TIME Newsletter

Fall 2019 News wisconsindot.gov/time

CONTENT

Upcoming Events

National Move Over Day — Oct. 19, 2019

National Traffic Incident Response Awareness Week — Nov. 10-16, 2019

New Move Over or Slow Down Materials Available

Order Move Over or Slow Down posters/rack cards and other outreach materials by completing and submitting this form, which is available at wisconsindot.gov/time.

David L. Spakowicz
TIME Program Manager

Well, summer has passed, and fall is upon us. Mother Nature has been nice to us as of late. Not like what she did to us earlier this year with the extreme cold of January and February, then the unseasonably cold and what seemed like almost constant rain in the spring, to the July storms that wreaked havoc with downed trees and power lines over many portions of the state. With those storms, many responders in our great state were called in to assist in the clean-up. DPW and highway crews shouldered a large portion of the burden by cutting trees, clearing up damage caused by the storm, and clearing roadways to make them passible again. Law enforcement, fire service, emergency management and towing and recovery professionals also stepped up once again and helped get their communities back functioning, especially in the hardest-hit North Central and Northeastern portions of our state.

Now with fall here and winter not far away, we must start getting ready for winter. Construction projects are going to be finished up or suspended for the year. We always remind everyone that you are never really safe when you are working in or around live traffic. That was evident on August 26 when a flagger in Ashland and a tower in Milwaukee were both struck and seriously injured just "doing their job" on the side of the road. We all probably saw the video of the two firefighters from Oklahoma that were struck by an out-of-control vehicle pulling a U-Haul trailer. It is dangerous out there!

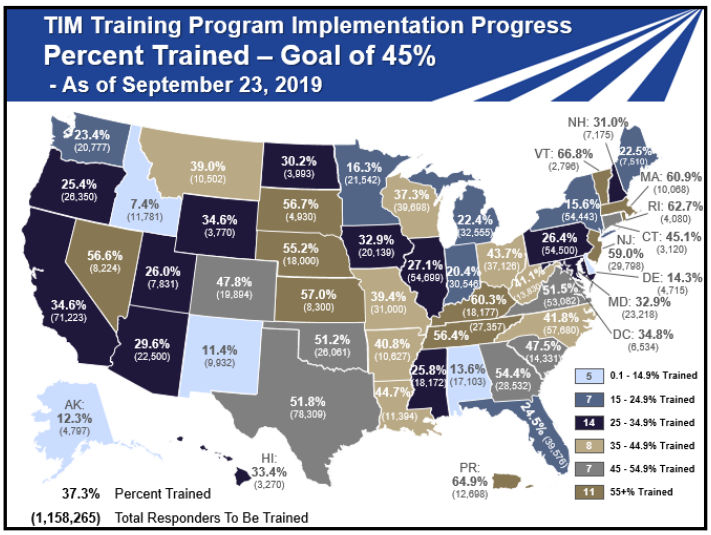
Please enjoy the fall in our beautiful state. The colors will be changing, fall festivals, deer hunting has started, Packer and Badger games take up every Saturday and Sunday, there is so much to do. Please be cautious in your travels. There are many distractions for drivers out there. You may be doing everything right, but it is the other driver that may be doing something they shouldn't that could result in a crash. Please be even more cautious when you are working out on the road. Your attention is always drawn to your task at hand, but you must maintain that situational awareness at all times. You must constantly be aware of your surroundings because things can change in a heartbeat. Please be safe!

