

Traffic Incident Management in Seattle

Findings and Recommendations



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Prior improvements

- Extend TOC hours of operation to 16 hrs/day, 7 days/week
- Upgraded TOC Video Wall
- Tweet every 15 minutes during a traffic incident
- Conduct monthly meetings with regional partners
- Improve SPD-SDOT communications
- Re-write Alaskan Way Viaduct Closure Plan
- Complete SR 99 Incident Response After-Action Plan
- Implement Duty Officer protocol
- Transportation Operations management and organization changes

Duty Officer protocol

Duty Officer: keep Mayor and Council informed if a serious event occurs

- Consistent approach
- Most vulnerable locations impacting N-S mobility: Rainier, I-5, SR 99, Battery Street Tunnel, West Seattle High Rise, moveable bridges
- Times to be diligent – peak hour and hour before, during significant events
- Role: Monitor activity, assess urgency
- Who else should be informed – Metro, Sound Transit, Port
- Who leads incident/directs resources – Maintenance Operations Division, Transportation Operations Division depending on incident

Background

- March 2015 commercial vehicle roll-over incident blocked traffic on SR-99, prompted review
- Mayor directed SDOT and SPD to engage external consultants to ensure City uses best practices
- Focus on coordinating multi-agency responses



Seattle's geographic constraints

- “Hourglass” shape, with highest density at narrowest points in and around downtown
- Limited number of crossings over waterways exacerbates congestion due to incidents
- Response times can be slowed due to limited alternate routes
- Few options for detour routing following incidents on bridges, arterials or highways



Project elements

Date	Activity
May 2015	Best practices review
Early June	Review City response best practices Interview SDOT, SPD, other city personnel
June 16	Workshop with national experts
June 30	Draft recommendations and report
July 31	Released final report

Key Findings



Key findings

- Seattle lacks comprehensive plans and policies for Traffic Incident Management (TIM)
- TIM training is lacking or non-existent in all agencies
- SPD needs a better understanding of why “quick clearance” matters and how to make it happen
- SDOT needs to better coordinate with SPD before, during, and following incidents
- Current towing contract may be too restrictive and harm TIM
- The city lacks clarity on ordinances that are necessary for quick clearance and full enforcement against commercial vehicles
- Greater sense of urgency is needed at all levels when incidents occur

Recommendations



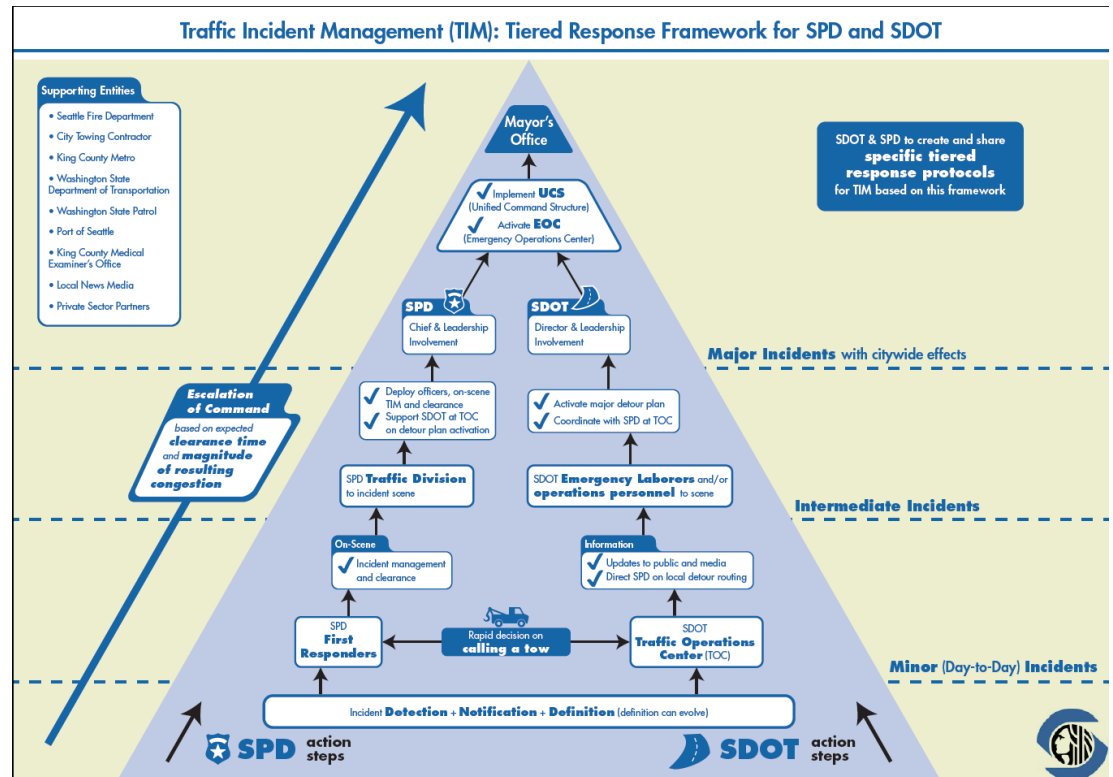
Create a citywide approach to TIM

- Create a citywide culture for improved TIM
- Establish a citywide TIM program
- Develop comprehensive TIM training program



Improve TIM operations

- Leverage expertise from the state
- Develop new policies for SPD responders on clearance priorities
- Improve information flow to the TOC and to the public
 - Finalize a tiered response protocol
- Improve towing response and operations
- Review towing contract



Improve enforcement

- Educate drivers on state “steer it and clear it” law
- Improve commercial vehicle enforcement within the City



Next steps

- Complete short-term recommendations this month
- Develop longer-lead time implementation plan for recommendations, including timeline, possible legislation, and budget impacts
- Report progress to the Mayor in January

