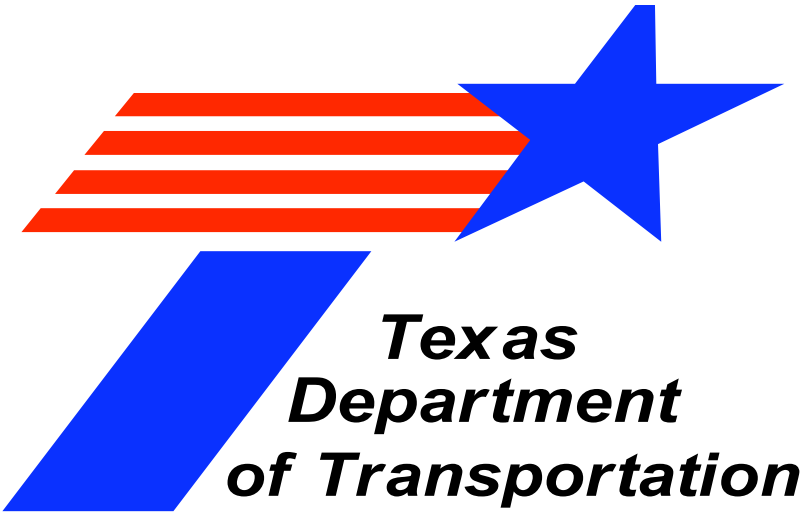

MIND OVER MATTER

SAFELY REMOVING ROAD HAZARDS

Grover A. Schretter / District 02-Fort Worth
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This document is provided with the intent of establishing usual guidelines and procedures for handling daily duties on high speed traffic roadways, high volume roadways and multiple lanes of travel in urban districts. It is intended to compliment or more clearly define guidelines provided by other department publications. In some cases the supervisor's instructions or common sense will supplement or override the safety operating procedures.

MIND OVER MATTER

SAFELY REMOVING ROAD HAZARDS

MIND OVER MATTER you may ask, if we as supervisors don't mind it won't matter to our employees how they remove road hazards. Personnel may see road hazards (for example: debris in the roadway, traffic crashes in the roadway, stalled vehicle in the roadway). In 1973 the Fort Worth District Courtesy Patrol may have seen a hazard and did their utmost to remove it as soon as it was spotted. The simple fact of seeing and removing ASAP was and is still a great hazard to all employees that work for TxDOT.

As supervisors we should advise all new and old road hands that we do indeed mind and again it will matter to them to follow safety procedures we have been using in the Fort Worth District for many years.

Consider the personal safety of yourself, other employees and those you are assisting first in all situations.

When conditions permit, keep yourself and your equipment well clear of open traffic lanes. Position personnel and equipment so that maximum sight distance is given to oncoming motorists.

<u>Never, Never</u> turn your back on the traffic or stand on the traffic side of your equipment!! Walk backwards if you have to.

<u>UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES</u> should personnel stand behind the truck or in the taper after the setup is in place. When personnel are lighting flares or setting out cones they must be within the taper. At this point personnel must be facing the oncoming traffic.

When personnel are removing traffic control devices they must be accompanied by a unit with all safety lights activated.

Debris: **When driving in high speed traffic conditions and you see some type of debris; don't get in a hurry to remove the debris. We must use extreme caution if we do not spot the debris well in advance.**

Go to the next exit, turn around and return to the location to remove the debris. When approaching the debris, move to the nearest shoulder to the debris and activate all your emergency lights. Always be sure to stop well in advance of the debris. This is always a safer procedure for three reasons.

1. We can not control how the third party may react to our movement or their movement around the debris.

2. Your vehicle will shield you from any third party vehicle approaching your unit.

3. When we are out of our unit be sure to stay between your vehicle and the debris when seeking an opportunity. (If there is no opportunity please see below) An employee may ask why would we want to do this and we can let them know if a third party hits the debris the debris will in fact travel the same direction the traffic is flowing. If we are standing or our equipment is past the debris we may be hit by shrapnel or the equipment may be hit.

If there is not an opportunity due to high speed traffic, volume, multiple lanes of travel or not enough site distance, do not take any chances and attempt to remove the debris, call for help at once!

