

## TRAINING TIP: ZERO BUFFER ZONE

A zero buffer is any area where you don't have an escape route if a vehicle enters your work area. This is the **most dangerous place** to be during a roadway incident because there is little or no lateral buffer space between your work area and moving traffic. While the term "zero buffer" is not an official Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) term, it is commonly used to describe a situation with **no room for error**. Anytime a responder is on the traffic side of any vehicle at an incident scene, they are in danger. Common at-risk incident scenarios include entering/exiting vehicles, traffic stops, tow operations, pump operations, and so on. While zero buffers are sometimes unavoidable, always plan a safe escape route. Protect yourself and others on scene by:

- Staying out of the zero buffer zone whenever possible.
- Planning an escape route if you must enter the zero buffer zone.
- Working from the non-traffic side of a vehicle until lane +1 blocking can be achieved.
- Giving yourself room to work.
- Using traffic control and blocking vehicles to warn and manage approaching traffic.
- Assisting others in returning to safety if they are in an unsafe situation.



Photo source: SHRP2

For more information about the zero buffer zone, watch the Responder Safety Learning Network's video, "[Operating Near the Zero Buffer](#)."

## NATIONAL DAY OF TIM TRAINING

The Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT), in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), joined agencies nationwide in recognizing the inaugural National Day of TIM Training on April 9, 2026. On that day, NDOT hosted a TIM Responder Training Course at the Nebraska State Patrol Headquarters in Lincoln. The training brought together 56 participants, including representatives from law enforcement, FHWA, the Health Department, towing services, NDOT's Director's Office, the NDOT Safety Coordinator, and transportation staff.



April 9 Training. Photo source: NDOT



"Traffic Incident Management training is a critical part of keeping Nebraska's roadways safe," said NDOT Director Vicki Kramer. "When we looked at TIM, we saw an opportunity to build an organized, consistent emergency response system along I-80, from Ogallala to Omaha. We've now deployed these proven, consistent trainings and techniques along the entire Interstate corridor, and the results we've seen have encouraged us to start expanding to rural areas as well."

## TRAINING PROGRESS

676 people have been trained so far this year! The goal of 1,000 is 68% complete.

Up-to-date information on classes, including the registration form, is available on the [training website](#). Data as of May 7, 2026.

# TOW TEMPORARY TRAFFIC CONTROL AWARENESS SEMINAR

In Nebraska, tow operators often leave crashed vehicles along the roadway and return during non-peak hours. These types of recovery efforts can be dangerous without proper advanced warning and the deployment of temporary traffic control (TTC). Nebraska developed a national, first-of-its-kind program in 2020 and revisited the material this year via a tow TTC awareness seminar, held on May 12 in North Platte. The seminar covered MUTCD-compliant TTC strategies and best practices for tow professionals to deploy during longer-duration recovery and cleanup efforts.



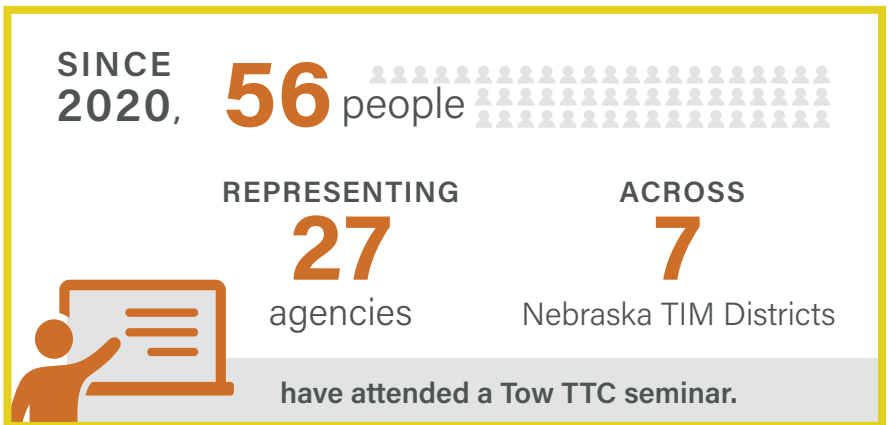
Photo source: Arrow Towing

Proper TTC at crash scenes improves responder safety, reduces secondary crashes, and returns some responders to service. The seminar allowed the tow professionals in attendance to share their experiences and provide feedback as a unified voice on tow TTC.



**Build relationships with your tow professionals.**

This will improve your understanding of their capabilities and communication, enhancing safe, quick clearance. Remember to give these responders the information they need to respond to your incidents quickly and with the proper equipment to facilitate safe, quick clearance.



## VIDEOS AVAILABLE ON YOUTUBE

Quarterly Statewide Virtual Meetings are recorded and uploaded to a private [YouTube playlist](#). Check out this [recording on electric vehicle \(EV\) crashes](#). Researchers from the Midwest Roadside Safety Facility shared findings on the impacts of EV crashes on roadside infrastructure, and a panel including law enforcement, fire, and towing representatives discussed best practices for EV crash response.

## Nebraska TIM: Safer, Together

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