

1 **CHAPTER ~~6H~~ 6H. CONTROL OF TRAFFIC THROUGH TRAFFIC INCIDENT**
2 **MANAGEMENT AREAS relocated to prior to typical applications**

3 **Section ~~6H.01~~ 6H.01 General**

4 ~~Support:~~

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

6 **Standard:**

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

11 In traffic incident management areas, the Incident Command System (ICS) as required by the
12 National Incident Management System (NIMS) shall be implemented and used by all responders
13 involved in the traffic incident.

14 Support:

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

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

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

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

27 The primary functions of TTC at a traffic incident management area are to move road users ~~reasonably~~
28 ~~safely and~~ expeditiously past or around the traffic incident, to reduce the likelihood of secondary traffic
29 crashes, and to preclude unnecessary use of the surrounding local road system. Examples include a stalled
30 vehicle blocking a lane, a traffic crash blocking the traveled way, a hazardous material spill along a highway,
31 and natural disasters such as floods and severe storm damage.

32 Guidance:

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

38 On-scene responders ~~s~~ organizations should ~~be trained~~ their personnel in ~~safe~~ TTC practices for
39 accomplishing their tasks in and near traffic. On-scene responders should take measures to move the incident
40 off the traveled roadway or to provide for appropriate warning. All on-scene responders and news media
41 personnel should ~~always~~ constantly be aware of their visibility to oncoming traffic and ~~take measures to move~~
42 ~~the traffic incident as far off the traveled roadway as possible or to provide for appropriate warning~~ wear high-
43 visibility apparel.

44 Emergency vehicles should be safe-positioned (see Section 1A.13) as they arrive at the incident scene.
45 The number and placement of emergency vehicles that are safe-positioned should be such that traffic flow
46 through the incident scene is optimized. All emergency vehicles that subsequently arrive should be positioned
47 in a manner that does not interfere with the established temporary traffic flow.

48 Responders arriving at a traffic incident should, within 15 minutes of arrival on-scene, estimate the
49 magnitude of the traffic incident, the expected time duration of the traffic incident, and the expected vehicle
50 queue length, and then should set up the appropriate temporary traffic controls for these estimates.

51 Option:

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

3 Support:

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

14 Option:

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

17 ~~Section 6H.02~~ 6H.02 **Major Traffic Incidents**

18 Support:

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

22 Guidance:

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

25 Support:

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

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

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

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

42 Guidance:

43 All traffic control devices needed to set up the TTC at a traffic incident should be available so that they
44 can be readily deployed for all major traffic incidents. The TTC should include the proper traffic diversions,
45 tapered lane closures, and upstream warning devices to alert approaching traffic of the ~~end~~ back of a queue.

46 Attention should be paid to the upstream end of the traffic queue such that warning is given to road users
47 approaching the ~~end~~ back of the queue.

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

50 Option:

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

4 Guidance:

5 When flares are used to initiate TTC at traffic incidents, ~~more permanent traffic control~~ [channelizing](#)
6 devices ([see Section 6F.60](#)) should replace them as soon as practical. Both the flare and its supporting device
7 should then be removed from the roadway.

8 [Option:](#)

9 [When light sticks are used to initiate TTC at traffic incidents, they may remain in place after channelizing](#)
10 [devices \(see Section 6F.60\) have been deployed as long as the light sticks do not conflict with those devices.](#)

11 ~~On scene responders should be trained in safe practices for accomplishing their tasks in and near traffic.~~
12 ~~Responders should always be aware of their visibility to oncoming traffic and take measures to move the~~
13 ~~traffic incident as far off the traveled roadway as possible or to provide for appropriate warning.~~

14 ~~Section 6H.03~~ [6H.03](#) **Intermediate Traffic Incidents**

15 Support:

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

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

22 Guidance:

23 All traffic control devices needed to set up the TTC at a traffic incident should be available so that they
24 can be readily deployed for intermediate traffic incidents. The TTC should include the proper traffic
25 diversions, tapered lane closures, and upstream warning devices to alert approaching traffic of the ~~end~~ [back](#) of
26 a queue.

27 Attention should be paid to the [upstream](#) end of the traffic queue such that warning is given to road users
28 approaching the ~~end~~ [back](#) of the queue.

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

31 [Option:](#)

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

35 Guidance:

36 When flares are used to initiate TTC at traffic incidents, ~~more permanent traffic control~~ [channelizing](#)
37 devices ([see Section 6F.60](#)) should replace them as soon as practical. Both the flare and its supporting device
38 should then be removed from the roadway.

39 [Option:](#)

40 [When light sticks are used to initiate TTC at traffic incidents, they may remain in place after channelizing](#)
41 [devices \(see Section 6F.60\) have been deployed as long as the light sticks do not conflict with those devices.](#)

42 ~~On scene responders should be trained in safe practices for accomplishing their tasks in and near traffic.~~
43 ~~Responders should always be aware of their visibility to oncoming traffic and take measures to move the~~
44 ~~traffic incident as far off the traveled roadway as possible or to provide for appropriate warning.~~

45 ~~Section 6H.04~~ [6H.04](#) **Minor Traffic Incidents**

46 Support:

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

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

4 Guidance:

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

7 **Section ~~6H.05~~ 6H.05 Use of Emergency-Vehicle Lighting**

8 Support:

9 The use of emergency-vehicle lighting (such as high-intensity rotating, flashing, oscillating, or strobe
10 lights) is essential, especially in the initial stages of a traffic incident, for the safety of emergency responders
11 and persons involved in the traffic incident, as well as road users approaching the traffic incident.

12 Emergency-vehicle lighting, however, provides warning only and provides no effective traffic control. It is
13 often confusing to road users, especially at night. Road users approaching the traffic incident from the
14 opposite direction on a divided facility are often distracted by emergency-vehicle lighting and slow their
15 vehicles to look at the traffic incident posing a hazard to themselves and others traveling in their direction.

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

21 Guidance:

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

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