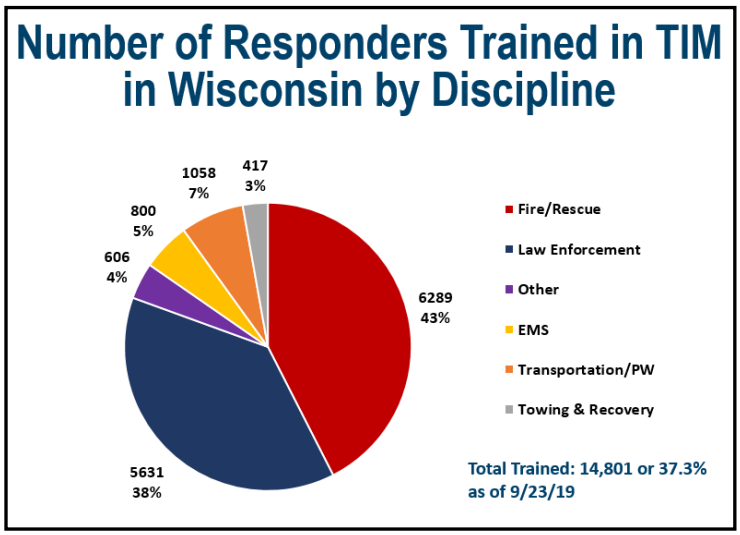
Wisconsin Keeps Pushing to get the Responders Trained

As of September 23, Wisconsin has 14,801 of their identified responders trained in Traffic Incident Management. That is fantastic, but we still have a way to go. Please consider attending or hosting a TIM class for your agency or organization. This class is about improving the safety of all responders that work in or near live traffic while clearing a traffic incident.

There is no cost to attend or host a class. The TIME program will provide all of the training materials, two instructors and a certificate of completion for the student after the course.

If you are interested in hosting a training, please contact TIME Program Manager David L. Spakowicz at david.spakowicz@dot.wi.gov or 414-225-3729.





The TMC Hires New Communication Manager

The TIME program is pleased to share that Jon Riemann has joined the WisDOT Traffic Management Center team as the Communication Manager.

Jon is an accomplished, multi-discipline communicator with nearly 20 years of experience identifying and sharing stories and leading communication outreach. For the past ten years, Jon helped guide and shape media and public affairs outreach for the Milwaukee Police Department, where he was responsible for coordinating media requests, writing messaging and creating content for social media. His time with MPD will benefit the TIME program as Jon joins us with an excellent understanding of incident management and risk mitigation. Prior to MPD, Jon worked for WISN-TV as a photojournalist and then technical director, executing the on-air production of morning newscasts.

At WisDOT, Jon is responsible for communicating internally the many accomplishments of the Bureau of Traffic Operations and publicizing important information to our customers and stakeholders, via 511 and the media, about road conditions and incidents. Jon believes safe driving messaging is a top priority and has already expanded the use of Twitter and the freeway message boards to impact driver behavior. The TIME program is looking forward to leveraging some of Jon's talents in order to promote the TIME program in new and innovative ways.

Please join us in welcoming Jon!

It's All About Communication

As I travel throughout the state hosting regional TIME meetings, attending responder conferences or participating in formal After-Action Reviews (AAR), the first and by far the most common thing that is identified as being an "Opportunity for Improvement" is that of communication. I can't tell you the number of times I have heard from ALL responder disciplines words similar to, "I should have reached out to the Chief sooner" or, "I got to the scene, and I didn't know who to talk to, so I just waited."

In contrast, I also hear more and more stories about how incidents went really well. Comments like, "I was connected at the hip with the fire chief and we made all of the decisions together," or "I met with all of the towers and asked them what they thought was the best way to get all of the cars out of there." Or the highway department employee who stated, "As soon as I get on scene, I find out who is in charge and ask them what they want me to do."

What is the common denominator in both cases? Communication. Effective face-to-face communication, or the lack of communication. Either way, it can make your incident clearance go very well, or it can cause unnecessary delay.

Remember, if you are the first responder on the scene, no matter what your disciple, you are the incident commander (IC) until you are relieved by a superior from your agency or organization or another discipline based on the circumstances at the time. Provide your dispatcher with a good scene size-up of the incident to let them know what you are seeing. At the same time, you are also letting other responding units know what they will be facing upon arrival. The old "10-23" isn't enough anymore. After you make contact and get a better idea of the extent of the incident, update your dispatcher with the information. This again will also let the other responding units and your supervisor know what is occurring.

