

TN/VA Incident Management Meeting
Kingsport, TN
Friday, March 29th, 2019

The I-81 Corridor Coalition organized and hosted a meeting in Kingsport, TN on March 29th to discuss traffic incident management issues in the Tennessee – Virginia border region, and particularly those occurring on Interstate 81.

Those in attendance were: Bill Albright, Kingsport TN MPO; Brian Ramsey, TDOT; Cody Williams, VDOT; David Wortham, TDOT; Eric Malone, VDOT; Jeff Pigg, Ballard Health; Jim Bean, Sullivan Co TN EMA; John Bechtold VDOT, Justin Haga, VDEM; Lt. Mark Murph, Sullivan Co TN Sheriff's Office; Mark Dykes, TDOT; Michelle Christian, TDOT; Michelle Matson, TEMA; Sgt. Mike Willis, VSP; Rex Montgomery, Bristol TN MPO; Rich Desgroseilliers, Morristown TN MPO; Robert Ratliff, VDOT; Scott Sproles, VDEM; Todd Martin, VDOT; Carolyn Blanton, I-81CC.

It was a positive experience with discussions regarding weather issues, which included rockslides in TN and a snowstorm in VA.

- The rockslide occurred on Interstate 40 in NC stopping traffic at the TN/NC state line diverting traffic up Interstate 81 North and onto Interstate 26 East. TDOT and VDOT have detours in place to help with such emergencies.
- The VA snowstorm, which had northbound Interstate 81 at a standstill for approximately 20 hours in Washington County/Abingdon-Bristol area.
- We discussed the snowstorm and the steps VDOT took to handle the situation.
- TDOT/TEMA gave a scenario as to how a situation such as this might have been handled.

In our last meeting held October 2017, in Bristol TN, we discussed the use of queue protections and the question was asked if anything had changed.

TDOT

- We are continuing to use queue protection during incidents with our TDOT Operations Q-Trucks within the Districts. As of now, each county Operations (Maintenance) Supervisor Truck is outfitted with lights/arrow board and are utilized as the Q-Truck when needed. We are in the process of adding more Q-Trucks within the districts.
- For interstate maintenance activities, we typically use Law Enforcement. The majority of our interstate construction/resurfacing projects, we require the contractor to supply trucks and perform queue protection as a Special Provision within the contract and supplement with Law Enforcement as needed.
- We have started utilizing ITS Smart Work Zones within some projects (Portable cameras, sensors, message boards) for travel time/delay messages, and are looking at utilizing them for queue protection as well.

VDOT

- Queue protection is part of many interstate maintenance/traffic control contracts that the contractor will supply personnel and equipment to warn motorists.
- The TOC also uses changeable message signs as a means of queue warning during major traffic events when data systems and cameras exist in areas where the end of queue can be located and confirmed

Truck crashes/parking issues/using left lane on 3-lane sections of the highway/signage.

- No comments on truck crashes.
- Not a lot of discussion on truck parking except for the ELD rule and truckers having a extra 2-hour extension for adverse driving conditions to find a place to park.
- As far as using left lane, they have to be caught in the act and with a shortage of troopers, that's difficult to do.
- Regarding signage and truckers understanding that they are prohibited in the left lane, we learned that it could be more of a language barrier.

Drone usage, the VA Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) has multiple drones that they use on a regular basis to aid in search and rescue, chemical spills and various other things. No drone usage in Tennessee at this time was reported.

This meeting turned out to be a great team building event, with positive results and friendships formed. The I-81 Corridor Coalition would like to thank everyone that took the time to make the trek and for being willing participants in all the discussions.