

AIMHigh

Austin-area Incident Management for Highways

PROCEDURES FOR THE USE OF AUSTIN AREA TOLL FACILITIES DURING MAJOR TRAFFIC INCIDENTS

The network of toll roads and managed lanes (toll facilities) in the greater Austin area is intended to: (1) relieve congestion along conventional (non-tolled) facilities; (2) offer significant travel time savings to potential users who are willing to pay for a faster, more predictable trip when conventional (non-tolled) facilities become congested; and (3) provide a sustainable source of revenue to service debt requirements and to support additional State transportation projects and improvements.

In the event that traffic flow on conventional (non-tolled) facilities is compromised by a major incident such that public safety is at risk, law enforcement may direct traffic to the toll facility for a limited time period to facilitate restoration of traffic flow on the non-tolled facility to a safe operating condition. The decision whether or not to waive tolls during this time period rests solely with the responsible toll authority.

Such actions must be carefully directed to adequately balance concerns for public safety and mobility with the basic intent of the toll facility system related to valued time savings, predictability and debt payment requirements.

These procedures have been developed by the Texas Department of Transportation—Toll Operations Division (TxDOT TOD), the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (CTRMA), the Austin Police Department (APD), and the Texas Department of Public Safety to guide when and how such actions should be taken.

These procedures should be consistent across each of the area toll facilities; should be clearly communicated to area incident response personnel responsible for directing motorists; and should be clearly communicated to motorists.

Authority

For unexpected, unforeseen major traffic incidents, authority to initiate traffic diversion off of the conventional (non-tolled) facility to the tolled facility lies with law enforcement agencies and on-scene law enforcement personnel. **The decision whether or not to waive tolls during the temporary diversion rests solely with the responsible toll authority.**

Law enforcement personnel should immediately notify the responsible toll authority—CTRMA or TxDOT TOD—of the diversion so that they may consider a temporary suspension of tolls along the affected toll facilities. Toll authority personnel will subsequently notify personnel at the Combined Transportation, Emergency, and Communications Center (CTECC) to coordinate motorist information efforts.

Circumstances

Major traffic incidents that may require the temporary diversion to toll roads shall include, but not be limited to: multi-vehicle collisions; fatality incidents; large truck involved incidents; hazardous materials spills; localized events—such as fires, chemical releases, or acts of nature—that impact passage along conventional routes, and other incidents deemed to present a risk to public safety.

The decision to initiate traffic diversion off of the conventional (non-tolled) facility to the tolled facility should not be taken lightly. This action should be limited to major traffic incidents that significantly compromise public safety. Specifically, a temporary traffic diversion off of the conventional (non-tolled) facility to the tolled facility shall only occur when:

- No other reasonable alternate route exists,
- All directional lanes are closed, with limited potential to expedite the opening of select lanes,
- Directional lane closures are expected to last two (2) hours or longer, and
- Sufficient capacity exists along the toll facility to support diverted traffic.

Diversion to the toll facility should be minimized—bounded by the first available upstream entrance and downstream exit points that adequately divert traffic around the conventional (non-tolled) facility incident.

The duration of the traffic diversion will be left to law enforcement agency discretion. Law enforcement personnel should periodically reevaluate the incident scene to determine the continued need for traffic diversion and routinely communicate their assessments with toll authority personnel.

Notification Procedures

If the circumstances of the major incident along the conventional (non-tolled) facility meet the stated criteria above and an on-scene officer has determined that a temporary traffic diversion off of the conventional (non-tolled) facility is necessary to ensure public safety, the following notification procedures should be followed:

Prior to or immediately after diverting traffic to the toll facility

- An on-scene law enforcement officer provides notification of the traffic diversion (including the **start time of the diversion** and anticipated duration) to the respective toll authority by contacting:

TxDOT TOD	Linda Sexton	(512) 853-0441
	Erica Ramirez	(512) 563-0098
CTRMA	Tim Reilly	(512) 721-8585
- Respective toll authority personnel may consider the temporary suspension of toll collection operations in accordance with their Authority's established toll suspension policy and will notify CTECC to coordinate motorist information efforts by contacting:

TxDOT CTECC	Dispatcher	(512) 974-0883
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When traffic diversion is no longer necessary

- An on-scene law enforcement officer notifies the respective toll authority that traffic diversion is no longer necessary by contacting:

TxDOT TOD

Linda Sexton (512) 853-0441

Erica Ramirez (512) 563-0098

CTRMA

Tim Reilly (512) 721-8585

- When the respective toll authority personnel return to normal toll collection operations, they will notify CTECC to coordinate motorist information efforts by contacting:

TxDOT CTECC

Dispatcher (512) 974-0883

Periodic Review of Criteria

These procedures should be periodically reviewed to ensure a continued balance between public safety and mobility concerns with the basic intent of the toll facility system related to valued time savings predictability and debt payment requirements.

- If criteria directing the circumstances for toll facility use during major incidents (extent and duration of lane closures along conventional (non-tolled) facilities) are too lax, the frequency of interim use will detract from the toll facility's intended use.
- If criteria are too strict, the safety benefits derived from the interim use of toll facilities will be negated.

These criteria should be monitored over time and adjusted accordingly depending upon the frequency of toll facility use during major traffic incidents.

**I concur with these procedures and intend to implement them
among the employees under my supervision.**

Mr. Greg Malatek, P.E.,

Date

District Engineer
Austin District, Texas Department
of Transportation



**I concur with these procedures and intend to implement them
among the employees under my supervision.**

Mike Heiligenstein,
Executive Director
Central Texas Regional Mobility
Authority

Date



I concur with these procedures and intend to implement them
among the employees under my supervision.

Mr. Art Acevado,
Chief of Police
Austin Police Department

Date



I concur with these procedures and intend to implement them
among the employees under my supervision.

Mr. Gary Albus,
Regional Commander, Region 6,
Texas Highway Patrol, Department
of Public Safety

Date



**I concur with these procedures and intend to implement them
among the employees under my supervision.**

Mr. Fred D. Woodall, P.E.
Interim Director, Toll Operations
Division, Texas Department of
Transportation

Date

