

Traffic Incident Management Enhancement (TIME) Taskforce

5/20/08

Meeting Minutes

The meeting was conducted at the DeKalb Fire and Rescue Complex in Tucker. Approximately 65 people were in attendance.

Topics of Discussion

Emergency Vehicle Lighting

Capt. Rory Howe with the Roswell Police Department gave a presentation on emergency vehicle lighting at incident scenes. There is a national push that is now looking at the different practices or disciplines of emergency vehicle lighting. Often times the thought process of emergency responders is to leave on all emergency lights for the purpose of safety of the emergency workers. However, there is now a criticism that is arising of this practice. With today's technology, emergency lighting is brighter than ever before and is creating the opposite of the desired effect. Drivers become confused with all the lights thus creating congestion, secondary incidents and worst of all drivers collide with the emergency equipment or personnel. One of the main causes of death of emergency personnel is being struck by passing motorists. Studies show that a single amber light is more effective and less distracting than the barrage of red and blue lights. The Roswell Police Department is in the process of considering a possible policy change in this area.

Metro Atlanta Ramp Meter Project

Monica Luck with GDOT gave a brief discussion on the soon coming ramp meters. Many attending the meeting did not know anything about ramp meters. They did not know the purpose or how they operated. Many of the police did not realize that ramp meters are considered a traffic control device that can be enforced just like running a traffic signal or stop sign.

After Incident Review

Gwinnett County police conducted a review of the fatality crash on I-85nb near Indian Trail that occurred on March 31, 2008 at 8:43pm. This incident claimed the life of four individuals, one being that of an infant. There was one other serious injury where the individual is still in a coma. The incident was classified as a hit and run of which the perpetrator is in custody. The width of the incident scene and evidence field was from the inside barrier wall to the right shoulder (82 ft.). The length was 700 feet. A total of five vehicles were involved. One of the main issues in completing the investigation was that when the traffic stopped it was on much of the evidence. Traffic had to be cleared so that the gathering of evidence could be completed. Gwinnett Police made the decision to only gather evidence at the time of the incident. To get traffic moving, they came back later to map the scene.

Because of the impact that the incident was having on the surface streets Gwinnett PD was stretched to capacity. Georgia State Patrol assisted in going to three different hospitals where the injured were taken. They also assisted in the family notification of the fatalities. DeKalb police assisted in diverting

traffic and traffic control. The medical examiner was prompt in getting to the scene and had completed his investigation prior to the completion of the police investigation.

The incident took four hours total to clear from the time of first notification. Three hours into the incident, two lanes were opened. That means that for three hours I-85 was closed to north bound traffic. While this is outside the clearance goal of 90 minutes, the handling of this incident was deemed successful. Without the communication and cooperation from all the different agencies and outside police departments, this incident would have lasted much longer.

Towing and Recovery Incentive Program (TRIP)

Gary Millsaps, GDOT Incident Management Manager, provided an update on TRIP. Since the implementation of TRIP in mid January 2008, there have been 13 tractor trailer incidents where TRIP has been activated. The average roadway clearance time (clearing all travel lanes) for TRIP incidents is 30 minutes. The average incident clearance time (everything and everyone completely gone from the scene) is 2 hours and 26 minutes. This is a reduction of 2 hours and 23 minutes for incident clearance based on the 2007 data.

Gary Millsaps also summarized the purpose and procedure for TRIP.

Rural Metro Ambulance

Nita Ham, Director of Rural Metro Ambulance, gave a presentation on the funding cut backs and how that might impact ambulance service in the Metro Atlanta area. Efforts are under way to insure that the service level that everyone is accustomed to does not fall off. She also noted that in the past the ambulance services have not participated in TIME. She pledged as the new director to make sure that they are represented.

Committee Updates

- The annual meeting will be held in Savannah on Oct. 19-21. This year's meeting will be a joint meeting with ITS Georgia. There will be joint sessions that both groups can learn from and breakout sessions that apply to the specific groups.
- Atlanta PD is developing a guideline for parking emergency response vehicles at traffic incidents. The plan will take into account placement of vehicles, traffic control, incident command and emergency vehicle lighting. Once finished, the plan will be set up as a new policy for APD and will have training curriculum that other jurisdictions can use and adopt.
- An update was given on the down town connector resurfacing project.