



Colorado Springs Police Department Standard Operating Procedure

DL-1220-10 Interstate 25 Incident Management

Section 1200 – Critical Incident Functions

Effective Date: 12/10/2024

Supersedes Date: 1/10/2022

.01 Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to establish guidelines for responding to and handling incidents on the Interstate 25 (I-25) corridor that may block or impede the normal traffic flow.

.02 Cross-Reference

[GO 902 Vehicles: Emergency Operation](#)

[GO 1220 Incident Command System](#)

[GO 1223 Hazardous Materials Incidents](#)

[GO 1300 Traffic Law Enforcement](#)

[GO 1320 Towing and Impound Procedures](#)

[GO 1841 Staff and Personnel Notification](#)

[DL-1305-01 Fatal or Serious Injury Traffic Crashes](#)

.03 Definitions

Colorado Springs Traffic Incident Center (CS-TMC): The City of Colorado Springs Traffic Engineering Department runs the CS-TMC. They assist CSPD with incidents occurring on I-25 during their normal business hours, Monday – Friday, 6AM-6PM. The primary phone number is [REDACTED]. The on-duty CS- TMC incident manager is TOC1 on the Gold Hill-1 and Falcon-1 talk groups. On the MDC and CAD they are listed as TOC1 as the unit and TRAF OPS for the name. The CS-TMC can also be emailed at [REDACTED].

Colorado Traffic Incident Center (D-TMC): The Colorado Traffic Management Center in Denver (D-TMC) is utilized after hours, weekends, and holidays when the CS-TMC is unavailable. The D-TMC will be contacted during *Level-3* incidents only. Their phone number is [REDACTED] and their FAX number is [REDACTED]. They do not share radio talk groups with CSPD.

Traffic Incident: A traffic incident is a non-recurring or unusual event that reduces the effective capacity of a roadway and disrupts the normal demand/capacity relationship that currently exists

for a roadway. This can be a crash, vehicular problem such as a stall or breakdown, spilled material, or debris on the roadway, special event, or natural disaster that may block or impede the traffic flow.

.04 Procedure

These guidelines have been established to address traffic crashes and other incidents on I-25 that cause traffic delays in order to:

- Reduce delays on I-25
- Increase operational efficiency and incident response efforts
- Maximize efficiency of alternate routes
- Disseminate information to the motoring public to reduce motorist frustration
- Reduce secondary accidents
- Provide safety to responders and motorists traveling through an incident scene
- Reduce clearance times and restore roadway to normal or as close as normal traffic flow as quickly as possible

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) has implemented a statewide Traffic Incident Management Plan. The goal of the plan is to facilitate a quick and safe response by first responders to the traffic incident. This is necessary to provide incident safety for emergency response personnel and incident victims, reduce the likelihood of secondary incidents, and to reduce the clearance time and delays caused by the blockage. The longer traffic remains obstructed, the higher chance of secondary accidents occurring. Further, for each minute a traffic lane remains blocked results in an average of four additional minutes of traffic congestion.

Secondary crashes often occur as drivers are attempting to change lanes during a blockage, and drivers "rubbernecking" as they look at crash scenes and emergency vehicles. These are responsible for 20% of I-25 accidents and are most likely to occur 36-minutes or more after the first incident. It is significantly important that first responders attempt to clear the interstate as soon as possible and practical.

Rapid Vehicle Removal

Department members will attempt to get the vehicles involved in an I-25 incident causing a roadway delay removed from the roadway as quickly as possible.

The following Colorado Revised Statutes (CRS) grant authority to move vehicles stalled, stranded, or disabled on I-25:

CRS § 42-4-1602 Accident involving damage - duty.

When an accident occurs on the traveled portion, median, or ramp of a divided highway and each vehicle involved can be safely driven, each driver shall move such driver's vehicle as soon as practicable off the traveled portion, median, or ramp to a frontage road, the nearest suitable cross street, or other suitable location to fulfill the requirements of section CRS § 42-4-1603.

CRS § 42-4-1803. Abandonment of motor vehicles - public property.

Whenever any sheriff, undersheriff, deputy sheriff, police officer, marshal, Colorado state patrol officer, agent of the Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI), or an agency employee finds a motor vehicle, vehicle cargo, or debris, attended or unattended, standing upon any portion of a highway right-of-way in such a manner as to constitute an obstruction to traffic or proper highway maintenance, such officer or agency employee is authorized to cause the motor vehicle, vehicle, cargo, or debris to be moved to eliminate any such obstruction; and neither the officer, the agency employee, nor anyone acting under the direction of such officer or employee shall be liable for any damage to such motor vehicle, vehicle, cargo, or debris occasioned by such removal. The removal process is intended to clear the obstruction, but such activity should create as little damage as possible to the vehicle, or cargo, or both.

