly placed approximately 200 feet apart, allowing for an estimated warning sign placement of between 5 and 13 delineator post spaces between the transition area and the closest warning sign.

- Warning signs on other roadways should be placed approximately 500 – 1,000 feet prior to the transition area.

All advance warning signs should be placed so that they will provide enough warning for vehicles to slow before reaching the traffic backup. Advance warning signs placed in urban areas may need to be placed at shorter distances to avoid sign clutter. It should be noted that setting up a TIMA for traffic incident management situations near a corner, hill, or other reduced visibility situation may require the location of the advance warning devices to be adjusted.

5.1.1 Advance Warning Signs – Warning and guide signs used for emergency traffic incident management situations should have black lettering and a black border on a fluorescent pink background (per MUTCD Chapter 6I). Examples of these signs are shown in Figure 3.

![Figure 3 - Examples of TIMA Advance Warning Signs](image)

5.1.2 Portable Changeable Message Signs – Portable Changeable Message Signs (PCMS) are another tool for providing drivers advance warning. PCMS can be used for intermediate incidents and are strongly recommended for use during major incidents. The county highway department is typically responsible for housing and deploying PCMS. Upon deployment, the STOC will operate the PCMS including providing messages.
5.1.3 **Dynamic Message Signs** – Dynamic Message Signs (DMS) are the permanent, structure-mounted, electronic signs located on some segments of the State’s highways. WisDOT remotely operates these signs from the STOC and may be able to provide advance warning messages to motorists if an incident occurs near one or more DMS.

5.2 **Transition Area and Tapers**

The transition area is that section of highway where road users are redirected out of their normal path. Proper transition areas usually involve the use of tapers.

A taper, using traffic cones, should be set up as soon as practically possible any time there is a lane closure and/or traffic is moved from one lane to another. Walking a straight line taper can be both difficult and dangerous. Exposure to the traffic flow is almost certain. Whenever resources permit, a spotter should be present to assist in watching for traffic during taper set up. Furthermore, it is highly recommended that personnel place and retrieve cones while facing oncoming traffic.

The speed of the roadway should be considered when determining the length of a taper. Typically, the higher the roadway speed the longer the taper. However, initial scene set up is dynamic in nature and it is recognized that a balance must be reached between the roadway speed and the number of available cones. For example, as illustrated in Figure 4, if the first responder on scene only has 6 cones available when responding to an incident on a high speed roadway, they will only be able to set up a short taper; however, **any taper is better than no taper**. A short taper should be extended as soon as resources permit.

![Figure 4 - Initial Scene Set Up](image)

Key points to remember when setting up a taper include:

- A taper should encompass as much equipment as is available on the scene.
- Tapers should be set up to accommodate for sight obstacles.
- The taper should begin at the upstream end of the buffer space.
- Try to maximize the spacing covered with the cones available at that time.
- Block as much of the roadway as needed and extend the taper out as far as possible to allow drivers adequate time to merge.
Skip lines provide a useful guide for placing cones. Skip lines are the broken pavement markings used to separate two travel lanes. In Wisconsin, the distance from the beginning of one skip line to the beginning of the next skip line is approximately 50 feet. Appendix D contains a detailed explanation, with diagrams, on how to set up a taper using skip lines.

It is strongly recommended that responder vehicles be equipped with, at minimum, the following numbers of MUTCD compliant traffic cones:

- Fire response vehicles: 20 cones
- Law enforcement response vehicles: 6 cones

Cones used for the purpose of emergency traffic control and scene management should be consistent with the standards established in MUTCD Section 6F.59. Such cones should be orange, fluorescent orange or fluorescent red-orange in color, 28 inches or greater in height, and should be retroreflective for maximum visibility. Retroreflection of 28 inch or larger cones should be provided by a white band 6 inches in width, no more than 3 to 4 inches from the top of the cone, and an additional 4-inch-wide white band a minimum of 2 inches below the 6-inch band. Figure 5 illustrates the appropriate cone dimensions.

![Figure 5 - Traffic Cone Dimensions](Source: Modified from 2003 MUTCD)

### 5.3 Flagger and Spotter

When resources permit, a “Flagger” function should be established to assist in slowing and directing approaching traffic. Flaggers should be outfitted with high-visibility safety apparel. While STOP/SLOW paddles are preferred, a flag may be used at an emergency scene. The flag should be a minimum of 24 inches square, made of a red material, and securely fastened to a staff that is approximately 36 inches in length. Flags used at night should be retroreflectorized red. The free edge of the flag should be weighted so the flag will hang vertically, even in heavy winds. Figure 6 illustrates some suggested flagging procedures for emergency situations.
Alternatively, a flash light equipped with a small traffic direction cone may also be used to direct traffic.

