Incident Management Team Emergency Vehicle Operations
UDOT 06C-35

Effective: April 8, 2008 Revised: March 19, 2015

Purpose
To define the emergency response policies and procedures for the Utah Department of Transportation (Department) Incident Management Team (IMT).

Policy
1. IMT operators will drive with due regard for the safety of all people at all times. IMT will make a reasonable effort to reach the scene of a traffic incident as quickly as possible to ensure public safety. The Utah Highway Patrol (UHP) under authority of UCA 41-6a-102(3)(d) has designated IMT as an authorized emergency vehicle and as such is subject to all emergency vehicle requirements described in UCA 41-6a-212 and related sections of the Utah State Code. IMT may utilize emergency response with that designation in certain limited circumstances described in policy.

2. The decision to respond as an emergency vehicle is made by the IMT operator within the constraints of the Utah State Code and this policy.

3. IMT emergency response is authorized in two circumstances:
   a. When all of the following conditions are met:
      1) The incident is verified by law enforcement (location, direction, and nature of the incident are known).
      2) The proximity of the incident is such that the use of emergency response would substantially reduce the response time to the incident.
      3) The incident involves the blockage of one or more mainline lanes.
   b. When the safety of a law enforcement officer, IMT operator, or emergency responder is in jeopardy.

4. IMT emergency response is authorized on the following roadways segments built to freeway standards, including on, off, and system ramps (all other roads are prohibited for IMT emergency response):
   a. Any interstate
   b. US-40 from I-80 (Exit 146) to SR-32
c. SR-67 (Legacy Parkway) for the entire length.

d. US-89 from I-15 (Exit 324) to SR-273

e. SR-201 from 5600 West to I-15/I-80

5. IMT emergency response is not authorized on arterial roadways. Operators may use signal preemption on arterial roadways to reduce response time, subject to Policy 06C-18, Signal Preemption.

6. IMT emergency response is only authorized for IMT operators with a current training certification from the UHP. Annual recertification is required for all IMT operators and supervisors according to the schedule established by the UHP for training and certifying troopers.

7. During an emergency response:
   a. The maximum travel speed as long as life or property are not endangered:
      1) Is the posted speed limit in the travel lanes.
      2) Is 25 mph on the left and right shoulders.
   b. All traffic signals, STOP, and YIELD signs must be obeyed.
   c. All regulations governing direction of movement must be obeyed unless directed otherwise by law enforcement.

8. An IMT Review Panel will review each occurrence of a violation of this policy by an IMT operator resulting in a claim against the Department. A review is optional for occurrences that do not result in a claim against the Department.
   a. The IMT Review Panel will consist of the Region Traffic Operations Engineer and Region Risk Manager from the IMT operator’s region, the IMT supervisors from each region, the statewide IMT coordinator from the Traffic Management Division, and a UHP representative.

9. An IMT operator is NOT authorized for emergency response:
   a. In conjunction with a vehicle pursuit conducted by UHP.
   b. When conducting a ride-along involving a non-UDOT or non-UHP employee.
10. Pursuant to UCA 41-6a-1601(2), the UHP has established the following standards for the color and placement of lights on the IMT truck for use in emergency response:

a. Top-mounted light bar – red to the front and amber to the rear
b. Grill and visor lights (front) – red
c. Ambulance lights (rear) – red
d. Headlights – white or clear

1) Wigwag headlights are allowed but will be transitioned to strobes as equipment is replaced.

Background

The Incident Management Team performs a critical function during a traffic incident. Traffic control at the scene and upstream provides warning to approaching drivers, which reduces the likelihood of secondary crashes and greatly enhances the safety of emergency responders at the scene. Timely implementation of traffic control by IMT minimizes additional secondary crashes and the consequent resulting delays.

The impacts of incidents to traffic flow are well documented. Each minute of blockage to the traffic stream creates approximately five minutes of delay for every vehicle in the resulting queue during peak traffic periods. Safety is a concern that is directly tied to delay. The presence of a queue on a high-speed facility creates the potential for speed differential and secondary crashes to occur upstream of the incident. Debris in the road also has obvious safety implications in addition to crashes.

