

OCTOBER 2024 NEWSLETTER



PERFORMANCE MEASURES DEEP DIVE: SECONDARY CRASHES

Traffic Incident Management (TIM) programs must rely on efficient data collection, analysis and reporting to measure performance and identify opportunities to improve ([FHWA](#)). **Understanding the impact of traffic incidents on Nebraska roads requires reviewing performance measures and how our actions affect safe, quick clearance.** This month we're focusing on secondary crashes, which are crashes that occur at the scene of an original crash or in the queue, including the opposite direction.

Recent research by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine focused on the risks and outcomes of secondary crashes. **The risk of secondary crashes increases by 2.8% for every minute a roadway incident remains a hazard (even on the shoulder).** Additionally, it is estimated that 20% of incidents are secondary in nature, with 10% of secondary crashes occurring in the opposite direction of the initial incident.¹ **Secondary crashes can happen at any time and in any weather condition.** Interestingly, approximately half of secondary crashes examined by the FHWA occurred within the first 20 minutes of an incident, with most collisions occurring during daylight hours with clear weather conditions.² Always be vigilant and aware of what is going on around you.

Performance Measures Fact Sheet

Interested in learning more about performance measures? Check out the [Performance Measures fact sheet](#) for more information on definitions and TIM timeline, your role in quick clearance, reporting for data-driven decision-making and more.

The quality and quantity of verifiable data regarding secondary crashes is limited. **Secondary crashes are identified through crash reporting**, and few states tracked these incidents prior to the release of the Model Minimum Uniform Crash Criteria (MMUCC 5th Edition). It is critical for responders investigating crashes to accurately identify and report secondary crashes. We can reduce risks to responders and others by implementing safe, quick clearance techniques, robust TIM practices and improved roadway clearance times. **Fifteen minutes could lower the risk of a secondary crash by 42%.**

NEBRASKA PANHANDLE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CELEBRATION

In September, the Nebraska Panhandle area TIM group celebrated the signing of their Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a ceremony in Gering. At the ceremony, representatives from the Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT), Nebraska State Patrol (NSP), Scottsbluff Fire Department and Cheyenne County Emergency Communications spoke about the critical work our responders do for safe roadways in Nebraska. Formalized TIM partnerships support the group's progress in moving TIM initiatives forward to improve safety, reliability and efficiency on the roadway. This marks a major milestone for the group – congratulations!



¹ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2022. Guidelines for Quantifying Benefits of Traffic Incident Management Strategies. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/26486>.

² U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration. 2023. Secondary Crash Research: A Multistate Analysis. Washington, DC: ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/fhwahop23043/fhwahop23043.pdf

NEBRASKA PANHANDLE MOU CELEBRATION CONTINUED

Local and national media outlets covered the celebration, including the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). Check out their article on the celebration [here](#).



“Ensuring safety is our top priority as first responders—whether it’s for our team, those affected by incidents, or the traveling public,” stated Scottsbluff Fire Department Chief Thomas Schingle. “The TIM program has brought our safety partners together to promote safe practices and educate the public on moving over and slowing down when approaching emergency scenes.”



WHAT IS A SNOW SQUALL?

SNOW SQUALL WARNINGS AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

- ❄️ A **snow squall** is an intense but brief period of moderate to heavy snowfall, accompanied by strong, gusty surface winds and possibly lightning. Snow accumulation could be significant. The phenomenon is not new, but the term and warnings associated with it were only introduced in 2018.
- ❄️ Snow squalls differ from snowstorms in that they are much shorter in duration, but they also frequently include a phenomenon known as a flash freeze. Rapidly falling temperatures, combined with freshly fallen snow, can quickly glaze highways.
- ❄️ The National Weather Service (NWS) began issuing warnings in 2018 because of the impact on travel, which frequently resulted in chain reaction crashes due to low visibility and flash-freeze road conditions. Snow squall warnings are issued for travelers, with the goal of giving drivers enough time to get off the road before the snow squall hits.
- ❄️ The warning is issued similarly to that of a severe thunderstorm; both are considered significant events, but they are brief (typically 30-60 minutes) and limited to a specific area. The NWS will not issue a snow squall warning if a blizzard warning has already been issued, or at night when the impact on traffic is lessened.



For more information on snow squall warnings, please see the [“Impact-Based Snow Squall Warnings”](#) fact sheet from NWS.

Winter Weather Crashes

We are currently working on updating the Nebraska TIM Training curriculum with local examples. As we enter the winter season, please send any winter weather operations content or crashes to ne@tim.hdrinc.com.



Nebraska TIM: Safer, Together

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION