

Quick Clearance for Safety and Mobility

This agreement by and between the Minnesota State Patrol (MSP) and the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), establishes guidelines for MSP and MnDOT personnel to expedite the removal of vehicles, cargo, and debris from roadways on the State Highway System to restore, in an URGENT MANNER, the safe and orderly flow of traffic following a motor vehicle crash or incident on Minnesota's roadways.

Whereas: Public safety is the highest priority and must be maintained, especially when injuries or hazardous materials are involved. The quality of life in the State of Minnesota is heavily dependent upon the free movement of people, vehicles, and commerce. The MSP and MnDOT 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 harm to responders, eliminate secondary crashes, and minimize delays associated with incidents, crashes, roadway maintenance, construction, and enforcement activities.

The following operating standards are based on the philosophy that the State Highway System will not be closed or restricted any longer than necessary.

Be it resolved: Roadways will be cleared of damaged vehicles, spilled cargo, and debris as soon as it is 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 damage shall be taken, restoring traffic to normal conditions is a higher priority than avoiding such damage. Incident caused congestion has an enormous cost to society. The provisions of 168B.035, subd. 4 (Quick Clearance) shall be utilized in applicable events within MnDOT's eight-county metropolitan district.

Minnesota State Patrol Responsibilities

MSP Troopers 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 factors including the severity of the collision. Non-critical portions of the investigation may be delayed until lighter traffic conditions allow completion of those tasks. The MSP will close only those lanes absolutely necessary to safely conduct the investigation. The MSP will coordinate with MnDOT representatives to set up appropriate traffic control, establish alternate routes, expedite the safe movement of traffic at the scene, and restore the roadway to normal conditions as soon as possible.

Freeway or Expressway Closure, Statewide: Any extended highway or freeway closure shall be reported to the on-duty or on-call district supervisor. The district supervisor will be responsible for ensuring that appropriate available resources are deployed to expedite the reopening of the freeway and that clearance of the freeway is considered along with other priorities such as safety, medical treatment and evidence gathering. For purposes of this directive, all lanes closed in one direction constitute a closure even if the opposite direction of travel remains open. The district supervisor shall contact the on-call Major for a prolonged highway or freeway closure that will cause significant travel delays.

State of Minnesota "Open Roads Agreement"

Whenever practical, damaged vehicles on access controlled roadways will be removed to off ramps, accident investigation sites, or other safe areas for completion of investigations to reduce the delays associated with motorists slowing to view an incident. Tow trucks will be requested by MSP as soon as it is evident that they will be needed to clear the roadway. MSP will assure that all authorized tow operators have met established competency levels and that the equipment is of appropriate size, capacity, and design to meet all standards of the State of Minnesota. MSP will work with MnDOT to determine when expediting removal or recovery equipment to the scene with emergency vehicles is warranted.

The MSP will consider the length of time of any delay in reopening all or part of a roadway to allow a company to dispatch its own equipment to offload cargo or recover a vehicle or load that is impacting traffic, especially during peak traffic hours, or when creating a hazard to the public. The MSP and MnDOT will cooperate in planning and implementing clearance operations in the most safe and expeditious manner.

Troopers statewide will be advised that in addition to scene protection, treatment of victims and evidence collection, clearing the scene from any highway will be a high priority. Reducing the time of clearance will reduce risk to the trooper, other first responders, involved citizens and passing vehicle occupants. Further, the reduced clearance time will reduce back-ups, chances of secondary crashes and related economic loss.

The MSP will provide MnDOT with the needed incident information in order to assist in securing restitution from at fault parties for resources utilized.

Minnesota Department of Transportation Responsibilities

Metro: When requested by MSP or other emergency agency, MnDOT Metro District will respond and deploy resources to major traffic incidents 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. A major traffic incident may be defined as one which has the potential to cause traffic congestion, secondary crashes, or significant economic impacts. MnDOT Metro District will develop and implement response procedures with the goal of providing initial traffic control within 30 minutes of notification during normal working hours and 60 minutes after normal working hours.

Outstate: When requested by MSP or other emergency agency, MnDOT will respond and deploy resources to major traffic incidents on MnDOT roadways 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. A major traffic incident may be defined as one which has the potential to cause traffic congestion, secondary crashes, or significant economic impacts. MnDOT Districts will develop and implement response procedures with the goal of providing initial traffic control within 60 minutes of notification during normal working hours and 90 minutes after normal working hours.

Statewide:

As necessary, MnDOT, in coordination with MSP, will upgrade traffic controls, determine and establish detour routes, and discuss clearance strategies. When requested by MSP, MnDOT will provide temporary traffic controls to ensure a safe work zone for all responders and the motoring public.

MnDOT in cooperation with the MSP will determine and deploy the necessary heavy equipment, materials and manpower to reopen the roadway. If cargo or spilled loads (non-hazardous) are involved, MnDOT will make every effort to assist in the relocation of the ma-

**State of Minnesota
"Open Roads Agreement"**

materials in the shortest possible time, using whatever equipment available. All such materials or any vehicles relocated by MnDOT will be moved the minimum possible distance while effectively eliminating traffic hazards.

MnDOT will document all MnDOT labor, materials and equipment used for traffic control, detour establishment, roadway clearance, and debris clean up. As necessary, MnDOT will place traffic control devices at the scene should any damaged vehicles or cargo remain on the shoulder adjacent to the travel lanes for removal at a later time.

The MSP and MnDOT will continually work together to ensure that the needs of motorists on state roadways are being met in the most professional, safe, and efficient manner.

Therefore, it is agreed as follows:

The MSP and MnDOT will evaluate, and as necessary, update and modify their operating policies, procedures, training, rules and standards to assure they are consistent with this **"OPEN ROADS POLICY."**

The MSP and MnDOT will research, evaluate and conduct training in advanced technologies, equipment and approved methods for clearing, documentation and investigation of crash or incident scenes. The MSP and MnDOT will apply appropriate techniques, investigative tasks and clearing methods to reopen lanes for traffic.

Roadways will be cleared as soon as possible. It is the goal of MSP and MnDOT that all incidents be cleared from the roadway within 90 minutes of the arrival of the first responding officer, as described by the National Unified Goal for Traffic Incident Management. This goal is stated with the understanding that more complex scenarios may require additional time for complete clearance.

It is further agreed that: The MSP and MnDOT will actively solicit and enlist other state, county, local agencies, political subdivisions, industry groups and professional groups to endorse and become party to this "OPEN ROADS PHILOSOPHY" for the State of Minnesota.

In witness whereof, each party has caused this document to be executed in its name and on its behalf by its duly authorized Chief Executive.

By: 
Michael Barnes, Operations Division Dir.
Minnesota Dept. of Transportation

Date: 9/22/14

By: 
Lt. Colonel Matthew C. Langer, Acting Chief
Minnesota State Patrol

Date: 9-16-14