Pacing Traffic: **You may want to call local police or other TxDOT units. Once help arrives at least one or more units. Station one unit in advance of the debris as stated above. Other units should enter the roadway at least ¾ of a mile in advance of the debris. The units entering the roadway must work their way into the lanes of the debris. Activate all emergency light bars and arrow boards as needed and in some cases straddle lanes to gradually slow traffic so the personnel at the debris may have an opportunity. Gradually slowing traffic down will prevent oncoming traffic from having to make sudden slow downs or stops and this will lessen the chance of a rear end collision. The personnel at the debris must here from oncoming units that traffic has slowed.**

Then and only then we can make a move to remove the debris. When beginning to remove the debris do not turn your back to traffic and keep watching for oncoming traffic. In some cases the debris will be knocked off the roadway before this procedure is accomplished. This procedure can also be used for emergency road repairs such as patching pot holes in the roadway.

Removing Traffic Crashes in the Roadway: In most cases removing traffic crashes in the roadway is similar to removing debris as we should not be in a hurry. If we do, we will put ourselves in a hazardous situation. Again when driving in high speed traffic conditions and you see a traffic crash in the roadway and it is not spotted well in advance, go to the next exit turn around and return. This is always a good idea so personnel will know what is ahead of them before they arrive at the crash site. Once you have turned around heading back to the location, activate your emergency light bar and arrow board as needed in the lane that the crash occurred to slow oncoming traffic approaching the incident. If the crash can not be removed after the oncoming traffic has slowed, stop the unit and set out cones or flares at night well in advance of the crash. Never split lanes when setting up, take an extra lane as needed. Keep in mind at all times the site distance of oncoming traffic. If you are on a curve or at the bottom of a hill you should start setting out traffic control devices in the view of the oncoming traffic with all safety lights activated. You may need to keep your equipment at the top of a hill or at the beginning of the curve as road requirements call for.

Once you have set out your taper with traffic control devices and site distance is not an issue, proceed forward closer to the crash and set out cones or flares at night along the lane lines as needed for conditions. Once you have a complete set up, pull your unit closer to the incident. By doing this you will give yourself a safety buffer zone and the oncoming traffic may contact cones or flares at night first and not personnel or equipment. Again personnel should not stand behind the truck or in the taper after the setup is in place, stand in front of your vehicle and flag traffic passed the crash. If vehicles are hitting traffic control devices there is something wrong and adjustments must be made at once. Walk up the non-traffic side of the shoulder and set out the cones or flares at night behind your taper.
If the vehicles can be removed, do so as quickly and as safely as possible.

Removing Stalled Vehicles in the Roadway: **Again in most cases removing stalled vehicles in the roadway is similar to removing traffic crashes in the roadway. Don't get in a hurry and if we do we will put ourselves in a hazardous situation. When driving in high speed traffic conditions, you see a stalled vehicle in the roadway and it is not spotted well in advance, go to the next exit, turn around and return. When returning to the stalled vehicle's location activate your emergency light bar and arrow board as needed in the lane that the stalled vehicle is located to slow oncoming traffic. Pull up to the stalled vehicle after slowing oncoming traffic, do not exit your vehicle, motion to the driver or announce over your P.A. system to place the stalled vehicle in neutral so you can push them out of the roadway with your provided push bumper. If a push bumper is not available and traffic conditions permit, exit your vehicle to push the stalled vehicle out of the roadway by hand. This should only be done as a last resort if you have a buffer zone with your unit behind you at least 20' and the stalled vehicle is in the lane next to the shoulder. At no time split lanes in high speed conditions.**

Never push a stalled vehicle out of the roadway by hand without a buffer zone or some type of barrier between the stalled vehicle and oncoming traffic.

Weather: **It is commonly known that icy road conditions are hazardous to personnel; however there is a weather condition that is as bad or worse.**

Dense fog in my opinion is the most hazardous. The simple fact that the employee can not see the approaching high speed traffic and the oncoming traffic can not see the employee that may be working in the roadway. If this situation exists, there must be ample advance warning for oncoming traffic.

Icy road conditions:
When removing debris, traffic crashes in the roadway or stalled vehicles and the bridges have ice on them, don't stop past the bridge or on the shoulder of the bridge or on the bridge. We must stop or set up in advance of the bridge if possible. This will lessen the likelihood of an approaching vehicle sliding across the icy bridge into you or your equipment. If the bridge is lengthy and you have to set up on or past the bridge, make sure you have a good long taper.

Any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me by the below numbers or by e-mail.

Thank you

Grover A. Schretter
T.M.S. V
& Incident Manager
Fort Worth District
Office (817)-370-6736
Fax (817)-370-6707
Nextel D.C. 143*11185*334
gschret@dot.state.tx.us