Incident Levels

CDOT has developed Traffic Incident levels as a quick reference to identify the severity and duration of an expected interstate lane or road closure.

Minor (Level-1)

Incident with impact to traveled roadway estimated to be less than 30-minutes with a shoulder or lane blockage but not a full closure of the roadway in either direction.

Examples: Disabled vehicle located along the side of the road or in one lane, or debris in the travel lanes(s) causing vehicles to slow down or change lanes.

Intermediate (Level-2)

Incident with impact to traveled roadway estimated to be greater than 30-minutes and less than 2-hours with lane blockages but not a full closure of the roadway in either direction.

Example: Traffic obstruction in one or two lanes, disabled vehicle in traffic lane, debris in the travel lanes(s) causing slowing or stopping.

Major (Level-3)

Incident with congestive impact to traveled roadway estimated to be greater than 2-hours or roadway is fully closed in any single direction.

Example: Traffic obstruction in one or more lanes that results in stopped traffic, traffic obstruction in all lanes, closure of all lanes in one or both directions.

First Responding Officer Responsibilities

The initial response and assessment by the first responding officer is important. Some of the initial duties include:

- Respond quickly and safely to the incident. Due to the likelihood of secondary accidents occurring if a response is delayed, a Code-3 response is authorized for the closest responding unit. Officers should consider the traffic and weather conditions when deciding if a Code-3 response would expedite their arrival to the scene;
- Follow the standard protocol outlined below for parking of vehicles and the use of emergency lights;
- Notify dispatch of the estimated level of the incident by, i.e. one, two, or three;
- Inform dispatch of the type of blockage to include the direction, the lane(s) affected, and the estimated delay. When the lane blockage status changes at any time during the incident, notify the dispatcher so the call can be updated. The radio transmission and CAD updates on changes to lane restrictions will assist the CS-TMC in updating the variable message signs (VMS) regarding the change in lane restrictions. The time of lanes being opened will also assist the TMC in accurately documenting the clearance time.
- Make request for additional resources needed and stipulate where needed, the purpose, and the best route to get there if known;
- Direct the driver(s) to a location off the interstate to complete the report if vehicles can be driven safely.
- Request a tow truck immediately to remove any vehicle that cannot be driven. See [GO 1320 Towing and Impound Procedures](#).
- When moving vehicles where the extent of injuries is unknown, attempt to mark each vehicles' tire locations with spray paint or other semi-permanent marker should the crash scene later turn into a felony investigation;
- The only vehicles that should *not* be moved without supervisory approval are fatal crashes, crashes with obvious felony charges, or crashes that involve the risk of a major civil liability to the department or city;

- If the incident involves the cleanup of debris, final cleanup can sometimes wait until after the peak commuting period is over;
- Consider alternatives to immediately removing any disabled vehicles or debris in the roadway using CRS § 42-2-1803, as a guideline;

Patrol Supervisor

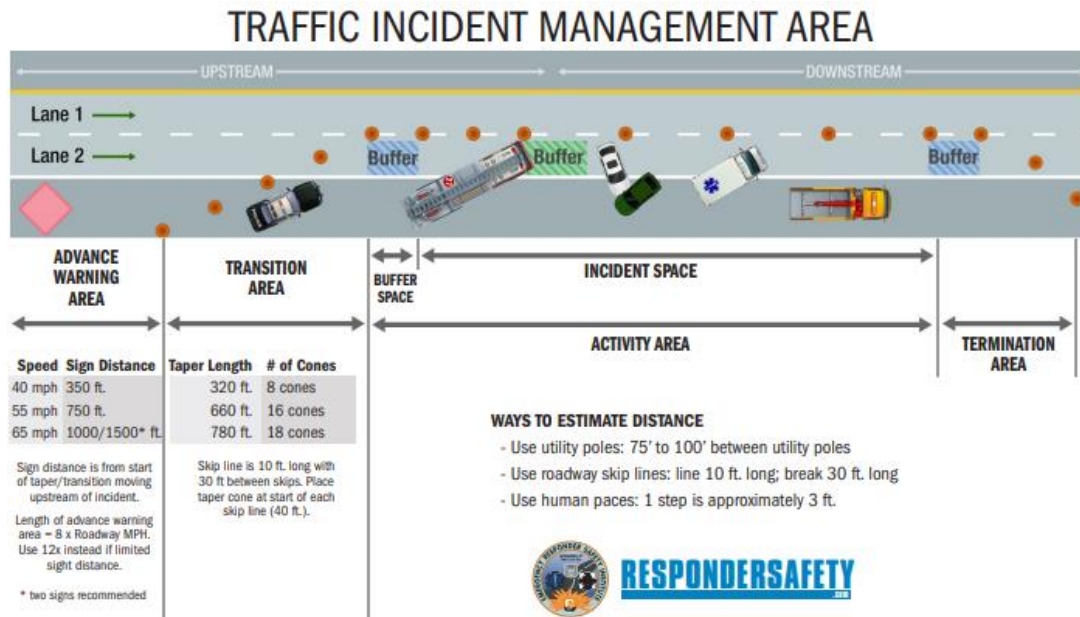
Patrol supervisors are a vital component to managing level-2 and level-3 incidents. Some of the initial activities the supervisor must perform include:

