Coordination Agreements: SHP Communication Centers and NCDOT Operation Centers

Last Updated: 12/31/19

This agreement between the **NC State Highway Patrol (SHP) and the NC Department of Transportation (DOT)** documents the coordination and information exchange between centers for the purpose of safe, effective traffic incident management. DOT is responsible for connecting people, products and places safely and efficiently along the transportation network. The DOT Operation Centers provide the most up to date information on road conditions to navigation companies (Waze, Google, INRIX, HERE, Tom-Tom, etc.), media, emergency managers, and DOT field personnel. SHP is a critical and reliable source of information for DOT as the public reports incidents directly to SHP and Troopers respond on-scene. In kind, DOT is a critical and reliable source of information for SHP as they proactively scan cameras, speed data, and IMAP patrols for road conditions. DOT offers safety benefits to on-scene Troopers by providing emergency traffic control through IMAP drivers, temporary traffic control through maintenance crews, warning messages on electronic message boards for crashes ahead, and/or rerouting motorists to other routes.

Roles and Responsibilities

SHP Communication Centers receive reports of traffic incidents, property damage, and other impacts to public safety. Information comes to SHP Communication Centers from a variety of sources including SHP Troopers in the field, other emergency responders, private citizens, and partners like the DOT. SHP Communication Center staff process incoming information and relay it to the appropriate parties to facilitate their response.

DOT Operation Centers acquire and receive specific details relating to traffic incidents, travel conditions, and requests for DOT on-scene response. They actively acquire information by coordinating with and requesting details from internal & external partners and by monitoring travel condition & incident reporting systems (cameras, speed maps, SHP CAD feeds, VIPER, etc.) to:

- Enable the response of DOT field personnel such as IMAP or Maintenance staff and to support the response efforts of other partners like SHP.
- Manage traffic and protect on-scene responders by activating electronic message boards and by implementing detours & alternate routes.
- Provide traveler information to motorists, media outlets, and navigation providers.
- Provide Leadership and Command Staff from NCDOT, SHP, and other agencies with real-time situational awareness of major incidents and response efforts.

DOT field personnel may need to respond on-scene for incidents that require infrastructure inspection or repair, traffic control, treatment for adverse weather, etc. Unlike SHP, Local Law Enforcement, and Fire/Rescue, DOT field personnel are <u>not</u> emergency responders. DOT's estimated time of arrival (ETA) on-scene is often extended (up to 2 hours for initial response) due to the time required to assemble the necessary crews & equipment and to travel long distances to remote incident locations. Due to limited personnel & resources, DOT field personnel must limit after hours response to incidents that are confirmed by responders on-scene <u>and</u> are emergency in nature (e.g. a lane is closed, a stop sign is down, etc.).

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General Agreements

The following agreements apply equally to SHP Communication and DOT Operations Centers:

1. Answer incoming calls, emails, and radio traffic from the other agency in a timely manner.
2. Relay complete and accurate information to one another based on available information.
3. Make reasonable effort to find the information and relay it to the requesting agency if the answer to the agency's question is not known.
4. Take appropriate and timely action based on information/requests from the other agency.
5. Advise the other agency if a requested action is delayed, altered, or cancelled.
6. Take ownership of the incidents/requests that are relayed to them by the other agency unless further involvement of both agencies is necessary or requested.
7. Make reasonable effort to relay new information/requests in a timely manner in order to facilitate the other agency's response once coordination between agencies have begun.

SHP Agreements

The following agreements will apply to SHP Communication Center staff:

1. Enter complete and accurate information into their Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system and update their entries as new information is available.
2. Contact the appropriate DOT Operations Center to advise of lane-closing incidents on interstates and other primary routes even if DOT on-scene response is <u>not</u> needed.
3. Contact the appropriate DOT Operations Center as soon as the need for DOT on-scene response is identified. Ensure that a Trooper is or has been on-scene with an incident before contacting a DOT Operations Center to request an on-scene response. **NOTE:** DOT field personnel will only respond on-scene to incidents that have been confirmed, with the exception of IMAP.
4. After hours, advise Trooper(s) on-scene that DOT field personnel may have an extended arrival time of up to 2 hours for initial response due to resource needs/availability AND/OR make a reasonable attempt to contact a local emergency responder, such as the Fire Department, who can assist until DOT arrives (e.g. provide traffic control) or who can resolve the incident (e.g. remove a tree from travel lanes).