It is also recommended that, when resources permit, a traffic spotter function be utilized to monitor traffic and activate an emergency signal if the actions of a motorist do not conform to established traffic control measures in place at the incident scene. The use of a portable air horn or similar device is suggested for use as an emergency signal. A portable radio is not recommended for this purpose, as it is unlikely that all responders on the scene would be monitoring the same radio frequency.

5.4 Activity Area

The activity area is the section of the highway where response activities take place. The activity area is comprised of the upstream buffer space and the incident space. Refer to Section 9.1 for discussion on the positioning of vehicles within the activity area.

Traffic cones should be placed along the edge of the activity area starting at the end of the transition area, following alongside the buffer space and the incident space. This will help define a clear boundary between the traffic space and the activity area.

5.4.1 Upstream Buffer Space – It is highly recommended that a longitudinal buffer space be placed between the end of the transition area (taper) and the actual incident space. Since the majority of response activities take place in the incident space, the buffer will help provide additional protection for responders. Longitudinal buffer space is dependent on, but not limited to, the speed of passing traffic and sight distance when approaching the scene, as well as when passing the scene. Table 1 below provides suggested longitudinal buffer spaces as outlined in the MUTCD.

When needed, providing lateral buffer space is also possible. This is the area between the incident itself and the path of traveling vehicles. Lateral buffer space can be beneficial because it allows more room for responders to work. The amount of lateral buffer space to be used is dependent upon many conditions including, but not limited to, time of day, weather and road
conditions. Lateral buffer space can encompass partial lanes or an entire lane; the amount of area necessary to properly perform duties is determined by the Incident Commander.

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Table 1 - Suggested Longitudinal Buffer Spaces (Source: 2003 MUTCD)

5.4.2 Incident Space – The incident space is the physical area of roadway within which the emergency responders perform their EMS, fire, law enforcement, and recovery tasks at a traffic incident.

5.5 Termination Area

The termination area is used to notify traffic that the TIMA is ending, and that they may resume normal driving. The termination area includes the downstream buffer space and the downstream taper. The termination area typically only needs to be spread out over a distance of approximately 100 feet, but is necessary to prevent motorists from entering the end of the incident space.

5.6 Traffic Incident Management Area Examples

The following figures provide examples of typical TIMAs recognizing that each incident has unique characteristics and no two incidents are exactly alike. The TIMA example in Figure 7 illustrates traffic control at an incident scene on a divided roadway. The TIMA example in Figure 8 illustrates traffic control at an incident scene on a two-way roadway. Additionally, the figures included in Appendix E illustrate the progression of an incident with the corresponding expansion and reduction of the TIMA.
Figure 7 - TIMA Example -- Divided Roadway
Figure 8 - TIMA Example -- Two-way Roadway
6. Staging

6.1 On-Scene (Level 1)

Only resources that have been assigned tasks should be present at the scene. Staging areas should be set up as close to the operation as possible, but in a safe location. The on-scene (Level 1) staging area should be upstream of the incident space if at all possible, preferably within the upstream buffer space.

6.2 Off-Scene (Level 2)

For multiple unit responses, the first unit approaching or entering a highway should continue to the scene to begin the scene size-up. All other approaching units should consider off-scene (Level 2) staging. This will help maintain safety on the scene as well as for passing motorists. If a vehicle is needed on the scene, then staging can be altered but until that is deemed necessary, it is best to have all unnecessary vehicles and personnel located somewhere nearby.

6.3 Medical Helicopter Landing Zones (Helispot)

When medical helicopter services are required, strong consideration should be given to the use of off-site landing zones. Additional information about medical helicopter landing zone (helispot) preparation and safety is located in Appendix F.

If injuries appear severe enough to require immediate attention, medical helicopter services should be notified that they may be needed as soon as possible. However, it is best to have helicopters land at a nearby location that is easily accessible by an ambulance if services are not needed immediately or if the injured person(s) can be transported directly up to the helicopter via ambulance.

When medical helicopters are needed, keep the following in mind:

- Ensure the scene is properly controlled and managed and all responders are aware of safety requirements and protocols.
- Approach the aircraft only from the front and ensure the pilot can see you and is aware that you are approaching the aircraft.
- Due to the high winds generated by the helicopter rotors, make sure everything is secure when the helicopter is present on the scene – this includes traffic control equipment, everything in or attached to a vehicle, and all personal belongings.
- Ensure that you are aware of the possibility of flying debris and that there will be a lot of noise.