Once other responders start arriving at the scene, if you are the IC, reach out to the Officer-in-Charge (OIC) of the other disciplines. A face-to-face meeting is always the best. Speak briefly with the other OIC(s) and talk about a game plan to handle the incident. Life safety is always, first and foremost. Then comes incident stabilization and third, preservation of property and the environment. You don't have to have a plan to accomplish everything at one time. Just talk about the priorities at that time to make sure you are all on the same page. Remember, we all look at an incident from a different perspective. One discipline may look at an incident completely different than another one.

If face-to-face communication is not possible, providing one of your radios to the other OIC(s) is always an option. If that is not an option, exchange phone numbers. We all know things can get pretty hectic at a scene. With all of the response activity occurring, radio traffic, cell phone calls, personnel coming and going, it is easy to get caught up in the specific task that you have to complete and forget about meeting and talking with the other OIC(s).

If a command post (CP) is established, make sure your agency has a representative at the CP as soon as possible. This will make sure all decisions are developed and executed from a point of unified command (UC). Everyone will be on the same page if everyone has the opportunity for input. In addition, make sure your dispatch knows the exact location of the CP in case other units need to respond there.

After your first meeting or communication with the other OICs, try and set a time to meet or talk again. Early on in an incident, 15-20 minutes may be good. If the incident is extremely complex, maybe 5-10 minutes would be better. Either way, talk about it and decide. As things get more under control, you can always extend the time of the next face-to-face meeting or call. Once you are in a complete recovery phase, you can probably extend it out even longer. Once again, just a simple check-in or status call will keep everyone knowing where everyone is in relation to their recovery efforts.

(continued on page 4)

It's All About Communication

(continued from page 3)

When you are going to clear the scene, make sure you let the IC know you are going to clear. Nothing worse than the IC having some follow-up or another task that needs to be completed, and all of the personnel have left without the IC's knowledge.

Good face-to-face communication, if possible, from the early stages of the incident until its conclusion is the key to success. As previously stated, I hear more and more stories about how good communication made the clearance of an incident successful.

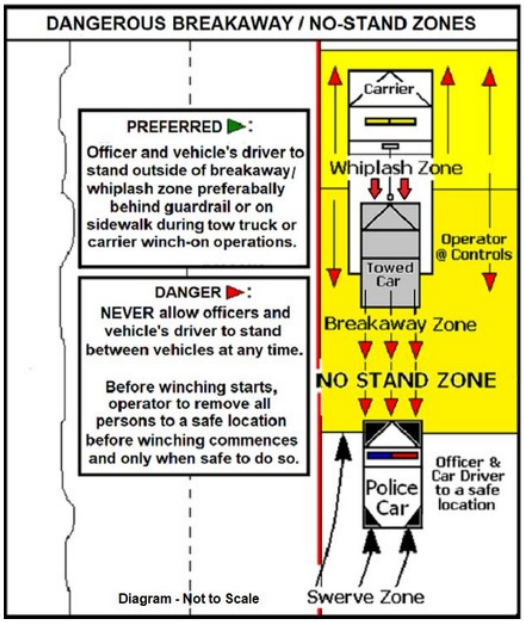
Beware of Towing Hazards

By: Randall C. Resch

Police call in tow trucks for removing a damaged vehicle from a traffic accident, impounding a vehicle, or recovering a stolen vehicle. But regardless of what reason a vehicle is being towed, hooking up a vehicle or loading one onto a flatbed truck can be a dangerous process that can lead to great bodily injury or death to persons standing or working in the deadly "roll-away zone."

The following are some specific incidents that illustrate these dangers.

In June 2018, a San Francisco city utilities worker was working in a ditch to repair a water pipe break. At the repair's location, the police were impounding cars. A contracted tow company responded to do the job. As one of the vehicles was being loaded onto a tilted carrier's deck, its winch reportedly let go, causing the vehicle to roll off and over the top of the city worker. Paramedics rushed her to the hospital where she died from her injuries.



In February 2019, a Port Hueneme, CA, police officer responded to a three-vehicle accident. As the officer was working the crash, she was critically injured after a minivan being winched onto a flatbed carrier somehow detached and rolled down the carrier's deck, pinning her underneath another vehicle and resulting in injuries that could have been fatal.

