

Policy Number: 4:47

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Subject: Moving Vehicles from Interstate Roadways- TIME Task Force

1. Purpose

This policy outlines how Grady EMS will assist agencies (APD, DOT, HERO, AFRD, towing companies, etc.) in an effort to expedite the removal of vehicles from roadways within our service area to restore, in an urgent manner, the safe and orderly flow of traffic, following a motor vehicle crash or other incident on the roadways.

2. Scope

This applies to all ambulances or official Grady EMS vehicles responding to auto crashes or assisting motorist blocking interstate roadways; I-75, I-85, I-20 and I-285.

This policy does not include accidents with major injuries, entrapments, fatalities, or where law enforcement may need to conduct a major investigation.

It is intended for minor accidents with minimal or no injuries and the vehicles are capable of moving under their own power.

3. Definition

TIME- Traffic Incident Management Enhancement

Metro Atlanta TIME Taskforce website- <http://www.timetaskforce.com/>

Goal of TIME Task Force- Develop and sustain a region-wide incident management program to facilitate the safest and fastest roadway clearance, lessening the impact on emergency responders and the motoring public.

Purpose of TIME Task Force-

- To continue the dialogue on ways to improve inter-agency coordination and cooperation.
- To create an opportunity for multi-agency training which promotes teamwork.
- To serve as a platform for participants to develop common operational strategies and a better understanding of other agencies' roles and responsibilities.

Georgia 'Steer it/clear it' law is also known as- O.C.G.A. 40-6-275. Duty to remove vehicle from public roads; removal of incapacitated vehicle from state highway.

O.C.G.A. 40-6-275- listed within this policy.

4. Procedures

Grady EMS is a partner in the safety of motorists when an incident or accident occurs on an interstate.

First unit on scene:

When Grady EMS arrives on the scene of an accident where a vehicle is blocking an interstate travel lane, the EMS crew will rapidly assess patients and if determined no serious life threats exist, make an immediate effort to remove vehicles and the ambulance from the travel lanes. There are dangers to the Grady EMS crew, patients on the scene, and upstream drivers. Additionally, obstructions of travel lanes quickly congest the area causing significant traffic delays. Grady EMS will work collectively with Georgia DOT HERO, law enforcement, and AFRD to move the accident scene to the shoulder. The ambulance will never occupy travel lanes for solely administrative, paperwork, or report purposes.

Once a Georgia DOT HERO Unit, law enforcement, or AFRD arrives on the scene, they will implement traffic control measures to protect both the incident scene and emergency responders. This may provide the ambulance the ability to reposition to an area not occupying travel lanes and a safer location. One of the Grady EMS staff shall make contact with the HERO operator, or law enforcement to formulate a plan to decrease the need for the ambulance to occupy a travel lane or to move the accident to the shoulder.

Arrive after HERO, law enforcement or AFRD:

Ambulances should park downstream from the incident, utilizing the protected area provided by Georgia DOT HERO or AFRD. This will allow the ambulance to assess, triage, package and transport while using the only the lane blocked by the accident. AFRD will block one additional lane based on NFPA's recommendation. When approaching the incident look for HERO operators directing the ambulance to a staging/parking location on major incidents. HERO operators may identify an area for the ambulance to park with easy access and egress.

Calling 511 or using the Grady 911 Center for HERO assistance:

Grady EMS shall assist motorists in moving accident vehicles to the shoulder and notify HERO dispatch if the vehicle is disabled. Once the HERO unit arrives, make immediate efforts to move the ambulance if obstructing their ability to remove the disabled vehicles and coordinate efforts to move the accident to the shoulder.

Calling 511 or using the Grady 911 Center for motorists needing HERO assistance:

If Grady EMS encounters a vehicle obstructing a travel lane where an accident has not occurred, notify the driver of the need to immediately move vehicle from travel lane pursuant to the law. There are signs posted on the interstates directing drivers to move vehicles. If the vehicle is disabled, contact HERO (call 511) and provide situation and exact location of incident. Encourage the driver to move to a safe location.

Georgia Open Roads Policy:

The Georgia Open Roads Policy states that whenever a roadway or travel lane is closed or partially blocked by a traffic incident, the Georgia State Patrol, Department of Transportation, local law enforcement and other public safety agencies will re-open the roadway as soon as possible and in an urgent manner. Safety of the public and responders is the highest priority and will be preserved.

Atlanta Regional Commission:

The Atlanta Regional Commission recognizes the policy's importance in significantly reducing non-recurring delays and secondary crashes. The policy is noted to be consistent with the

objectives and strategies of the Atlanta Regional Commission PLAN 2040 Regional Transportation Plan and its goals will be taken into consideration with future transportation projects.