*Many medical helicopter service providers throughout the state have, with the assistance of local fire/EMS agencies, started to identify and record the GPS coordinates of preferred off-highway landing zones within their typical response areas.
Figure 9 below illustrates traffic control at an incident scene during a medical helicopter landing.

Figure 9 - TIMA Example -- With Medical Helicopter Landing Zone (Helispot)
7. Scene Breakdown and Demobilization

A de-commit plan should be developed for each incident. Command must monitor and control the dismantling of the scene and plan to remove personnel, apparatus, injured persons, bystanders, and vehicles safely from the scene. Ensure that all debris has been cleared from the roadway so as to not present an additional hazard. **Dismantle the scene from the termination area backwards to the advance warning area.**

- Considerations while removing personnel and apparatus from scene:
  - Ambulance leaving scene with or without traffic control
  - Dismantling your safe incident space
  - Blocking apparatus leaving the scene
  - Picking up traffic cones safely

- Personnel must realize as the incident terminates, conditions change and the following will likely occur:
  - Safe area may no longer be intact
  - Frustrated drivers increase speed to make up for lost time
  - Frustrated drivers enter gaps in safe incident space
  - Vehicles (e.g. ambulances) leaving the scene may be too busy watching traffic to see personnel on scene

When an incident scene has been cleared ensure that the appropriate agency, generally the maintaining authority, has been notified that the roadway is now open. Additionally, if the STOC was notified of the incident they also need to be notified that the incident is clear.

8. Responder Safety

8.1 Responder Visibility

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has established a new rule in title 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) titled, “Part 634 Worker Visibility”. The new rule requires that all workers within the right-of-way of a Federal-aid highway wear high-visibility safety apparel when they are exposed either to traffic (vehicles using the highway for purposes of travel) or to construction equipment within the work area. The rule defines workers as people on foot whose duties place them within the right-of-way of a Federal-aid highway. This definition of worker encompasses all first responders, including, but not limited to: law enforcement, fire, EMS, towing and recovery, medical examiner/coroner, county maintenance and transportation officials, insurance investigators, engineers, and media personnel.

Federal-aid highways are defined as highways on the Federal-aid highway systems (the National Highway System and the Interstate System) and all other public roads not classified as local roads or rural minor collectors. However, for the purposes of this
document it is recommended that this rule be followed when responding to incidents on all highways, including local roads and rural minor collectors.

Part 634 also defines high-visibility safety apparel as personal protective safety clothing that is intended to provide conspicuity during both daytime and nighttime usage, and that meets the Performance Class 2 or 3 requirements of ANSI/ISEA 107-2004. Finally, 23 CFR Part 634 requires that state and other agencies comply with the provisions of the rule no later than November 24, 2008.

In regard to the ANSI/ISEA 207-2006 public safety vest standard, as stated in a letter dated February 4, 2008 from FHWA Associate Administrator for Operations Jeff Paniati, FHWA has reviewed the new standard and found it to be compatible with the ANSI/ISEA Class 2 requirements for night-time visibility. As such, the US DOT/FHWA has proposed that modifications be made to allow the use of the ANSI 207 vests. If accepted, it is anticipated that this change will go into effect in late 2009/early 2010. However, until this change is approved, responders must wear vests that meet the ANSI/ISEA 107-2004 standard in order to achieve compliance with 23 CFR Part 634.

ANSI/ISEA 107-2004 is the American National Standard for Highway Visibility Safety Apparel and Headwear. This standard provides uniform guidelines for the design and use of high-visibility safety apparel such as safety vests, rainwear, outerwear, trousers and headwear to improve worker visibility during the day, in low-light conditions and at night. ANSI/ISEA 207-2006 is the American National Standard for High-Visibility Public Safety vests. This standard establishes design and use criteria for highly visible vests that reflect the needs of public safety workers.

8.2 Situational Awareness

Responders should keep the following in mind when working on or alongside active highways:

- Never trust approaching traffic.
- Always maintain an acute awareness of the risk of working in/near moving traffic.
- Look before you move.
- Plan an escape route.
- Don’t allow yourself to get tunnel vision, maintain a view of the “big picture” and remember to consider how your actions may be impacting motorists traveling in the opposite direction.
- Maintain knowledge of current weather conditions and how it may affect driving and/or visibility abilities of the passing motorists and adjust advance warning to accommodate these difficulties.
- Whenever possible, direct witnesses to park on, or move to the same side of the highway that the incident is on. This will assist in allowing traffic to flow more smoothly around the incident scene, as well as eliminate the need for responders to cross traffic unnecessarily.
Additionally, once a scene is secure and the incident is under control, personnel that no longer have an active role or specific duty related to the incident should be released from the scene. This will help the Incident Commander maintain order on the scene and will also minimize unnecessary exposure of responders to potentially hazardous working conditions.

