

News Release
For Immediate Release

State Safety, Transportation Agencies Launch Effort to Protect Highway Responders *Five commonwealth agencies collaborate to boost safety, save lives through 'PennTIME'*

MIDDLETOWN, PA (Aug. 28, 2018) — Five commonwealth agencies today formalized an interagency agreement which officially launches the Pennsylvania Traffic Incident Management Enhancement program ("PennTIME"). The goal of PennTIME is to reduce highway incident clearance times and improve first-responder safety while keeping traffic moving.

"Traffic crashes and 'struck-by' incidents are leading causes of injury and death for highway workers, police officers, firefighters, emergency medical personnel and towing and recovery workers," said PennDOT Secretary Leslie Richards. "Reducing incident clearance times on our roadways will improve responder safety while also keeping traffic moving and travelers safe."

The interagency agreement was signed by five commonwealth agencies which make up part of the executive panel of the PennTIME consortium: PennDOT, the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Pennsylvania State Police, the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission.

The PennTIME program, designed from national traffic-management concepts, will enhance coordination and training among responder agencies and decrease the time it takes to respond to and clear highway incidents.

"Each day, in Pennsylvania alone, we see 355 reportable crashes that cause three fatalities and 227 injuries, on average," said PA Turnpike CEO Mark Compton. "We can do better. Today, these five agencies — and others on the team — are taking a meaningful step towards improving highway worker and responder safety and making roads safer for all who use them."

PennTIME grew out of a 2016 traffic-incident management summit hosted at PEMA, the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency. Attendees heard firsthand then about the successes and challenges Mid-Atlantic response agencies faced when implementing statewide traffic-incident management (or TIM) initiatives; Pennsylvania officials agreed to move towards a statewide response model at the 2016 summit.

"Each of the agencies represented here is charged with keeping our citizens safe as well as providing access to critical care when needed," said PEMA Director Richard D. Flinn. "Today's agreement puts into practice a working blueprint that has been saving lives by bettering coordination."

PennTIME will help synchronize a multitude of organizations, jurisdictions and governments involved in TIM in Pennsylvania, which encompasses a mix of rural and urban environments, volunteer and paid response companies and personnel from state, county and local agencies.

"Coordinating traffic-incident management has been challenging in Pennsylvania because our roadways fall under different jurisdictions and involve many responding entities, each with different protocols," said Lieutenant Colonel Robert Evanchick, Acting State Police Commissioner. "While each entity has distinct functions and responsibilities, organizing via a multi-disciplinary approach is crucial to develop and operate a successful statewide incident-management plan."

As PennTIME agencies work to improve incident-scene safety and clearance times, officials throughout the state's response community continue to remind motorists of the need to slow down or move over for all emergency, recovery and maintenance personnel. Pennsylvania's "Steer Clear" law requires drivers to move over or slow down when approaching an emergency scene, traffic stop or disabled vehicle.

"When responding to highway incidents, EMS providers and other responders are focused on the task at hand, such as caring for patients who need immediate treatment," said Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine. "As passersby, we must give them the space they need to do their jobs, not to mention the respect they earned

for the selfless work they do. Creating space between your car and the crash scene is just one way we can offer a gesture of thanks to our providers.”

In addition to the five above-mentioned agencies, the PennTIME executive panel includes representatives of these organizations: the Governor’s Office, the Office of the State Fire Commissioner, the Pennsylvania Association of Township Supervisors, the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association, the Pennsylvania Towing Association or Alliance of Automotive Service Providers, the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

Along with the executive panel, PennTIME consists of the following organizational bodies:

- The Statewide TIM Panel functions as the primary leadership group to develop statewide TIM initiatives and implement multi-disciplinary TIM programs. Along with executive-panel members, the TIM Panel includes representatives of some 20 national, state, regional, county and local groups involved in emergency response, planning, safety, transportation and legislative activities.
- Four distinct Regional TIM Teams — western, central, eastern and southeastern — are responsible to bring initiatives developed at the statewide level to the local level for review and consensus-building among TIM practitioners from all disciplines.
- Six Statewide TIM Committees will implement and enhance targeted programs and strategies and report successes and challenges to the Statewide TIM Panel. The six committees include Training, Technology, Public Education and Outreach, Legislative Affairs, TIM Task Force Development and Towing and Recovery.

To learn more, connect with PennTIME on Facebook and Twitter.

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Media Contacts:

Rich Kirkpatrick, PennDOT, 717-783-8800

Carl DeFebo, PA Turnpike, 717-831-7176

Ruth A. Miller, PEMA, 717-651-2009

Ryan Tarkowski, PA State Police, 717-783-5556

Nate Wardle, Department of Health, 717-787-1783