

Introduction to Traffic Incident Management

Saving Lives, Time, and Money



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

Traffic Incident Management, or TIM, offers coordinated strategies to detect, respond to, and clear traffic incidents. TIM programs increase traveler and responder safety. They also improve travel reliability, air quality, energy use, and commerce on all roadways.

When a crash, debris, stalled vehicle, or other incident affects roadways, TIM programs work to make sure the right people show up and collaborate to clear the incident scene safely and quickly. Firefighters, EMS/EMT, law enforcement, towing and recovery, transportation, public works, and 911 dispatchers are many of the disciplines that work together using well-rehearsed procedures and advanced technologies that save lives and return traffic to normal conditions.

A COORDINATED APPROACH

At its core, TIM teaches good practices for responders to be safe and effective. These include recommended practices for clearance of traffic incident scenes; prompt, reliable, and open communication; and motorist and responder safeguards. TIM training offers procedures and techniques for notification and scene size-up, safe vehicle positioning, scene safety, command responsibilities, traffic management, and clearance and termination.

TIM is best coordinated through regional committees that include all responder disciplines and other public and private organizations that support incident mitigation. Committees meet quarterly or even more frequently to improve collaboration and implement strategies to advance safe, quick clearance.

TIM can often include an effective range of technologies, enabling each responder agency to serve the public more efficiently and effectively. Technologies such as unmanned aerial systems (UAS), computer-aided dispatch (CAD), navigation-app notification of active responders in the vicinity, passive incident detection using crowdsourced data, and high-resolution video sharing help TIM professionals do their jobs more safely and quickly.

The TIM community also champions awareness of and adherence to safe, quick clearance laws. States are strengthening Move Over laws by providing strong penalties for endangering responders. States are also broadening Move Over laws to include more responder communities.

A HIGH RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Modern TIM practices are the result of decades of focused investment in training, processes, and technologies. From its genesis in the 1960s with freeway service patrols, TIM has grown to reflect a full discipline that supports emergency responder and motorist needs. Notable milestones of the last two decades include:

- **2003 | The TIM Self-Assessment**, or TIMSA, launched as a voluntary program to help regions benchmark and improve their TIM practices through data and performance. More than 90 regions now participate each year.

- **2007 | A National Unified Goal** further focused the TIM community on responder safety; safe and quick clearance; and prompt, reliable, and interoperable communications.
- **2013 | Free National TIM Responder Training** launched. As of the year 2020, 500,000+ professionals have been trained to clear incidents collaboratively, safely, and quickly.¹
- **2017 | Data-Informed Decision Making.** A National FHWA program promoted the collection, analysis, and use of data to improve TIM practices across responder communities.

Regions recognize tremendous returns on investment in TIM. For example, the Arizona Department of Public Safety saved 25 full-time equivalent staff hours by improving TIM practices.² And the Maryland TIM program eliminated 38.6 million vehicle-hours of delay, equating to more than \$1.4 Billion in annual benefits.³

AN EVOLVING PRACTICE

The FHWA Next-generation (NextGen) TIM program now spotlights local agency TIM innovations, integrating proven technology, data, and training. It offers these benefits:

- **Increased Safety.** NextGen TIM targets safety improvements through education and technology to help keep responders, drivers, and pedestrians safe across freeway, arterial, and multimodal travel.
- **Improved Travel Reliability.** Training, data, and technology combine to help local and State agencies reduce secondary crashes and incident clearance times, improving trip reliability and travel time.
- **Improved Operations.** Integrating proven technology, data, and training can reduce operator and responder workload, reduce costs associated with response vehicles struck, and improve strategic TIM resource allocation.

BECOME A TIM ADVOCATE

Help advance TIM in your region:

- Does your region have a TIM program?
- Do your stakeholders have routine communications?
- Do you share data across your responder communities?

RESOURCES

- [FHWA TIM Site](#)
- [FHWA Next Generation TIM Site](#)
- [Talking TIM Webinar Series](#)
- [National TIM Responder Training](#)
- [ResponderSafety.com](#)
- [TIM Handbook](#)

REFERENCES

1. FHWA TIM Training Status Report. Nov 23, 2020.
2. King, Jeff. AZDPS. TIM Performance Measurements and Reducing Secondary Collisions. TIME Task Force Meeting. Oct 2013.
3. Maryland DOT and the University of Maryland. CHART 2019 Performance Evaluation and Benefits Analysis. Oct 2020.