9. Responder Vehicles

9.1 Vehicle Positioning

When arriving at an incident scene, emergency vehicles should be positioned to provide added protection to the scene and activity area from passing traffic. The positioning of an emergency vehicle to create a physical barrier between upstream traffic and the incident space is referred to as the block position. In order to provide the greatest protection from traffic, the block position is best fulfilled using larger vehicles, such as fire department ladder trucks and fire engines. When the circumstances allow, these vehicles may be replaced with public works and/or highway department vehicles equipped with impact attenuators, especially when the initial blocking vehicle is carrying equipment that is being utilized by on-scene responders.

When acting as the block, there are two ways a vehicle is commonly positioned on the roadway - at a 20-45 degree angle or “straight-on”. When determining how to properly position a vehicle, responders should evaluate current conditions, including roadway geometry, sight distance, weather, etc., and the safety of other responders, crash victims and passing motorists. Consideration should also be given to how vehicle placement impacts vehicle visibility, including vehicle markings and vehicle emergency lighting. Regardless of roadway position, the blocking vehicle should park ensuring that wheels are turned away from the scene.

All vehicles responding to an incident scene should be located on the same side of the roadway and in the same direction as the incident. Vehicles should only be parked on the opposite side of a divided highway when it is determined that the benefits justify the risk.

Tow vehicles may be placed upstream of the scene in the transition area or buffer space. This positioning keeps the vehicles out of the way and allows towers to maneuver around the incident when necessary thereby minimizing the need for them to back into traffic when it is necessary to access vehicles involved in the incident from a different angle or location.

9.2 Cancelled En-Route

When responding to highway emergencies, it is the responsibility of the first unit on scene to initiate ICS and to then evaluate all response factors before canceling any other responding units (law enforcement, ambulance or fire units).
Canceling a unit en-route should only be done if the Incident Commander is sure he or she has all the response factors identified, and is confident additional units will not be needed. Any units that are cancelled en-route should not proceed into the scene unless re-dispatched.

It should be noted that there may be instances in which agencies have restrictions on en-route cancellations. Some agencies have protocols enforcing the need of fire to arrive on-scene at the same time as EMS. In such cases, even if the need for fire personnel is cancelled, if ambulance services are not cancelled, fire will still proceed to the scene in order to comply with protocol.

9.3 Incident Scene Illumination

While it is important to ensure proper illumination, or lighting, of the incident space, care must be exercised to ensure that scene lights are not blinding traffic. When available, vehicles with special lighting capabilities should be utilized. By using vehicle mounted lighting setups that can be controlled remotely, the lights can be directed downward to minimize the amount of light that reaches the motorists.

9.4 Emergency Vehicle Lighting

The use of emergency vehicle lighting is important for response and for the safety of emergency responders and persons involved with the traffic incident. Lighting is also essential for the safety of drivers approaching the incident scene. However, emergency-vehicle lighting only provides warning and should not be used for traffic control. In some instances, emergency vehicle lighting can be a hazard and blinding to traffic and/or the responders at the incident scene. Emergency-vehicle lighting should be reduced if good traffic control is established at the incident scene (i.e., advanced warning signs, appropriate tapers, safety cones, etc.)

In MUTCD Chapter 6I it is recommended that public safety agencies 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. Additionally, special consideration should be given to reducing or extinguishing forward facing emergency-vehicle lighting, especially on divided roadways, to reduce distractions to on-coming road users.

9.5 Vehicle Markings

To increase the visibility of emergency vehicles parked in or near moving traffic, some response agencies have added a pattern of retroreflective diagonal striping across the rear of their vehicles. The diagonal pattern chosen by the fire service is called a chevron. It is important to note that this pattern is defined by the MUTCD as a ‘vertical panel’ and as such must conform to MUTCD guidelines. Additionally, requirements for retroreflective striping on the rear-facing vertical surfaces of fire apparatus have been
included in the proposed 2009 Edition of the NFPA 1901 Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus. Examples of vehicles with retroreflective striping are shown in Figure 10.

![Figure 10 - Emergency Vehicles with Retroreflective Chevrons](Source: ResponderSafety.com)

It is strongly recommended that the rear of emergency vehicles be outfitted with retroreflective striping.

