STATE TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY BOARD ACTS ON INCIDENT MANAGEMENT ISSUES

TSB ACCEPTS REPORT OF THE INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE

The State Transportation Strategy Board (TSB) has accepted the report of its Incident Management Task Force and sent its recommendations on to the Governor and legislative leaders for action.

Oz Griebel, Chairman of the TSB, in his transmittal letter to Governor Rowland stated that the vote of the TSB “recognizes the need to improve the efficiency, coordination and management of the response to and clearance of incidents on our highways.”

The TSB established the Incident Management Task Force in January 2003 to address specific topics required by the State legislation. These topics included:

- incident response time standards,
- diversion plans for serious incidents that close the freeway,
- jurisdictional issues that affect incident scene management,
- pre-positioning of tow vehicles, and
- expansion of the State’s existing Connecticut Highway Assistance Motorist Patrol (CHAMP) service.

The Task Force met monthly throughout 2003 to discuss these topics, and expanded them to include other incident management and towing and recovery issues that were determined to be important.

The Incident Management Task Force White Paper was transmitted to the TSB on October 2, 2003. A 34-page document (plus appendices), this White Paper describes the current practices in managing incidents in the State and proposes 43 recommendations for improving those practices.

In October 2003, Jim Mona of the Highway Operations Division of the Connecticut Department of Transportation and Anthony Portanova, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles, presented the recommendations of the Task Force to the TSB. The TSB voted unanimously to accept the report.

See the Incident Management Task Force White Paper and related documents on the CRCOG website at www.crcog.org/transportation2.htm
Incident Management News

TSB ESTABLISHES PERMANENT STATEWIDE INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE

At its November 2003 meeting, the TSB acted on the first recommendation of the Task Force and established a permanent statewide Incident Management Task Force and appointed Stephen Cassano as its Chairman. Mr. Cassano is Mayor of Manchester, Chairman of the Capitol Region Council of Governments Policy Board, and the I-91 Corridor representative on the TSB. Mr. Cassano also served as the Chair of the initial Incident Management Task Force.

The duties of the Incident Management Task Force as recommended in the report to the TSB will be to work with appropriate agencies and organizations:

1. To reissue the Statewide Incident Management Policy,
2. To endorse the Unified Command System (UCS),
3. To develop a UCS Manual,
4. To sponsor training and drills in the UCS procedures,
5. To continue to address topics listed above, plus any additionally identified issues,
6. To develop and champion policies that promote coordination among responding agencies,
7. To identify, estimate costs, find funding and implement worthwhile projects,
8. To evaluate progress and propose additional changes, and
9. To share lessons learned with all responders.

In addition, the members of the original subcommittee recommended that all responding agencies endorse the Statewide Incident Management Policy. It further recommended that these agencies adopt the goal of continuing improvement in response and clearance times, and that they support that goal with appropriate policies, programs, projects and funding.

TSB ACTION MOVES FORWARD RECOMMENDATION FROM FHWA FACILITATED SELF ASSESSMENT

Last March, members of the Greater Hartford Incident Management Steering Committee participated in a self-assessment of the incident management program in greater Hartford. This assessment was undertaken at the request of and facilitated by the Federal Highway Administration.

Though this self-assessment, we were able to document our strengths and weaknesses. It gave us an opportunity to learn what other agencies were doing. It also gave us an opportunity to discover areas where improvements could be made.

Following an intensive two-day evaluation of our incident management program, the participants identified three “action areas”:

1. To revisit existing inter-agency agreements (including the Statewide Incident Management Policy) for updating and developing a communication plan,
2. To develop standard performance measures to be tracked, and
3. To develop a one-page document from each agency on how they respond to an incident.

During a follow-up meeting in May, the Incident Management Steering Committee endorsed these “action areas” as work tasks for the Committee. Members of the Committee thought that the first task in particular would be difficult to undertake on a regional basis. Now that the TSB has recommended the reissuing of the Statewide Incident Management Policy, this “action area” will be resolved at the State level.
TIMS Radio System Operating Changes

Two changes to be effective immediately

Change in the initial listening frequency to TIMS 1: The original operating protocol required agencies and departments operating east of the Connecticut River to listen to the TIMS 1 frequency while agencies and departments operating west of the Connecticut River were required to listen to the TIMS 2 frequency. This requirement could cause confusion when an agency responded in a mutual aid situation from one side of the river to another. State agencies that respond to both sides of the river could also end up listening to the wrong frequency.

In order to resolve any potential confusion, all departments and agencies are now being asked to monitor the TIMS 1 frequency: 453.125 / 458.125. In an instance when the TIMS 1 frequency is already in use, the North Central Connecticut CMED dispatcher will assign the second incident to the TIMS 2 frequency.

Change in authorized users to include local police: Until the issuance of this new protocol, the authorized users of the TIMS radio frequency were the State Department of Transportation, the State Department of Environmental Protection, State Police, and local fire departments. Local police do not usually respond to incidents on our limited access highways. However, the use of the radios has been expanded to any type of incident requiring a multi-agency response. With this new TIMS operating protocol, local police will be authorized to communicate on the TIMS frequencies. Departments having access to UHF radios that wish to add this frequency should contact Hugo Costa at the North Central Connecticut CMED (860-769-6055) for additional information.

One change to be effective upon notification

Change in the TIMS 1 PL number to 74.4: Because of several instances of interference from other radio users in the region, the PL (CTCSS) for the TIMS 1 frequency is being changed to 74.4. The effective date of this change will be sent to all TIMS radio users as soon as the appropriate changes have been made to the NCC-CMED equipment. State agencies and local fire departments who participate in the TIMS system may make the PL change themselves, or contact Keith Victor at the Town of West Hartford Communications (860-523-2085) for assistance in making that change.

All TIMS users have been sent information about these changes, as well as a revised copy of the new operating protocol. If you are a TIMS radio user and did not receive that information, please call Karen Olson at 860-522-2217, immediately.
INCIDENT MANAGEMENT STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Members of the Steering Committee are listed below.

Local Fire Departments
Chief Michael Eremita
East Hartford, 528-4171
Chief Edward Richards
Enfield, 745-1878

Local Police Departments
Capt. Michael Fallon
Hartford, 722-6150
Chief James Strillacci
West Hartford, 523-5203

Emergency Medical Services
North Central Connecticut
EMS Council, Inc.
Hugo S. Costa, Jr., 769-6055

Towing Services
Towing & Recovery
Professionals of CT
Roman Pryputniewicz, 436-9889
Tim Vibert, 677-9074

Regional Planning Agencies
CRCOG: Karen Olson, 522-2217
CCRPA: Margus Laan, 589-7820
MRPA: Robert Haramut, 347-7214

CT State Police
Lt. Robert Corona
Troop C, 896-3200
Lt. Lucian St. Germain
Troop H, 534-1018

CT Department of Transportation
Jim Mona, 594-3450
Ron Cormier, 258-4501

CT Department of Environmental Protection
Rich Ciasullo, 424-3377
Matt Williamson, 424-3377

Incident Management:
• Coordination
• Cooperation
• Communication

Questions or Comments?
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A highway incident management newsletter for the Hartford, New Britain, and Middletown areas. Prepared by:
Capitol Region Council of Governments
Connecticut Department of Transportation

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