State of Georgia “OPEN ROADS POLICY”

Quick Clearance for Safety and Mobility

This agreement by and between the Police Department, Fire Department, Local Department of Transportation, State Department of Transportation and Medical Examiner establishes a policy for personnel to expedite the removal of vehicles, cargo and debris from roadways within the local jurisdictions and to restore, in an urgent manner, the safe and orderly flow of traffic, following a motor vehicle crash or other incident on the roadways within the jurisdiction.

Whereas:

Public safety is the highest priority and must be maintained especially when injuries or hazardous materials are involved. Quality of life is dependent upon the free movement of people, vehicles and commerce. Departments share the responsibility for achieving and maintaining the degree of order necessary to make this free movement possible. Agencies have the responsibility to do whatever is reasonable to reduce the risk of responders, secondary crashes and delays associated with incidents, crashes, roadway maintenance, construction and enforcement activities.

The following operating standards are based on the philosophy that the roadway system will not be closed or restricted any longer than is absolutely necessary.

Be It Resolved:

Roadways will be cleared of damaged vehicles, spilled cargo and debris as soon as it is practical and safe to do so. It is understood that damage to vehicles or cargo may occur as a result of clearing the roadway, on an urgent basis. While reasonable attempts to avoid such damage shall be taken, the highest priority is restoring traffic to normal pre-incident conditions. Incident caused congestion has an enormous cost to society.

Police Department’s Responsibility:

Police Departments, who respond to the scene of traffic incidents, will make clearing the travel portion of the roadway, a high priority. When an investigation is required, it will be conducted in as expedient a manner as possible, considering the severity of the collision or incident. Non-critical portion of the investigation may be delayed until lighter traffic conditions allow completion of those tasks. Police personnel will close only those lanes absolutely necessary to safely conduct the investigation. Police personnel will coordinate with the Department of Transportation representatives to set up appropriate traffic control, establish alternate routes and expedite the safe movement of traffic at the scene and to restore the roadway to normal conditions as soon as possible.

Department of Transportation Responsibilities:

When requested by an emergency service agency, the State and/or Local DOT will respond and deploy resources to major traffic incidents 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, depending on location and severity of the incident.

Fire Department Responsibilities:

Upon arrival at any roadway incident, the Fire Department will only utilize the lanes absolutely necessary for a safe work zone and for the safety of their personnel. The Fire Department’s on-scene ranking officer should coordinate with the on-scene Police Department’s ranking officer to

determine whether or not the fire equipment might be repositioned to allow travel lanes to be reopened. Fire Departments will deploy the initial display of traffic cones, in a taper fashion from the rear of the closest piece of equipment upstream, toward approaching traffic. Once a Georgia DOT HERO Unit arrives on the scene, they will implement traffic control measures to protect both the incident scene and emergency responders.

O.C.G.A. § 40-6-275

Duty to remove vehicle from public roads; removal of incapacitated vehicle from state highway

(a) Any other provision of this article or any other law to the contrary notwithstanding, motor vehicles involved in traffic accidents and the drivers of such motor vehicles shall be subject to the provisions of this Code section.

(b) This Code section shall apply to motor vehicle traffic accidents which occur on the public roads of this state as defined in paragraph (24) of Code Section 32-1-3. Any violation of this Code section shall be punishable as a misdemeanor pursuant to Code Section 40-6-1.

(c) When a motor vehicle traffic accident occurs with no apparent serious personal injury or death, it shall be the duty of the drivers of the motor vehicles involved in such traffic accident, or any other occupant of any such motor vehicle who possesses a valid driver's license, to remove said vehicles from the immediate confines of the roadway into a safe refuge on the shoulder, emergency lane, or median or to a place otherwise removed from the roadway whenever such moving of a vehicle can be done safely and the vehicle is capable of being normally and safely driven, does not require towing, and can be operated under its own power in its customary manner without further damage or hazard to itself, to the traffic elements, or to the roadway. The driver of any such motor vehicle may request any person who possesses a valid driver's license to remove any such motor vehicle as provided in this Code section, and any such person so requested shall be authorized to comply with such request.

(d) The driver or any other person who has removed a motor vehicle from the main traveled way of the road as provided in subsection (c) of this Code section before the arrival of a police officer shall not be considered liable or at fault regarding the cause of the accident solely by reason of moving the vehicle pursuant to this Code section.

(e) This Code section shall not abrogate or affect a driver's duty to file any written report which may be required by a local law enforcement agency, but compliance with the requirements of this Code section shall not allow a driver to be prosecuted for his or her failure to stop and immediately report a traffic accident.

(f) This Code section shall not abrogate or affect a driver's duty to stop and give information in accordance with law, nor shall it relieve a police officer of his or her duty to render a report in accordance with law.