

# MARCH 2025 NEWSLETTER



## HIGHWAY SAFETY CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHT

In February, the Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) Highway Safety Office hosted the Highway Safety Conference to move Nebraska's fatal and serious injury crashes toward zero. Topics of discussion included grant writing, driver safety initiatives and Traffic Incident Management (TIM). **One workshop highlighted the work that local partners are doing across the state to collaborate on traffic incident response and improve post-crash care.** Post-crash care is defined by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) as "enhancing the survivability of crashes through expedient access to emergency medical care, while creating a safe working environment for vital first responders and preventing secondary crashes through robust traffic incident management practices.

Panelists walked through an After-Action Review (AAR) conducted in Merrick County. **One of the recurring themes was that AARs help everyone understand others' perspectives and the reasoning behind decisions that were made during the incident.** The speakers concluded that this work has strengthened relationships and improved communication among responders.

### Participants shared the following best practices from the AAR example:

- Provide a complete call report (en route, on scene, departing) that is clear and concise.
- Wait for dispatch to call you back, when you have their full attention, to give more details.
- Identify a preferred air ambulance landing zone considering power lines, trees, etc.
- Provide details on what radio channel is being used to all responders and minimize chat on main channel.
- Communicate with air ambulance throughout response so they can appropriately plan their resources.



Special thanks to our panelists, Merrick County Sheriff John Westman, Nebraska State Patrol (NSP) Sergeant Justin Brase, Hamilton County Emergency Communications Supervisor Ryan Shaw and Lone Tree Towing/Assistant Central City Fire Chief Troy Wells, for discussing this AAR, the importance of TIM training and benefits of participating in the TIM program.



Have you responded to a recent crash or other roadway incident that would be beneficial to review with TIM stakeholders in your region? Please submit a meeting request with the incident information via the [AAR meeting request form](#).

## MANAGING TRAFFIC WITH TEMPORARY TRAFFIC CONTROL TOOLS

Traffic control devices are needed to support traffic management efforts. Advanced warning is critical to alert drivers approaching the scene of unexpected slowdowns or stopped traffic. Temporary traffic control can include strategically placed emergency vehicles, portable signs, cones, flares and rolling roadblocks. These tools can be deployed individually or in combination to slow down and direct traffic away from a scene. Request additional resources as soon as possible and modify traffic control as traffic conditions change.

### Setting up a taper

In traffic control, a taper refers to a designated area on a roadway where traffic is gradually directed to move from one lane or path to another. Tapers are usually 50 to 100 feet in length and contain five equally spaced cones or barrels. **When setting up a taper, maintaining situational awareness is more important than perfect cone spacing.** Start on the shoulder, facing traffic, and roughly place cones on the shoulder at every skip line or every ten paces. Place the last cone on the edge line then work backward, facing traffic. Take side steps into the travel lane when placing each cone but always return to the shoulder and monitor traffic.

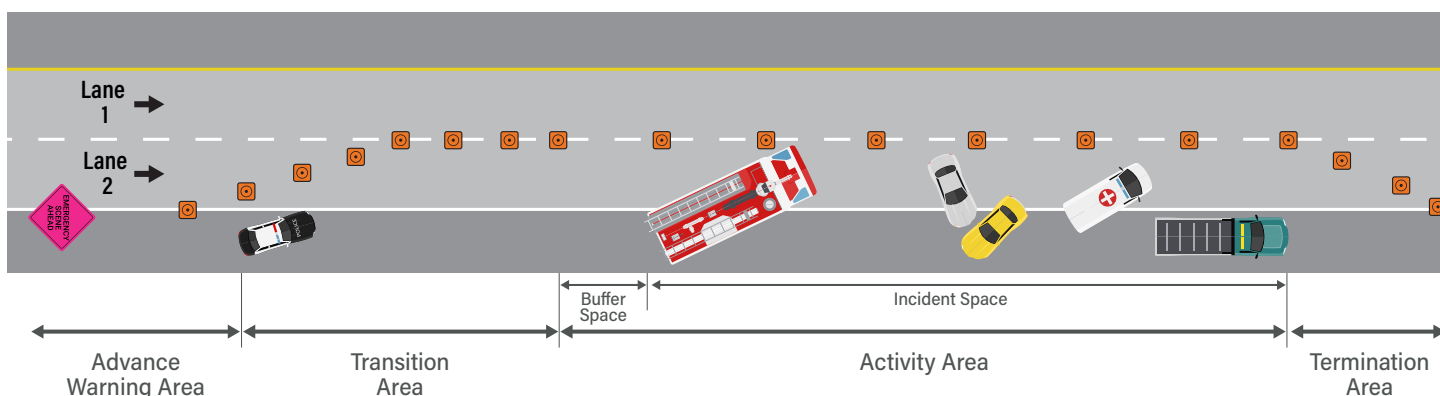
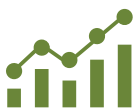


