



NATION'S EMERGENCY RESPONDERS UNITE FOR SAFER, QUICKER CLEARANCE OF TRAFFIC INCIDENTS; ASK MOTORISTS TO "SLOW DOWN, MOVE OVER"

The following NTIMC member organizations have endorsed the NUG:

Contact: Karen Haas
301-762-4227

editorsink@starpower.net
<http://timcoalition.org/>

AAA

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials

Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations

American Traffic Safety Services Association

American Transportation Research Institute

American Trucking Associations

Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials International

Cumberland Valley Volunteer Fire Association / Emergency Responder Safety Institute

I-95 Corridor Coalition

International Association of Fire Chiefs

International Association of Fire Fighters

International Fire Service Training Association

Institute of Transportation Engineers

Intelligent Transportation Society of America

National Association of State Emergency Medical Service Officials

National Emergency Number Association

National Fire Protection Association

National Volunteer Fire Council

Towing and Recovery Association of America

Gaithersburg, MD, Nov. 20 — As American families take to the highways this Thanksgiving, they realize they will face the peak traffic levels of the year. They can plan for the holiday traffic, but what they fear most is the traffic problem they can't plan around — getting stuck in a crash back-up. The nation's emergency responders came forward today to tell motorists they are throttling up their efforts to keep traffic flowing, and asked motorists to return the favor by slowing down and moving over when they approach crash scenes.

In an unprecedented show of unity among highway agencies, emergency medical professionals, firefighters, tow truck operators, and 9-1-1 call centers, nineteen national organizations announced the launch of the National Unified Goal for Traffic Incident Management. The National Unified Goal is good news for motorists, because the leading national responder organizations pledged to work together to improve communication and coordination at crash scenes in order to minimize factors that can delay road clearance.

In turn, the responders asked motorists to slow down and move over when they approach traffic incident scenes, in order to reduce the number of responders injured and killed from being struck by passing vehicles while working at crash scenes, and to enable the responders to re-open travel lanes quicker.

Federal Highway (FHWA) Administrator J. Richard Capka congratulated NTIMC on its leadership in developing the National Unified Goal, and underscored the importance of safe, quick crash clearance. "Traffic congestion is one of the single largest threats to the nation's economic prosperity and way of life, and costs the United States an estimated \$200 billion per year," Capka said. "Traffic incidents account for about one-quarter of all congestion on U.S. roadways. For every minute that a freeway travel lane is blocked during a peak travel period, four minutes of travel delay results after the incident is cleared. More efficient traffic incident management will reduce congestion and protect travelers and responders."

"Delays, misinformation, and lack of resources and coordination during any phase of incident response can delay clearance," said American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHTO) Director of Engineering and Technical Services Anthony R. Kane. "Under the National Unified Goal, responders from all disciplines are recognizing the importance of restoring traffic flow as quickly as possible under the circumstances, and that is good news for the public. We want you to know that we are working together harder than ever to clear the road

as efficiently as possible for you, and, in return, we ask that you keep an eye out for your emergency responders, and slow down and move over when you see them working on the roadway."

"The International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) endorses the National Unified Goal, and is strongly committed to its implementation. Firefighters recognize the need to work with other disciplines to make crash scenes safer and to get the roads open as quickly as possible," said IAFC Executive Director Mark Light. "We join with our NTIMC partners in calling on motorists to use extra care as they approach and pass roadway emergency scenes. Vehicle-related incidents account for roughly 20 percent of firefighter deaths. A growing number of those are firefighters who are struck at the scene while helping others. Hundreds more are injured. It is a problem we share with all roadside responders, and together we need to work toward a solution."

"If you, or your family members, are involved in a crash, you will depend on our emergency medical system (EMS) to care for you," said Kevin McGinnis, Program Advisor to the National Association of State EMS Officials (NASEMSO). "We ask that you, in turn, care for us. We join with other traffic incident responders in asking that you slow down and move over when you see ambulance crews and other responders working at crash scenes. NASEMSO endorses the National Unified Goal and is working through NTIMC to improve overall coordination and communication among all responders at traffic incident scenes, so we can maximize the chances that our patients will survive crashes with minimal injuries. We also share concern about keeping roadways open, so our ambulances can respond swiftly to all types of medical emergencies."

"The Towing and Recovery Association of America (TRAA) endorses the National Unified Goal and is strongly committed to its implementation," said Mike Scott, Chairman of the TRAA Education Foundation. "Towers are often the only private sector responders at crash scenes and we bear a lot of responsibility. We are responsible for removing wrecked or disabled vehicles and debris from the roadway. The better we do our job, the more quickly the crash can be cleared. We welcome the opportunity, through NTIMC and the NUG, to increase our communication and coordination with other responders in order to get the roads open as quickly as possible. The towing industry shares the safety concerns of other responders. We, too, mourn our fallen responders, and the number of towers struck, killed or injured seems to be increasing steadily. We join with other traffic incident responders in asking that you slow down and move over."

"AAA has no greater responsibility than to help safeguard motorists who are stranded on the roadside, as well as those who work everyday to protect them," said Yolanda Clark, AAA's Public Relations Managing Director. "Last Friday, AAA launched its "Slow Down, Move Over" national public awareness campaign in partnership with NTIMC, FHWA, and the nation's first responders. AAA endorses the National Unified Goal to keep the roads open for motorists, and to encourage motorists to slow down when you see the flashing lights of an emergency vehicle on the roadside, and to move over to the adjacent lane if possible."

The National Unified Goal was launched at the Montgomery County Public Safety Communications Center in Gaithersburg, MD. County Executive Isiah Leggett and county police, fire, and transportation officials pledged through commitment to implement the National Unified Goal as a continuation of their long-standing efforts to apply the best traffic incident management techniques to cope with the National Capital Region's challenging traffic environment. The Washington, DC region is the second most congested urban area in the nation, according to the Texas Transportation Institute's 2007 Annual Urban Mobility Report. Only Dallas-Forth Worth had a higher average number of annual hours of delay per traveler between 1982 and 2005.

"The National Unified Goal is Responder Safety; Safe, Quick Clearance; and Prompt, Reliable Incident Communications," said NTIMC Chair John Corbin. "NTIMC developed the 'NUG,' as we call it, through a consensus-generation process that has taken about 18 months. The Coalition is proud to have pulled together such a broad spectrum of national organizations representing the traffic incident responders, and we will continue to provide national leadership for implementation of the 18 strategies defined by the NUG."

ADDITIONAL PRESS CONTACTS

Esther Bowring, Montgomery County
esther.bowring@montgomerycountymd.gov
240-777-6513

Troy Green, AAA
tgreen@national.aaa.com
202-942-2082

Shane Artim, AASHTO
sartim@aashto.org
202-624-3626