In May 2003, a port worker at a marine harbor facility in Baltimore reportedly drowned after being trapped inside a sedan that rolled off of a flatbed carrier and into the Patapsco River as it was being moved to an awaiting cargo ship. The 23-year-old was in the driver's seat of the late-model vehicle when the winch that was keeping the vehicle on the carrier's deck detached, and the vehicle rolled approximately 50 feet and into the water.

It's been documented that as many as 30 tow truck operators have been killed in roll-away accidents involving their trucks or the vehicles they are towing. In many cases of tow operator fatalities, OSHA reported that the tow truck drivers failed to employ chock-blocks to prevent roll-away or they were standing at the rear of their carrier's deck when the winch let go or the winch cable separated.

As illustrated by the incidents listed previously, the same hazards are faced by law enforcement officers at scenes involving towing.

(continued on page 5)

Beware of Towing Hazards

(continued from page 4)

Dangerous Processes

The mechanical process of winch-out or loading includes a winch and cable that's used to connect the tow truck to a vehicle being impounded, recovered, or transported. Tow trucks and flatbed carriers are primarily equipped with electric or hydraulic winches to conduct pulling or loading processes. Law enforcement contracts typically require a tow truck's winch to hold a minimum of 100 feet of cable and a carrier's winch to hold a minimum of 50 feet.

When winching begins, tow operators may need additional cable, pulled from the tow truck to reach a casualty vehicle or a vehicle being impounded. The operator releases the winch by "free-spooling" ("free-wheeling") its locking mechanism where the spool turns freely and cable is easily pulled.

Roll-aways can occur during winching if the tow truck's hydraulics fail from for example a hydraulic hose blowing out, or if the cable separates during extreme pull. A cable separates because of earlier damage or if the operator fails to maintain five wraps minimum of cable on the winch's spool before the cable pulled entirely from the spool.

When vehicles are being winched back onto their wheels and at the moment the vehicle lands on the pavement, the operator must prepare for roll-away by placing a long 4x4 piece of lumber where the operator anticipates the vehicle's tires will drop. This is also true for semi-truck recoveries when there is no tank-activated air to keep semi-wheels from turning. And once a vehicle drops into place, chock-blocks should be placed in front of or behind the vehicle's tires to prevent roll-away.

In cases of unannounced vehicle roll-away, the tow truck's operator sometimes fails to confirm, after pulling excess cable to reach the casualty or vehicle being impounded, that the winch is relocked. The process of recovery winching and carrier loading requires that the tow truck's or carrier's winch has fully returned to the locked-in position, especially if the winch was put into free-spool mode to pull cable.

Failure to ensure a winch is fully locked-in can result in someone being injured or killed as the result of vehicle runaway. When a vehicle runs off of a carrier's tilted deck or if the winch lets go during hard-pull, there's a greater possibility that the tow truck's or carrier's operator failed to fully re-engage free-spool after cable was pulled.

Avoiding Danger

Roll-away dangers exist at all tow- and recovery-related scenarios. Knowing this information can save you from being injured or killed while conducting simple police services involving vehicles being impounded, recovered, or towed away from wrecks.

Vehicles being winched from any location during tow-related winch/recovery scenarios may disengage from free-spool, disconnect, or cable separation. When vehicles are being winched onto flatbed carriers, even during the most routine of impounds, they're prone to letting go when the tow operator hasn't confirmed the winch's spool was re-locked. Carrier operators are trained to apply a top-side safety strap or safety chain to hold a vehicle's weight in the event of cable separation, V-Bridle (chain) break, or any other mechanical failure involving the carrier's winch.

So it's important that officers remain safely away from winch-on winch-off operations. Unfortunately, officers are often the worst violators of this safety practice. Some routinely, sometimes nonchalantly, stand directly within dangerous roll-away zones and are virtually oblivious to potential roll-away dangers as they and or police service personnel prepare impound reports and write traffic citations.