The UHP, under authority prescribed in UCA 41-6a-102, has authorized IMT to respond to incidents as an emergency vehicle recognizing the critical function that the IMT provides at a crash scene and the time-sensitive nature of that function. Doing so will reduce response time to incidents, thus improving the safety of the traveling public and emergency responders.

UCA 41-6a-212 and related sections establish the general guidelines and restrictions for emergency vehicle operation in Utah, which are duly applicable to the IMT. The intention of this policy is to further restrict IMT emergency response beyond what is allowed in code to ensure IMT emergency vehicle operation that is consistent with the mission of the IMT program. For example, there is no reason for the IMT to participate in a vehicle pursuit, so while Utah code allows it for an emergency vehicle, this policy prohibits it for IMT.
Definitions

**Emergency Response**
Emergency response for the Department IMT program is defined as the use of lights and sirens to decrease response time to an incident under the conditions and limitations described in this policy.
Procedures
Incident Management Team Emergency Vehicle Operations

Responsibility: Incident Management Team Operator

Actions

1. Use judgment to determine whether or not emergency response is necessary if a traffic incident meets the policy criteria for emergency response and the IMT operator is properly trained and certified. Emergency response should not be used if the operator believes that the scene can be reached in about the same amount of time as with a normal response. Other factors to consider include:

a. The safety of the public and other emergency responders.

b. The operator’s familiarity with the roadway.

c. Obstacles, both known and potential, that must be avoided such as objects in the roadway, drainage structures, side slopes, construction, standing water, or limited shoulder width.

d. The time of day and the volume of traffic likely to be encountered.

e. Visibility and illumination available in the area.

f. Weather conditions.

2. Complete the following after making the decision to respond as an emergency vehicle:

a. Notify the Traffic Operations Center operators of the decision to employ emergency response.

b. Travel in the left-most lane as much as possible (including the HOV/Express lane) while engaged in emergency response, as motorists are required to move to the right to yield to emergency vehicles.

c. Use either shoulder, if needed, on approved roads built to a freeway standard while engaged in emergency response. The left shoulder is preferred over the right.
d. Comply with maximum travel speed requirements as follows:
   1) The posted speed limit in the travel lanes.
   2) 25 mph on the left and right shoulders.

e. Yield to all other emergency responders.

f. Observe all regulations regarding traffic signals, STOP, and YIELD signs including ramp terminal intersections. Emergency response is prohibited on arterial streets.

g. Observe all regulations regarding direction of movement, unless directed otherwise by law enforcement.

3. Use authorized emergency equipment during emergency response as follows:

   1) Use continuously during an emergency response.
   2) Discontinue front-facing emergency lights after placing the vehicle in support of the incident unless the operator believes that safety will be jeopardized.

b. Sirens
   1) Use continually during emergency response in a lane of travel or on the left shoulder.
   2) Do not use continually during emergency response on the right shoulder. Short bursts of siren or horn or both may be used to gain the attention of individual motorists when proceeding on the right shoulder.
   3) Discontinue after placing the vehicle in support of the incident.

Responsibility: Incident Management Team Supervisor

4. Observe all restrictions and regulations described in this policy when functioning as an IMT operator.

5. Ensure that certification is current for each IMT operator, including the scheduling and coordination of annual recertification with the UHP.
6. Review this policy periodically with all IMT operators, inspect trucks to ensure compliance with policy, and monitor the emergency response practices of IMT operators.

7. Inform the Region Traffic Operations Engineer of any violations of this policy by an IMT operator.

**Responsibility:** Region Traffic Operations Engineer

8. Initiate the IMT Review Panel whenever a violation of this policy occurs that either results in a claim against the Department or created a situation that in the estimation of the Region Traffic Operations Engineer unnecessarily endangered the public or other emergency responders.

   a. The Region Traffic Operations Engineer, or designee, acts as the chair of the IMT Review Panel and conducts the meeting.

   b. Reports the results of the investigation to the Region Director.