- Respond to the scene and establish incident command during a Level-2 or 3 incident. The type of incident will determine if the incident commander is from the police department, fire department, or unified. See [GO 1220 Incident Command System](#);
- Determine if felony charges are obvious and weigh the loss or potential loss of evidence with that of having additional delays by keeping I-25 closed or partially blocked;
- The incident commander is responsible for lane closure or opening decisions.
 - Clearance of the traffic lanes should be a priority next to care for the injured and protection of emergency personnel. Prior to any lane closure or opening, consider the safety of responders, patients, and the traveling public, and the ability to preserve evidence.
 - Any change to opening or closing the entire roadway requires notification of CDOT. The CS-TMC will do this during their normal hours of operation or the D-TMC after hours.
 - Consult with the CS-TMC to determine best detours or alternate route plans when traffic signal timing plans can be modified.
- Establish a site for the media and others responding in non-emergency vehicles to the scene. This is important since it becomes difficult to locate drivers of vehicles once they have parked and left the proximity of their vehicle;
- Return to service any equipment and personnel that are not needed. This helps clear congestion;
- Ensure compliance with guidelines established in this procedure for incident command, response vehicle parking, emergency flashing light policy, coordination with the TMC, etc.;

- Consult with the duty lieutenant if the Level-3 incident is adversely impacting patrol response in order to implement Cold (Counter) Reporting.
- During a Hazardous Materials incident, [GO 1223 Hazardous Materials Incidents](#), the CSFD is the designated Emergency Response Authority for the City of Colorado Springs and as such will be in charge at the scene of hazardous substances. The police supervisor in charge should respond to the fire department command post to maintain situational awareness of the hazard and appropriately deploy officers in a manner that minimizes risk and exposure to the hazardous material.
- During a Level-3 event ensure notifications are completed to the following:
 - CS-TMC as appropriate
 - CDOT, CSP, and D-TMC, as necessary
 - PPROEM if the incident requires multiple operational periods or is a significant Hazardous Materials incident. Coordinate with the fire department
 - Send out Twitter message of road closures via the Communication's Center and duty lieutenant.
 - Post a public ETACs with road closure information and update as appropriate.

Response Vehicle Parking

- To secure the scene first responders should attempt to create the Traffic Incident Management Area zones:
 1. *Advanced Warning Area* for Level-2 or 3 events marked by warning signs placed by City Barricades or CDOT well in advance of the incident scene to warn of motorists of the crash.
 2. *Transition Area* marked by traffic cones tapering the lane closure to the open lanes.
 3. *Buffer Zone* is a safety buffer between emergency vehicles and the accident.
 4. *Incident Space* is the protected work zone for the first responders.
 5. *Termination Area* denotes the end of the traffic incident and facilitates controlled merging to into all lanes of open traffic.



- All other responding vehicles not being used to create the transition and buffer areas should be parked ahead of the Incident Space, before the termination area, on the shoulder or off the roadway. Emergency lights should be turned off.
- The only vehicles operating their emergency lights are those creating the Transition Area and Buffer Zones.
- During a Level-1 incident, the officer may use their emergency lights when next to a high speed lane of traffic. Where the officer's vehicle is off roadway, it is recommended to turn off the emergency lights or use only the yellow warning flashers so that motorists are not distracted.

Application of Alternate Detour Routes

The decision to establish an alternate detour route is made when the closure of one or more lanes of I-25 through Colorado Springs occurs in conjunction with a Level-2 or 3 incident. The decision is made by the incident commander and will depend on the estimated duration of the incident, the time of day, traffic conditions, and availability of personnel. Coordination should be made with the CS-TMC or D-TMC, as appropriate, to determine the status of possible alternate routes and signal light timing along the route.

Some modified alternate routes might include utilizing the shoulder for interstate traffic when all lanes are blocked and the shoulder is unobstructed or have traffic exit and re-enter the interstate at the same interchange when the lane blockages is between the exit and entrance ramp.