DOT Agreements

The following agreements will apply to DOT Operations Center staff:

1. Allow SHP enough time to arrive on-scene, assess the incident, and relay information to DOT.
2. Contact SHP Communication Center directly if DOT has not heard from SHP within 15 minutes of Trooper arrival on-scene or 30 minutes since the report entered the SHP CAD.
3. Contact SHP to request information that they cannot get from other sources. If DOT field personnel can provide the information that is needed, staff will call these DOT points of contact instead of calling SHP.
4. Only ask questions that are necessary and relevant to the safe and effective management of a traffic incident. Sensitive information, like the cause of incident or types of injuries sustained will not be requested. **NOTE:** <u>Appendix A</u> contains a list of questions DOT Operations Centers will commonly ask SHP Communication Centers and the reasons for those questions.
5. Limit calls to SHP to relay specific requests for SHP assistance and to gather critical information about incidents on state-maintained roadways.
6. Coordinate with other DOT staff as needed to provide assistance to SHP when requested.

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Appendix A: List of Common Questions that DOT Operations Centers will Ask SHP

	What We Ask	Why We Ask	Other Notes
ALL REPORTS	"Can you confirm the incident type?"	1. Many DOT response measures are based on the incident type. 2. Incident type helps understand what response measures may be needed, possible duration, expected impacts, etc.	
ALL REPORTS	"Can you tell me the incident's location?"	1. Location is critical. Responses based on inaccurate locations have negative and unsafe consequences (e.g. wrong direction = no warning for motorists approaching scene). 2. Many DOT response measures are based on the incident's location.	We are looking for complete location info: -Impacted route (e.g. on I-40) -Direction of travel (e.g. N-S-E-W) -Nearest cross street, exit, or MM (e.g. Gorman St).
ALL REPORTS	"Can you advise if any lanes are closed?" AND "Can you advise which lanes are closed?"	1. Responses based on inaccurate lane info have negative and unsafe consequences (e.g. wrong lanes = signs tell motorists to merge INTO lanes that are closed). 2. Many DOT response measures are based on how many lanes are closed (or if the road is closed completely).	For DOT's response to be effective, we must know: -Specific lanes closed (e.g. 2 right lanes), AND/OR -Part of road closed (e.g. left/right shoulder, entrance or exit ramp, off the road, etc.)
ALL REPORTS	"Has a Trooper been on-scene to confirm the incident?"	1. An incident is CONFIRMED if it is "reported by SHP <u>with a unit on-scene</u>". 2. DOT field personnel only respond to confirmed incidents. The only exception is IMAP. Afterhours, DOT will only respond to confirmed incidents that are emergency in nature AND where a unit is still on-scene.	If a unit has <u>not</u> been on-scene to confirm, we will ask the reporting agency to call us back once a unit has gone to the scene.
ALL REPORTS	"Is DOT on-scene response needed?"	To determine if there is a specific request for DOT (e.g. traffic control, sand truck, infrastructure damage, etc.).	

