



Mn/DOT POLICY GUIDELINE

Date: September 7, 1983

Reference: Highways No. 83-2-G-1
Closure of State Highways
Severe Winter Storms or
Natural Disasters
Responsibilities

Guideline:

Communication is the key factor when a road becomes closed or it is decided to close the road. Information must flow between the departments involved with highway operations; public safety, road users, etc. Included are Highway Patrol Offices, Mn/DOT Area Maintenance Offices, Mn/DOT District Offices, Central Office – Mn/DOT and State Patrol, road user agencies and news media. At times, it may involve adjacent states, municipalities, counties and agencies such as the State Division of Emergency Services and Mn/DOT Office of Communications.

The following responsibilities are assigned to implement the above policy.

1. The following are the responsibilities of Mn/DOT Area Maintenance Engineers:
 - a. Notify and discuss the closure or barricading with District Engineer.
 - b. Notify and discuss the closure or barricading with District State Patrol Commander.
 - c. Notify adjacent Mn/DOT Maintenance Areas, counties, and municipalities through which the route passes.
 - d. Notify Mn/DOT Central Office Maintenance Emergency Operations Section.
 - e. Insure that local news media have been contacted.

2. The following are the responsibilities of the District State Patrol Commander:
 - a. Notify the Mn/DOT Area Maintenance Engineer of conditions that would require the closure of a highway.
 - b. Resolve requests from patrol officers to a close highway with the Mn/DOT Area Maintenance Engineer or Mn/DOT District Engineer.
 - c. Notify their field forces and central office.
 - d. Notify adjacent Patrol Districts.
 - e. Assist in notifying motorists.

3. The following are the responsibilities of Mn/DOT Central Office of Maintenance Emergency Operations Manager:

- a. Notify the Department of Transportation of any adjacent State that will be directly affected.
 - b. Notify any other State agencies or offices that need the information.
 - c. Coordinate with the State Patrol and the Office of Public Information on getting the information to motorists and the public. Incorporate the information in State Road Condition Reports.
4. The State Patrol Central Office shall:
- a. Contact the Mn/DOT Central Office of Maintenance if it is necessary to resolve District level disagreements on decisions-to-close.
 - b. Notify and coordinate with the Police Agencies of any adjacent affected States.
 - c. Notify affected State Patrol Districts not having the information.
 - d. Assist in getting the information to motorists and the public.

For Interstate routes and other major through routes, the re-opening of a route without warning may have as much impact on the adjacent State or District as the closure itself. It could permit a large number of vehicles to enter an area not yet prepared to accept them. Communications and actions by District and Central Offices of Mn/DOT and the State Patrol when considering a decision to re-open an Interstate or other major route should be handled in a manner similar to that used when considering a decision to close a route.

Position Statement Reference:

Issued under Mn/DOT Policy Position Statement Highways No. 83-2.

Background:

Currently, each Maintenance Area has its own policy on closing roads during severe winter storms or natural disasters. The policy and procedures were approved by the Maintenance Standards Advisory Committee with the assistance of the State Patrol, Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

R. J. McDonald, Deputy Commissioner

Any questions regarding this position statement should be directed to:

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