

NEWS RELEASE/FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Incident Responders to PA Drivers: ‘Steer Clear of Accident Scenes’**

*First responders urge drivers to move over or slow down so they can do their jobs.*

**HARRISBURG, PA. (Nov. 16, 2016)** — The men and women whose job it is to respond to roadway incidents throughout Pennsylvania are meeting in Harrisburg today to discuss ways to work together to improve how they prepare for and respond to roadway emergencies. Their appeal to motorists across the Commonwealth: Show your appreciation by moving over or slowing down for stopped emergency and maintenance personnel and equipment.

More than 100 Traffic Incident Management (TIM) professionals gathered at PA Emergency Management Agency headquarters in Susquehanna Township for Pennsylvania’s TIM Summit.

Attendees learned about successes and challenges faced by other Mid-Atlantic response agencies when they implemented statewide TIM initiatives. The intent of today’s summit is to move towards a statewide response model in Pennsylvania.

“Those of us in the response community want motorists to realize that we are joining forces to do a better job when it comes to incident response and management,” said Executive Deputy Director Jeffrey Thomas of the PA Emergency Management Agency (PEMA). “As a group, we urge drivers to do their part by following the state law that requires motorists to move over or slow down when they see an incident scene or emergency vehicle

on the road.”

Pennsylvania’s “Steer Clear” law — enacted to help prevent injuries and save lives — requires drivers to move over or slow down when they encounter an emergency scene, traffic stop or disabled vehicle. Drivers must move over or slow down for all responders, including police, fire and ambulance as well as stopped tow trucks and maintenance vehicles.

“If someone is convicted of violating this law, they will face a fine of up to \$250,” said PA State Police Major Edward C. Hoke, Director of the Bureau of Patrol. “If an emergency service responder is seriously injured or killed because a driver failed to move over, they’re looking at a fine of up to \$10,000 and their license can be suspended for up to a year.”

Those who serve as incident responders are sometimes paid little or nothing and put their lives on the line to assist others during a crash, medical or weather emergency or other roadway disaster. “Responders risk their lives every day to help travelers in need on Pennsylvania’s motorways — be it a rural, two-lane road or the busiest interstate,” said PA Turnpike Chief Executive Officer Mark Compton. “Responders are focused on performing their vital jobs during an incident; as motorists, we must focus on our jobs too. Let’s show our responders the respect they deserve and help get them home to their families at the end of the day.”

Summit speakers and attendees include police, fire and EMS personnel as well as towing and maintenance providers. Conference presentations and workshops are geared towards formalizing a process through which TIM authorities in Pennsylvania can team up for the benefit of travelers and responders alike.

“Our summit theme is ‘One Vision, One Voice, All Together,’ and our focus is working collaboratively to become more effective, safe and efficient as a whole,” said Jon Fleming, Chief of PennDOT’s Maintenance Technical Leadership Division. “While

there has been regional coordination among responders in certain areas, our goal is implementing a statewide TIM program here in Pennsylvania.”

The summit was held in conjunction with National Traffic Incident Response Awareness Week, Nov. 14-18.

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