### 9.6 Personally Owned Vehicles

Due to the lack of vehicle markings and appropriate emergency lighting, **the use of personally owned vehicles (e.g. volunteer fire fighters, first responders, etc.) to respond to the scene of highway incidents is strongly discouraged.** When it is necessary for a privately owned vehicle to respond to a highway incident, the vehicle must be parked safely in the downstream buffer area or, if possible, off of the roadway (e.g. a nearby parking lot).

### 10. Crash Investigation/Reconstruction

Crash scenes should be cleared as quickly as is practical, emphasizing restoration of all available traffic lanes without compromising the short-lived and un-retrievable evidence necessary for a thorough investigation. The investigation and reconstruction of traffic collisions has become increasingly more important in recent years. Among the most significant reasons for this include:

- Criminal and civil aspects of traffic crash cases.
- Litigation against law enforcement agencies and personnel.
- Documentation of the economic and personal loss and injury of those involved in traffic crashes.

Reconstruction is a process of recreating an incident through factual information. In order to perform reconstructions of incident scenes, evidentiary items must be accurately documented and preserved for analytical purposes. Time on-scene will vary between incidents based on the individual circumstances of the incident. There may be instances in which not all information needs to be gathered immediately. For example,
in some situations, the roadway could be opened after all crash related data is collected and then roadway configuration information could be collected at a later date in a safer manner. However, regardless of the situation, it is most important that safety is maintained for all personnel.

Some critical pieces of evidence that need to be thoroughly investigated include:

- Locate and identify all witnesses, drivers, and others involved, as may be appropriate. If resources permit, consider conducting an initial interview to determine the depth of their knowledge about the incident.
- Gather and preserve physical evidence from the scene when necessary.
- Take appropriate photographs of all fatal, personal injury, extensive property damage crashes, and when feasible, all crashes where enforcement action is taken.
- Sketch the scene and record necessary measurements on all fatal, personal injury, and extensive property damage crashes.
- Collect all other information necessary to complete the following, as appropriate, including:
  - Wisconsin motor vehicle accident report
  - Supplementary notes
  - Witness statements
  - Wisconsin motor vehicle fatal supplement form
  - Emergency vehicle involvement
  - Other forms as necessary

11. Emergency Alternate Routes

As soon as possible after arriving at the scene, the activation of an emergency alternate route should be considered. Because activating an emergency alternate route takes considerable resources, early planning will be essential to its successful implementation and operation. The use of an emergency alternate route will be necessary in the event that the highway must be completely closed. Emergency alternate routes should also be considered when an incident is causing significant traffic queues.

In many areas of the state, emergency alternate route guides have been developed and/or alternate route signing has been installed. These can be helpful resources in instances where an emergency alternate route needs to be used. The emergency alternate route guides assist in determining what route would be most effective and how to best implement diversion to the route. Additional public works and/or highway department traffic direction resources should be requested as soon as possible when an emergency alternate route is implemented. Portable Changeable Message Signs (PCMS) can also be deployed to assist in notifying motorists of and/or guiding motorists along the emergency alternate route.
12. Media Considerations

It is recommended, especially for large-scale incidents, that a media staging area be established in a safe location near the scene, but away from the incident command post. The establishment and use of a media staging area will ultimately assist in the management of the incident scene in the following ways.

- Media personnel will be kept together in one location, allowing information to be released as quickly and efficiently as possible. A Public Information Officer (PIO) should be assigned to the media staging area to disseminate the information. All information released by the PIO must be approved by the Incident Commander.
- Media personnel will be separated from the responders on scene, allowing the responders to concentrate on completing their tasks, and clearing the scene as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- Members of the media should be escorted to and from the scene for the purpose of obtaining photographs and video footage. Consider the use of a “pool” camera and video crew, reducing the amount of people that need to be escorted. This process will help ensure that the media is only allowed to access the portions of the scene that have been secured for their safety. As a reminder, all members of the media that arrive at a highway incident scene should follow the same high-visibility safety apparel requirements as other responders.
- Any media personnel not participating in the staging area should be denied access to the scene.

13. Post Incident Debriefings

Each traffic incident is unique and, as such, one of the most effective ways to enhance quick clearance and improve safety is to regularly debrief incidents that have occurred. The purpose of an incident debriefing is to evaluate the decisions made and actions taken during an incident and to identify best practices and opportunities for improvement. An incident debriefing can be held for any type or size of incident, but it is highly recommended that all major incidents be debriefed.

