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## COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

Lt. Colonel Robert B. Northern  
Deputy Superintendent

### DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE

P. O. Box 27472, Richmond, VA 23261-7472

August 20, 2013

Dear Traffic Incident Management Partners:

The Commonwealth of Virginia has a vested interest in reducing traffic congestion. In Virginia, it is estimated that more than half of all congestion is caused by crashes, disabled vehicles, adverse weather, work zones, special events and other temporary disruptions to the transportation system. Traffic congestion not only has a negative impact on the quality of life and safety of its citizens, it has a significant financial impact as well.

We all agree the best way to combat this growing problem is the implementation of a comprehensive and coordinated multi-disciplinary process to detect, respond to, and clear traffic incidents. A statewide program which emphasizes safe, quick clearance of incidents will reduce traffic congestion as well as the time first responders and motorists are exposed to secondary crashes.

To address this statewide issue, the 2013 Session of the General Assembly enacted Senate Joint Resolution (SJR) 277, followed by Governor McDonnell's Executive Order 58 (See Attachment 1 and 2). Both are excellent efforts to move Virginia towards a coordinated traffic incident management process, and it is my belief the time is right for all traffic incident management partners to embrace this effort and work together to reach this critical goal.

To understand where we are headed in this process, I believe it is important to understand what has already been achieved.

### **History**

The Statewide Traffic Incident Management (TIMs) Committee began meeting in December 2010, at the direction of Secretary of Public Safety, Marla Graff Decker. The membership was made up of leaders from traffic incident management stakeholders such as VSP, VDOT, OEMS, VDFP as well as leaders from local fire, rescue and law enforcement organizations and associations. The committee was tasked with looking for ways to improve traffic incident management in Virginia. The

Committee reviewed the National Unified Goal (NUG) for Traffic Incident Management and agreed that the NUG concepts of *quick clearance, responder safety, and improved communications between first responders* should be promoted and applied to all traffic incident management strategies in the Commonwealth.

The Committee continued to meet and began the development of several initiatives to include the creation of a written traffic incident management plan, selection and implementation of a uniform TIMs training program, and the use of local TIMs groups to develop a statewide structure for promoting NUG concepts, approved training and TIMs best practices.

As stated above, SJR 277 and E.O. 58 formalized and expanded the membership and work of the Statewide Traffic Incident Management Committee. Both documents charged this Committee with developing a comprehensive and effective TIMS program through the promotion of our ongoing initiatives which are detailed below. The Committee held its first formal meeting on May 3, 2013 (See Attachment 3 and 4), and discussed the following ongoing TIMs initiatives which are vital to the development of this comprehensive plan.

### **Traffic Incident Management Plan**

The Virginia Department of State Police, with review and adoption by the Statewide TIMs Committee, has developed a Statewide Traffic Incident Management Plan (See Attachment 5) which provides all Virginia first responders with a vision and basic framework for managing highway incidents by emphasizing the NUG concepts of *quick clearance, responder safety, and improved communications between first responders*. The plan also provides a uniform template for classifying highway incidents. This classification will allow first responders and communications centers to quickly identify the resources which are needed at the scene of an incident. This will help prevent disproportionate responses, disorganized scenes and longer on-scene times for first responders increasing their exposure to dangerous traffic. Finally the manual addresses the roles and responsibilities of all first responder groups while they are on the scene of an incident.

### **TIMs Training**

The Statewide TIMs Committee believes uniform training for all TIMs Stakeholders is critical to our traffic incident management efforts and will provide our first responders common goals from which to work every scene. This will allow responders to mitigate incidents as an effective team instead of as divided groups with individual goals, policies and agendas.

In 2012, Virginia was selected by the Federal Highway Administration to “pilot” the Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP II) for traffic incident management (See Attachment 6). The SHRP II training program is a multidisciplinary training program which promotes effective traffic incident management through the use of the promotion of NUG concepts.

In June 2012, thirty first responders from several traffic incident management disciplines, to include VSP, VDOT, VDFP, OEMS, towing, fire, rescue and local law

enforcement, completed the SHRP II Train the Trainer course. This course prepared the trainers to conduct multidisciplinary classes focused on effective traffic incident management by promoting NUG concepts.

The trainers have been broken into seven regional training teams and tasked with setting up and providing SHRP II TIMs classes to all interested stakeholders to include, police, fire, rescue, communications, transportation and towing personnel. Our trainers began holding classes in January 2013, and as of July 22, 2013, have trained 395 first responders (See Attachment 7).

### **Local TIMs Committees**

To develop a uniform TIMs program it is necessary to develop a structure which will allow the Statewide TIMs Committee to communicate with and effectively disseminate information to all TIMs stakeholders. The Statewide TIMs Committee determined the most effective way to accomplish this is by connecting with existing local traffic incident management committees and groups which routinely meet throughout the Commonwealth.

Members of VSP, VDOT and VDEM have begun to take active roles in the local groups by emphasizing NUG Concepts, best practices and promoting the SHRP II TIMs training. The Department of State Police is actively participating in over 60 separate local TIMs groups or committees and has been charged with reporting their findings to the Statewide TIMs Committee. This effort to initiate and participate in all traffic incident management groups has helped to create an expansive TIMs network focused on the NUG concepts (See Attachment 8).

As you can see, the Statewide TIMs Committee is moving forward to develop a lasting, comprehensive and effective traffic incident management program in the Commonwealth. While we have made strides towards our goals, the success or failure of this effort ultimately lies with every traffic incident management partner and stakeholder: Subsequently, we encourage all TIMs stakeholders to consider participating in the following ways:

- 1. Review and adopt the attached Traffic Incident Management Plan. It is critical all communications/E911 centers and emergency first responders begin to use the incident levels when dispatching and arriving on the scenes of crashes.**
- 2. Support the SHRP II traffic incident training by hosting training sessions, providing personnel to become SHRP II trainers, and sending personnel to SHRP II classes as they are offered.**
- 3. If applicable, begin participating in a local TIMs group or committee. This will connect your agency to all your local TIMs partners as well as the Statewide Traffic Incident Management Committee. Your participation will expose your first responders to local after action reviews, best practices and new and innovative training.**

As stakeholder agencies begin to embrace and participate in this endeavor, it is the belief of the Statewide Committee that we will maximize the effectiveness of our response and mitigation of traffic incidents. The result of this cooperative effort will be improved safety for the motoring public and first responders, while reducing costly and inconvenient traffic delays for all.

On behalf of the Statewide TIMS Committee, thank you for your ongoing efforts to provide safe and effective traffic incident management to everyone who travels the highways of the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. S. Allyn", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Superintendent

WSF/FDG/ctj

Attachments:

- #1 [Senate Joint Resolution 277](#)
- #2 [Executive Order 58](#)
- #3 [Statewide TIMs Committee Membership](#)
- #4 [Statewide TIMs Committee Meeting Minutes](#)
- #5 [Statewide Traffic Incident Management Plan](#)
- #6 [SHRP II Training Flyer](#)
- #7 [SHRP II Training Report](#)
- #8 [Local TIMs Committee List](#)

c: The Honorable Marla Graff Decker  
Secretary of Public Safety  
The Honorable Stephen D. Newman  
Chairman, Senate Transportation Committee