(continued on page 6)

Beware of Towing Hazards

(continued from page 5)

Always be aware of what is going on during a towing operation, especially when tow operators are in the process of winching, loading, and off-loading vehicles. In any environment where a tow truck winch is actively working, unannounced disconnect or cable separation can happen without notice, resulting in great bodily injury or death, even when the activity is typical and mundane to you.

Don't stand or work behind or near any tow truck that is actively at work. And don't expect the tow truck driver to see that you are in danger. While tow operators are trained to remove anyone from a dangerous winch zone, they may be concentrating on their towing and recovery duties and not see persons reentering an active roll-away zone.

As an additional level of precaution during impound operations on city streets or highway shoulders, I recommend that you park your police vehicle directly in-line and behind the vehicle being loaded, if there's room to do so. If a vehicle detaches (for whatever reason), the roll-away vehicle will roll only as far as the front end of the police vehicle and not into locations where persons or pedestrians are standing or working. This protocol could be a life-saving consideration.

Tow operations safety is a topic of training not typically covered in law enforcement academies. But I urge all police department managers assigned to traffic enforcement, parking control, abatement, vehicle impound, and patrol, to be extremely aware of the dangers that exist during towing operations. Remind your personnel that if a tow truck's winch is actively engaged and working, the potential for accidental roll-way is always dangerously close.

2019 Move Over or Slow Down PILOT Project: I-90/94 Corridor

The Columbia, Juneau and Sauk County Highway Departments are conducting a:

SHOULDER CLOSURE *traffic study for varying conditions of the Move Over, Slow Down law implementation, effectiveness, and education within a corridor of high volume, high speed traffic. Corridor of study is 4 lane (2 EB and 2 WB) Interstate 90-94 from the interchange of STH 33 near Portage, Columbia County to the split of the conjoined interstates near Tomah, Monroe County. Study to occur for 4 separate dates at 4 separate locations within the corridor between June and October of 2019.*

The study, led by the Columbia County Highway Department and supported by the Wisconsin County Highway Association (WCHA), WisDOT, Kilbourne Fire Department, Blystone's Towing and the Wisconsin State Patrol (WSP) is designed to identify how well the motoring public complies with the state's current Move Over or Slow Down (MOSD) law.

The study will videotape vehicles and record their speed as they approach the study area, and while they pass a variety of response vehicles that will be positioned on the side of the road. It will also record any changes in driver compliance with the MOSD law when additional static and temporary MOSD signage is added to the test area. At the end of the study on the road, live surveys of motorists will take place at I-94 rest areas, examining the motorist knowledge of the MOSD law.

This study will be used to identify any gaps in the education of the public on the requirement to Move Over or Slow Down for all types of incident response vehicles. It will also be used to identify the extent of their knowledge of the MOSD law. In addition, it will evaluate how important both static and temporary MOSD signs are in achieving motorist compliance with the MOSD law.

The TIME program is looking forward to seeing the results of the study once the data is analyzed. Everyone in the responder community knows that motorists need to do a better job with moving over or slowing down when approaching ALL response vehicles.

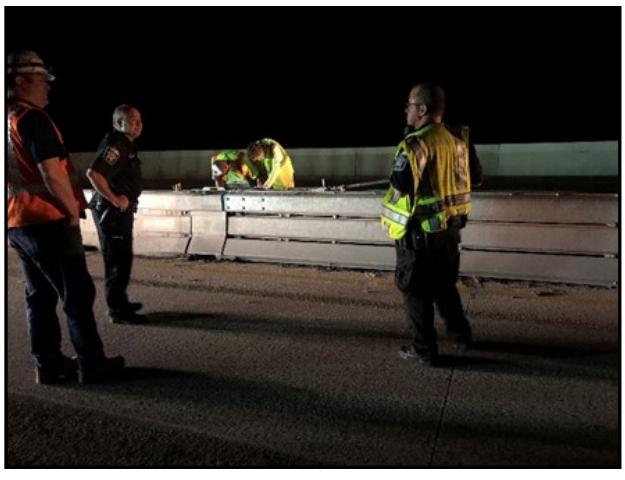
Median Swing Gates to be Installed in a Major Freeway Project to Clear the Queue Quicker

The I-94 N-S Freeway Project (Kenosha, Racine and Milwaukee Counties) is making a big reconstruction push to close out the 2019 construction season strong. Within the next two months the project is scheduled to complete the South and Central segments and open I-94 N-S to four lanes/direction from WIS 142 to County G. The North Segment of the I-94 N-S Freeway project is scheduled to move into its winter configuration from County G to College Avenue before project completion in June 2020. Before the North Segment moves into its winter configuration, a substantial portion of the I-94 WEST (NB) needs to be rebuilt.