Figure: Traffic Incident Management Area components with examples of temporary traffic control tools.

## MAY STATEWIDE VIRTUAL MEETING

Join us on Tuesday, May 6 from 10-11:30 a.m. CT/9-10:30 a.m. MT for the Statewide Nebraska TIM Virtual Meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to share state and national TIM best practices and resources, and to create a statewide network of TIM champions. In May we will cover:



### AASHTOWARE SAFETY

NDOT is sharing a new crash data software called AASHTOWare Safety with our government safety partners for free. Users will be able to search and map crash data in their area to identify safety improvement opportunities. The presentation will include a brief overview and a demonstration.



### WAZE FOR CITIES

At recent AAR meetings, groups have discussed the challenge of managing alternate route traffic for I-80 incidents. A common issue is that detoured traffic follows navigation app instructions using county roads (not the preferred route). Local agencies can partner with Waze for free to indicate road closures, hazards, etc. from their computer, which updates the Waze app in one minute and Google maps within thirty minutes. Visit [waze.com/wazeforcities](https://waze.com/wazeforcities) for more information.



### PROGRAM UPDATE AND OPEN DISCUSSION

Learn more about ongoing activities and resources to stay involved in the TIM program. We will discuss ongoing training efforts, AAR meetings, the Highway Safety Office digital alerting technology application and more.

Please [register](#) to attend. We look forward to "seeing" you on May 6!

## NEBRASKA TIM YOUTUBE PLAYLIST

Check out the [Nebraska TIM YouTube playlist](#) for recordings of past TIM statewide meetings, including segments on unified command, electric vehicle crashes and response, digital altering technologies, and more.

### WHAT'S IN THAT TRAILER?

#### Know what is in the trailer.

Responding to crashes involving commercial vehicles may present many different types of hazards to emergency responders beyond hazardous material spills. Cargo may have shifted or become unstable during a crash, creating a crush hazard for responders.

**Before working around commercial vehicles, verify with the driver, if able, what they are transporting and if it may have come loose during a collision.**

#### Ensure heavy objects are still properly secured.

During a recent AAR, there was discussion on the **hazards coiled steel can present to responders, including rolling off the trailer or the explosive force the coil has if the transport bands break.**

Other common items such as hay bales, pallets or machinery can all present a crushing hazard. Don't become complacent if the load is not considered a hazardous material.

#### Contact NSP.

All troopers are trained on Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) rules and regulations for commercial motor vehicles. **Troopers are familiar with bills of lading and can help identify the load, verify proper load securement, conduct driver and/or vehicle inspections and assist in ensuring the vehicle is safe to drive or tow before leaving the scene.**



Examples of shifted/leaning loads. Photos courtesy of Nebraska State Patrol.

#### Nebraska TIM: Safer, Together



Nebraska TIM Program | [NE@TIM.hdrinc.com](mailto:NE@TIM.hdrinc.com)



[dot.nebraska.gov/safety/tim](https://dot.nebraska.gov/safety/tim)



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