Effective debriefings provide a forum in which conflicts and inefficiencies are identified and steps are taken to resolve or eliminate them. Debriefings can also help open lines of communication and foster relationships among responders. It is essential that incident debriefings be multi-agency and multi-discipline and include all agencies and personnel that were involved with the incident, including dispatchers. Incident debriefings can be initiated by any agency involved in the response to an incident and should take place as soon as possible.

The TIME Program Incident Debrief Form can be found in Appendix G. The form is intended to assist agencies in gathering and disseminating incident details and can be completed by any agency involved in the response to a traffic incident.
Appendix A

_Towing and Recovery Call-Out Checklist_
TOWING AND RECOVERY CALL-OUT CHECKLIST

Reason for tow:  □ Crash     □ Breakdown     □ Arrest

Location
City/County: _________________________________________________________________

Roadway (including direction of travel): _________________________________________

Is the vehicle on the:  □ Median (Left/Inside)   □ Shoulder (Right/Outside)   □ In traffic
And is the vehicle:  □ On the roadway     □ Off the roadway 20 ft or more

Vehicle Information
How many vehicles need to be towed:  ____ # of Light Duty     _____ # of Heavy Duty

Light Duty
Vehicle description (make and model): ___________________________________________

Is the vehicle:  □ Four-Wheel/AWD     and/or     □ Hybrid

Is the vehicle:  □ Unoccupied     □ Occupied - # of passengers: _____

Are the keys with the vehicle?  □ Yes     □ No

Heavy Duty
Is the truck/trailer:  □ Empty     □ Loaded     and/or     □ HAZMAT

What is the approximate weight of the truck? _____________________________________

How many axles does the truck/trailer have? _____________________________________

How many tires does the truck/trailer have? _____________________________________

Additional Vehicle/Crash Information
Visual damage assessment (i.e. load spill, vehicle facing wrong direction, etc.): _____________

Additional information: _________________________________________________________

________________________
10/01/08
Appendix B

Emergency Traffic Control and Scene Management - Quick Reference Visor Card
Incident Response Priorities
1. Life Safety
2. Incident Stabilization - prevention of secondary crashes; protection of evidence; safe, quick clearance
3. Protection of Property and the Environment

Incident Classification
- **Major** - expected duration of more than 2 hours
- **Intermediate** - expected duration between 30 minutes and 2 hours
- **Minor** - expected duration of less than 30 minutes

Initial Scene Response Objectives
*It is imperative that high-visibility safety apparel (i.e. safety vests) be put on and worn for the duration of an incident*
1. Position your vehicle to establish initial block
2. Stabilize scene and provide medical attention to injured persons
3. Conduct initial scene size-up
   - **Location** - exact incident location
   - **Incident Type** - Major, Intermediate, or Minor
   - **Request for Public Works and/or Highway Dept Support** - for major and intermediate incidents the public works and/or highway dept should be notified to assist with traffic control
   - **Vehicles** - number and type of vehicles involved
   - **Injured Persons** - number of people injured and extent of injuries
   - **Other Conditions** - any other conditions present at the scene that may affect the safety of other responders
4. Initiate Incident Command System (ICS) and/or Unified Command
5. Establish a Traffic Incident Management Area (TIMA)
6. Conduct secondary scene size-up - request additional resources
   - **Hazardous Materials** - response and clean up
   - **Towing and Recovery** - provide accurate, detailed vehicle info
   - **Traffic Conditions** - report traffic conditions, as well as alternate response routes and/or emergency alternate routes being used
   - **Additional Resources** - medical helicopter services, crash investigation/reconstruction, medical examiner/coroner, DNR, etc.

Traffic Incident Management Area (TIMA)

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Source: 2003 MUTCD

Contact the Wisconsin Dept of Transportation’s **Statewide Traffic Operations Center (STOC)** at **1-800-375-7302** for any incident that is anticipated to have at least one state highway lane/ramp blocked for more than 30 minutes. Please note that this number is **NOT** to be distributed to the general public.

Lane Naming Convention
Lanes are numbered starting with the left most lane as seen from the motorist’s direction of travel being Lane 1. (Lane 1 is nearest to the center line/median.)

Put on high-visibility safety apparel as soon as possible
1. Park vehicle in a block position
2. Stabilize scene
3. Conduct initial scene size-up
4. Initiate ICS / Unified Command
5. Establish a TIMA
6. Conduct secondary scene size-up
Appendix C

Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) Chapter 6I

The complete MUTCD is available online at: mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov
CHAPTER 6I. CONTROL OF TRAFFIC THROUGH TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT AREAS

Section 6I.01 General

Support:
Whenever the acronym “TTC” is used in this Chapter, it refers to “temporary traffic control”.