For the next three months, the traffic on the North Segment will be traveling bi-directionally on the future I-94 EAST (SB) side of the freeway. Also, multiple I-94 WEST (NB) service ramps will be closed and reconstructed. Due to the bi-directional traffic and multiple ramp closures, there will be two four-mile segments of the North Segment that will have no open entrance/exit ramps (County G to Ryan Road and Ryan Road to College Avenue). In recent weeks the I-94 N-S Traffic Management Plan team, emergency responders, and project staff met to discuss traffic incident management strategies.

From those discussions, the need for quick clearance and emergency response were on top of the list. Due to the four-mile work zones with no ramp access, responding to incidents and clearing queued vehicles could be a challenge. In recent incidents that required a full freeway closure, emergency responders had a difficult time accessing the incident and clearing vehicles that were in the queue. Many times, emergency responders had to wait for one to two hours for contractors to arrive on-site to remove the median barrier wall to allow access directly to the incident and to allow vehicles to U-turn to get off the freeway. A quicker solution to open the barrier wall was needed. One solution to this challenge is a median swing gate.

A median swing gate is a heavily reinforced steel gate designed for emergency openings, contraflow applications and work zone access. The gate can be opened or closed quickly, using only manual power. Its purpose is to reduce the need for contractor assistance during incidents that block at least one direction of traffic. Vehicles that are trapped in the incident's queue can be removed from the freeway by opening the median swing gate and allowing vehicles to make a U-turn onto the opposing direction of traffic and exit the freeway. The median swing gates are available in 26', 39', or 52' sections. The I-94 N-S Freeway project is using the 26' length median swing gate. Semis need the 52' length to do a U-turn, but law enforcement supports the use of the smaller gates for quick clearance of passenger vehicles while staging semis within the queue until the incident is clear.



Three median swing gates have been installed along the North Segment. An onsite training session was held with I-94 N-S TMP staff, project staff and law enforcement. The session was video recorded and shared with the law enforcement agencies to share with their staff. We hope the median swing gates are not needed, but we are glad they are available in the I-94 N-S work zone.

Fall Regional TIME Meeting Schedule

Here is the fall schedule for the remaining 2019 regional TIME meetings. If you have never been to a regional TIME meeting, or it's been some time since you last attended one, please consider attending one in your area. There is a lot of good information that is presented, and there is always at least one informational topic that is relevant for all TIM disciplines.

October 2019

S	M	T	W	T	FR	SA
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

December 2019

S	M	T	W	T	FR	SA
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Wednesday, October 9, 2019 ***Southwest Region*** *Sparta*	**9:00 AM – 12:00 PM** State Patrol Safety and Weight Enforcement Facility 5751 Interstate 90, Sparta, WI 54656
Wednesday, October 16, 2019 ***Southwest Region*** *Lake Delton*	**10:00 AM – 12:00 PM** Lake Delton Fire Department 45 Miller Drive, Lake Delton, WI 53940
Thursday, October 17, 2019 ***Northeast Region*** *I-43 & Lakeshore Counties*	**10:00 AM – 12:00 PM** Sheboygan County Transportation Facility W5741 CTH J, Plymouth, WI 53073
Tuesday, October 22, 2019 ***Northeast Region*** *Southern I-41/STH 441*	**1:00 PM – 3:00 PM** Winnebago County Sheriff's Office 4311 Jackson Street, Oshkosh, WI 54901
Thursday, December 12, 2019 ***Southeast Region*** *Milwaukee*	**9:00 AM – 12:00 PM** Traffic Management Center (TMC) 433 W. St. Paul Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53203