

# PENNSYLVANIA TURNPIKE TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM (TIM) AND PENNTIME PROGRAMS

By Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission

## IN THIS CASE STUDY YOU WILL LEARN:

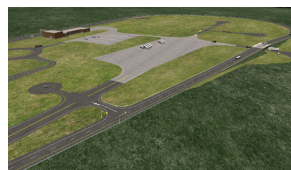
- 1 How the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission's Traffic Incident Management program has partnered with other state incident management organizations to form the Pennsylvania Traffic Incident Management Enhancement (PennTIME) initiative.
- 2 How the Commission's TIM program has been key to driving statewide training efforts, including train-the-trainer, responder, and web-based training modules.
- 3 How the Commission's increased training and coordination has reduced incident durations and improved mobility, as well as reduced unplanned emergency detours.

## BACKGROUND

The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PTC) launched its Traffic Incident Management (TIM) program in January 2016 as part of the Traffic Operations Performance (TOP) initiatives and the program has quickly established itself as a leader and exceptional example among incident management programs nationwide. The Commission's Vision to "drive the standard for safety, customer service, and

mobility" could not be more evident in the direct and measurable results the Traffic Incident Management program has accomplished over the program's initial four years. The TIM program is responsible for customer safety and mobility over 552 miles (2,442 lane miles) of tolled roadway and tunnels under 24/7 operations, which includes operations and management for the Commission State Farm Safety Patrol Fleet, Emergency First Responders, Contracted Towing and Recovery Operations, Contracted Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT) Operations, and Commission agreements with Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS).

At the statewide level, under its TIM program, the Commission currently serves in a chair position on the Pennsylvania Traffic Incident Management Enhancement (PennTIME) initiative and helped lead the establishment of the statewide incident management organizational structure, subcommittees, and program resources for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. PennTIME is a strong development in advancing TIM efforts in Pennsylvania and in addition to coordination and resources, a new state-of-the-art facility project (Pennsylvania Safety Transportation and Research Track – PennSTART) is planned



for construction to benefit emergency response, transportation organizations, and research institutions involved in traffic incident management.

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The TIM program was designed to accomplish the core values of the Vision and Mission of the Commission in leading efforts for safety, customer service, and mobility through proven incident management practices. Safety and mobility are emphasized highly in all Commission activities and the TIM program has created a direct pathway for the agency to have a daily visible impact on incident management, response and clearance times, and early preparation for weather and event management activities.



The TIM program framework includes the core objectives set forth in the Commission Strategic Plan as well as agency-established SMART (Specific; Measurable; Attainable; Relevant; Time-Based) primary objectives set forth by the Commission as follows:

- Reduce the number of fatal crashes
- Reduce the reportable crash rate
- Reduce the reportable work zone crash rate
- Reduce the average incident duration
- Increase safety training and awareness for all employees

The TIM objectives are a core part of a “Playbook” developed by the Commission used as a resource for statewide incident management coordination and training. Key tactical initiatives and metrics have been set forth for each program objective as measurable quarterly/annual goals as part of the TIM playbook and involve review of metrics data, planning meetings, and key training targets. By having a strong TIM program that provides education and learning opportunities for Commission staff and its partners, the Commission commits to:

- Increasing responder safety
- Promoting quick and safe clearance
- Enhancing prompt and reliable incident communications

## TSMO PLANNING, STRATEGIES AND DEPLOYMENT

As part of the Commission’s TIM framework, all program objectives are reviewed on a quarterly and annual basis to evaluate progress and track accomplishments. The Commission regularly publishes key TOP program accomplishments on the web for customer and partner information sharing. Key metrics specific to the TIM program (statistics for fatal crashes, crash rates, work zone data) are also published annually in the Commission Strategic Performance Report to publicly promote TIM progress and highlight how the Commission actively prioritizes safety and mobility.

Incident management training is a cornerstone of the Commission’s TIM program and is unquestionably one of its crowning achievements. Since its inception, the TIM program has been a key Pennsylvania and national force in driving statewide training efforts, including train-the-trainer, responder, and web-based training modules for FHWA Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP2) training, Work Zone Incident Management Training, and National Incident Management System (NIMS) initiatives. The training modules developed by the Commission TIM program have served to train toll agency employees and support staff throughout the country, including law enforcement, fire/rescue, towing and recovery, emergency medical service (EMS) and other transportation and public works staff.



A total of 23,520 individuals have been trained statewide (as of April, 2021), positioning Pennsylvania 6th in the state rankings nationwide. Since the inception of the Commission TIM program and PennTIME initiative, incident management classroom training in Pennsylvania has experienced a 31.6% increase from 2016 to 2020 and has 43.2% of responders receiving training.

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Another key achievement in training, the Commission TIM program and its staff have directly overseen the deployment of an award-winning Pennsylvania SHRP2 certified E-Learning program across multiple platforms that have played a critical role in training significant numbers of responders. Since being deployed in January 2019, the web-based E-Learning program has proven to be an invaluable resource in accelerating statewide TIM training efforts, capturing 9.2% of Pennsylvania's emergency responders and training a total of 7,426 individuals (as of April 2021).

## COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING AND EXECUTION

The Commission TIM program is a leading example of incident management practices and an effective program framework for all toll agencies. The Commission currently serves in a chair position in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania incident management initiative PennTIME. PennTIME represents a partnership of federal, state, county, and municipal agencies who have joined forces to educate first responders and the public while developing programs to promote stronger TIM safety practices addressing roadway incidents in Pennsylvania. The Commission TIM staff are currently directly involved in the development of the Pennsylvania State Unified Incident Command Program under PennTIME.

At the national level, the Commission TIM program has directly impacted NIMS training objectives through the incident management training program established in Pennsylvania. The TIM program has positioned Pennsylvania among the highest state rankings countrywide for responder training percentages. Collaboration with other agencies in the toll industry is an integral part of the TIM program efforts and demonstrates a strong dedication to outreach efforts. Collaboration examples outside of Pennsylvania include mass casualty coordination with Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) and resource sharing locally and nationally during National Incident Responder Week with agencies such as New Jersey Traffic Incident Management (NJTIM).

Commission TIM staff are also involved in quarterly webinars through the SafeHighways.org Safety Service Patrol Idea Sharing Network steering committee (in partnership with SafeHighways, National Operations Center of Excellence (NOCOe), and Travelers Marketing) to share best practices with the toll industry.

## OUTCOME, LEARNINGS AND PUBLIC BENEFIT

As an effect of reduced incident durations and improved mobility, the Commission has also recognized a reduction in the implementation of unplanned emergency detours ('Plan X' interchange-to-interchange detour plans) for incident management. In 2019, the Commission reports indicate 20 total unplanned annual 'Plan X' detours, which is a decrease of 33 percent from the previous annual average. The decrease in unplanned detours indicates quicker incident clearance times and a return to normal traffic conditions with significant savings in road user costs.