Standard:
The needs and control of all road users (motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians within the highway, including persons with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Title II, Paragraph 35.130) through a TTC zone shall be an essential part of highway construction, utility work, maintenance operations, and the management of traffic incidents.

Support:
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 imposed by authorized officials 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 move road users reasonably safely and expeditiously past or around the traffic incident, to reduce the likelihood of secondary traffic crashes, and to 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 responders should be trained in safe practices for accomplishing their tasks in and near traffic. 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.

Responders arriving at a traffic incident should, within 15 minutes of arrival on-scene, 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 while providing reasonably safe traffic flow. 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.
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 inter-agency 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 approaching traffic of the end of a queue.
Attention should be paid to the end of the traffic queue such that warning is given to road users approaching
the end 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 flares are used to initiate TTC at traffic incidents, more permanent traffic control devices should
replace them as soon as practical. Both the flare and its supporting device should then be removed from the
roadway.

On-scene responders should be trained in safe practices for accomplishing their tasks in and near traffic.
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.

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 inter­
agency 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 approaching traffic of the end of a queue.

Attention should be paid to the end of the traffic queue such that warning is given to road users approaching
the end 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 flares are used to initiate TTC at traffic incidents, more permanent traffic devices should replace them
as soon as practical. Both the flare and its supporting device should then be removed from the roadway.

On-scene responders should be trained in safe practices for accomplishing their tasks in and near traffic.
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.

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. It is often confusing to 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 on-coming road users.

Vehicle headlights not needed for illumination, or to provide notice to other road users of the incident response vehicle being in an unexpected location, should be turned off at night.
Appendix D

Guide for Taper Set Up Using Skip Lines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time (hrs)</th>
<th># of Cones</th>
<th>Cumulative Skip Distance (feet)</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>500</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table D-1 - Taper Set Up -- Guide for Cone Placement Offset Distances
Guide for Taper Set Up Using Skip Lines - Detailed Explanation

The following guide was developed to allow a responder placing a taper to walk toward traffic, therefore minimizing the time their back is to traffic.

1) Beginning at the upstream end of the buffer zone, place a single traffic cone on one end of a skip line as shown in Figure D-1.

![Figure D-1 - Taper Set Up -- Initial Cone Placement](image1)

2) Walk to the shoulder on the side of the roadway that you are closing, then walk upstream along the shoulder until you reach the corresponding end of the next skip line as shown in Figure D-2.

![Figure D-2 - Taper Set Up -- Safe Movement Path](image2)
3) When traffic conditions permit, walk into the traffic lane, and place a cone at the distance specified, in Table D-1, from the shoulder side edge of the lane as shown in Figure D-3.

![Figure D-3 - Taper Set Up -- Second Cone Placement](image)

4) Repeat this process using the next specified distance in Table D-1 until the taper reaches the lane edge as shown in Figure D-4. A similar process will need to be used to continue the taper across the shoulder.

![Figure D-4 - Taper Set Up -- Final Result](image)
Appendix E

TIMA Incident Progression Example
Appendix F

Flight For Life Landing Zone Preparation and Safety Guidance Card

General helicopter landing zone/helispot preparation and safety requirements, provided by Flight For Life, are shown in Figure F-1. There are numerous medical helicopter service providers that work within the state, and each may have slightly different requirements. The information shown below is provided as one example of such requirements and as an educational resource.

**Figure F-1 - Flight For Life Landing Zone Preparation and Safety Guidance Card**
Appendix G

TIME Program Incident Debrief Form

An electronic version of the Incident Debrief Form is also available on the TIME Program Web site at: www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/stoc/time.htm
INCIDENT DEBRIEF FORM OVERVIEW

Each traffic incident is unique and, as such, one of the most effective ways to enhance quick clearance and improve safety is to regularly debrief incidents that have occurred. The purpose of an incident debriefing is to evaluate the decisions made and actions taken during an incident and to identify best practices and opportunities for improvement. An incident debriefing can be held for any type or size of incident, but it is highly recommended that all major incidents be debriefed.

Effective debriefings provide a forum in which conflicts and inefficiencies are identified and steps are taken to resolve or eliminate them. Debriefings can also help open lines of communication and foster relationships among responders. It is essential that incident debriefings be multi-agency and multi-discipline.

The Incident Debrief Form is intended to assist agencies in gathering and disseminating incident details and can be completed by any agency involved in the response to a traffic incident. Ideally, the form will enhance communications between agencies and provide the framework for formal debriefings. In addition, the form provides another avenue for identifying and compiling traffic incident management best practices.