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	What We Ask	Why We Ask	Other Notes
CRASH	"Can you tell me what TYPES of vehicles are involved?"	Vehicle types (e.g. tractor trailers, box trucks, motorcycles, passenger cars, etc.) help understand what response measures may be needed, possible duration, expected impacts, etc.	For crashes, we are only interested in vehicle TYPES, not vehicle DESCRIPTIONS. We may also ask, "is the vehicle over-turned?" or "was any cargo was spilled?"
CRASH	"Can you advise if there are any injuries or fatalities?"	Presence of injuries/fatalities helps understand what response measures may be needed, possible duration, expected impacts, etc.	We only want to know if injuries or fatalities are involved. We do not want to know specific details like the names of victims, specific injuries, etc.
DISABLED/ ABANDONED VEHICLE	"Can you give me a vehicle description and what's wrong with the vehicle?"	1. The specific vehicle description (color, make, and model) helps IMAP identify the correct vehicle. 2. Knowing what's wrong with the vehicle (e.g. flat tire, out of gas, etc.) helps IMAP determine how to best provide assistance prior to arrival.	Disabled/abandoned vehicles are the only incidents where we will ask for vehicle descriptions rather than generic vehicle types.
DISABLED/ ABANDONED VEHICLE	"Can you tell me the motorist's name and cell phone number?"	1. If we cannot locate the motorist, we will call them to get a more accurate location OR to determine if they still need assistance. 2. If IMAP is delayed, we will call the motorist to let them know.	
SPILL / DEBRIS	"Can you tell me what has spilled?" OR "Can you tell me the type of debris?"	Knowing what has spilled helps determine what will be required to clean it up, what precautions must be taken by responders (e.g. HazMat PPE), and what types of responders are needed.	We will also ask for the size/quantity of the debris/spill. We use the Emergency Response Guidebook (ERG) to determine if cargo or a substance is hazardous.
TREE DOWN	"Can you tell me the size of the tree?"	Size of the tree dictates how many DOT personnel will respond and what type of equipment they will bring. Inaccurate size estimates may significantly extend the incident duration.	A rough estimate/description of the tree's size is sufficient. Extent of roadway blocked, etc. Can Officer stay on scene for safety if possible during clean up?
TREE DOWN	"Have you contacted the Fire Department to see if they can remove the tree?"	Afterhours, DOT field personnel have an extended ETA of up to 2 hours. The Fire Dept. may be the quickest way to remove the tree and allow the Trooper to move on to other incidents sooner.	

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	What We Ask	Why We Ask	Other Notes
ROAD / DOT PROPERTY DAMAGE	"Can you tell me what has been damaged?"	Different DOT field personnel are responsible for different types of property damage.	Downed STOP SIGNS are an emergency situation and will be responded to immediately.
ROAD / DOT PROPERTY DAMAGE	"Can you tell me the extent of the damage?"	1. Extent of the damage helps DOT field personnel understand what will be required to make repairs. 2. Escalated response measures may be implemented based on extent of damage.	General descriptions like, "30 feet of guard rail," or "a pavement gouge that's a couple inches deep and several feet long," are sufficient.
ROAD / DOT PROPERTY DAMAGE	"Can you provide the incident report # or sequence #?"	DOT uses SHP's records of an incident to evaluate how the damage occurred and to submit insurance claims that may help recoup the cost of repairs.	
TRAFFIC SIGNAL	"Can you describe the signal malfunction?"	Knowing how the signal is malfunctioning helps determine what (if anything) can be done to fix it.	We will also ask follow-up questions to better understand the malfunction and/or impact to traffic.
TRAFFIC SIGNAL	"Is the signal in 'flash' or is it out completely?"	Knowing if the signal is in flash mode helps DOT Signal Techs better assess the malfunction and plan an appropriate response prior to arrival.	"Flash Mode" is when signals flash red/yellow but do not change to solid green or red. Signals may enter flash mode briefly after they restart. DOT Signal Techs will respond if the signal remains in flash for more than 10 minutes after it is restarted.
TRAFFIC SIGNAL	"Are multiple signals in the area out as well?" OR "Has power gone out in the area?"	DOT Signal Techs will not respond to a signal that does not have power. Most often, the signal will work normally once power is restored.	If power is the issue, SHP should contact the local power company. If the signal is still out after power has been restored, SHP should call DOT.
POWER / UTILITY LINES	"Have you contacted the power/utility company?"	Power lines, gas lines, water lines, etc. are the domain of local power/utility companies. DOT cannot safely commence work until those companies shut off the affected lines or otherwise make the area safe.	If power/other utility lines are involved, SHP should contact the local power/utility company before they contact DOT.

Appendix B: IMAP Route Map & DOT Operation Centers

Below is the link for the "Statewide IMAP Routes" map. This map shows the roadways that are defined as IMAP patrol routes. Click the highlighted route segments to find additional information for the selected route. Routes that are labeled as "Response Routes" are areas where IMAP does not normally patrol but will respond to if there is a major incident. The map also shows the location, contact info, and operating hours for each of the DOT Operation Centers.

https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?hl=en&mid=1aMYjMqDI-Fe0_A8f5sMiWGH3GQY&ll=35.588998996134975%2C-81.16158907669091&z=8

NOTE: Actual IMAP coverage changes day-to-day. SHP Communication Center staff should contact the appropriate DOT Operations Center to determine if IMAP is available.

Agreement adopted this 27th day of April 2023