Completed Incident Debrief Forms should be submitted to the appropriate WisDOT TIME Program contact for your Region. Current contact information can be found on the TIME Program Web site at: www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/stoc/time.htm. Alternatively, completed forms can be submitted to the WisDOT State TIM Engineer via fax (414) 227-2165 or e-mail timeprogram@dot.state.wi.us.
INCIDENT DEBRIEF FORM

Contact Information
Name: _____________________________  Agency: _______________________________
Phone Number: _________________________    Fax Number: _________________________
E-mail: ______________________________________________________________________

Incident Information
Date: ______________ Time: ______________ CAD/Crash Record #:_______________
Main Street: _____________________________________   Direction: __________________
Cross Street / Mile Marker: ______________________________________________________
Total Duration: ________________________      Weather: _____________________________
County: _________________________  Municipality: _______________________________

Brief Incident Description: (Provide a brief description of the incident, highlighting key activities)
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Roadway Closures: (List any roadway closures and detour routes used)
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Responding Agencies: (List all agencies that participated in response to this incident)
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

10/01/08 Please submit completed forms to the WisDOT TIME Program contact for your Region
Timeline: (Identify key events and approximate times when they occurred starting with arrival on-scene)

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Best Practices: (Identify TIM best practices utilized during the incident, i.e. traffic control, safety vest use, communication/coordination among responders, etc.)

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Opportunities for Improvement: (Identify possible areas for improvement)

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Pictures: Please include any digital photos you would like to share in an e-mail to the WisDOT TIME Program contact for your Region.
WisDOT Emergency Traffic Control & Scene Management Guidelines

ERROR/OMISSION NOTIFICATION AND REVISION REQUEST FORM

Today’s Date __________________________ Date of Guidelines __________________________

Guidelines Section Number / Title ____________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________ Page _____

Error/Omission Notification and/or Revision Request:

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Reason for Notification/Revision:

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Requested By:

Name __________________________

Agency __________________________________________

Title __________________________________________

Mailing Address __________________________

City ______________________ State _______ Zip _______

Phone ______________________ Fax ______________________

E-mail Address __________________________________________

Please submit completed forms: Attention State TIM Engineer

Mail: WisDOT STOC 433 West St. Paul Avenue, Suite 300, Milwaukee, WI 53203

Phone: (414) 227-2166 Fax: (414) 227-2165 E-mail: timeprogram@dot.state.wi.us
**WisDOT Emergency Traffic Control & Scene Management Guidelines**

**MATERIALS ORDER FORM**

Date __________________________

**Contact Information**

Name __________________________________________

Agency __________________________________________

Title __________________________________________

Mailing Address __________________________________

City ___________________________ State ________ Zip ________

Phone ___________________________ Fax ___________________________

E-mail Address ___________________________

**Materials Request**

In the spaces below, please indicate how many of each item you wish to receive. All items are available free of charge. Also, please include the date the materials are needed by in the space provided.

_____ WisDOT Emergency Traffic Control & Scene Management Guidelines Document

_____ WisDOT Emergency Traffic Control & Scene Management - Quick Reference Visor Card (Laminated 8.5" x 5.5")

_____ WisDOT Emergency Traffic Control & Scene Management Guidelines Overview and Training Presentation CD - includes both the Informational Overview PowerPoint Presentation and the Training PowerPoint Presentation with Instructor Manual (Limit 3 per agency)

Date Materials Are Needed By __________________________

Please submit completed forms: Attention State TIM Engineer

Mail: WisDOT STOC 433 West St. Paul Avenue, Suite 300, Milwaukee, WI 53203

Phone: (414) 227-2166 Fax: (414) 227-2165 E-mail: timeprogram@dot.state.wi.us
The table below provides a record of all revisions made since the original version of the Emergency Traffic Control and Scene Management Guidelines was published.

Original Guidelines Date: May 1, 2008

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<th>Section</th>
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<td>10/01/08</td>
<td>Multiple pages</td>
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<td>A TIME Program e-mail account was established, <a href="mailto:timeprogram@dot.state.wi.us">timeprogram@dot.state.wi.us</a>, and contact information for specific individuals was removed throughout the entire document.</td>
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<td>Visor Card</td>
<td></td>
<td>Under the Initial Scene Response Objectives section, objective 5, which related to high-visibility safety apparel, was removed from the numbered list and moved to the top of the section for added emphasis.</td>
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If you would like to obtain additional copies of this document please contact the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's Statewide Traffic Operations Center at: (414) 227-2166 or visit our Web site at: www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/stoc/time.htm