

# PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER & PUBLIC EDUCATOR



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**PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER & PUBLIC EDUCATOR  
BACKGROUNDERS**



## Resources for Public Education on Safe Driving Practices at Emergency Response Scenes

Every day across America, distracted and uninformed drivers pose a major threat to the safety and wellbeing of first responders who risk their own lives on roads and highways to assist those involved in traffic incidents.

Every year, an average of 5 firefighters, 12 law enforcement officers, and more than 60 employees of state departments of transportation are struck and killed while working roadway incidents.<sup>1</sup> The number of near misses and injuries is far higher, but unknown. Vehicle-related incidents are the second leading cause of firefighter deaths<sup>2</sup> and the number one cause of law enforcement officer deaths<sup>3</sup>.

So far in 2017<sup>4</sup>, 38 law enforcement officers have died in traffic-related incidents and 9 firefighters/EMS personnel have died by being struck by a vehicle while on duty. Another 3 deaths occurred when fire personnel were off duty but stopped to help along a roadway.

The traveling public is a vital partner in the effort to keep first responders safe by properly passing emergency scenes and giving roadway responders room to work. When the public is informed about and compliant with laws like Slow Down Move Over, refrains from distracted driving, and practices driving habits that enable them to safely pass emergency scenes on the roadway, first responders and the motoring public are both safer. To reach the goal of a fully-educated and full-compliant public, the nonprofit Cumberland Valley Volunteer Firemen's Association has released new educational resources available for free at [ResponderSafety.com/PIO](http://ResponderSafety.com/PIO). Fire departments and community safety partners are encouraged to use these materials, including PSAs and talking points, to help the public understand their legal<sup>5</sup> and moral responsibility to change lanes and slow down when approaching a stationary emergency response vehicle on the roadway, avoid distracted driving, and exercise caution when passing emergency scenes. The available resources can be easily customized by the department and tailored to each jurisdiction's applicable statutes.

<sup>1</sup> Source: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/publicroads/14julaug/05.cfm>

<sup>2</sup> Source: <http://www.nfpa.org/~media/files/news-and-research/fire-statistics/fire-service/osfff.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Source: <http://www.nleomf.org/facts/officer-fatalities-data/causes.html>

<sup>4</sup> As of 9/14 for fire statistic <https://apps.usfa.fema.gov/firefighter-fatalities/fatalityData/incidentDataReport?deathYear=2017> and 9/25 for law enforcement statistic <http://www.nleomf.org/facts/officer-fatalities-data/>

<sup>5</sup> All 50 states have a Move Over Slow Down law on the books.





ResponderSafety.com is the emergency responder's go-to resource for accurate, vetted training and information on roadway response safety. ResponderSafety.com offers five key mechanisms for all roadway incident responders to improve their personal and departmental safety practices:

- **The Responder Safety Learning Network (RSLN):** Delivers over 20 free online training modules in all aspects of traffic incident management and roadway safety. More than 30,000 registered users from all 50 states and many foreign countries have earned almost 100,000 certificates of module completion. So far this year, RSLN has had 115,000 sessions by 60,000 users averaging over 15 minutes/session (almost 29,000 hours of engagement). RSLN offers a National TIM Training Certificate, which is a professional credential equivalent to the national training from the Federal Highway Administration. RSLN's practical, high-quality training is developed and vetted by recognized emergency response experts from many fields. RSLN courses are accepted for CE credit by many institutions, including the Texas Commission on Fire Protection, Prince Georges County (MD), and the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems.
- **Resource Library:** More than 60 resources are available for download in TIM topics ranging from advance warning to public education to traffic control to blocking and safe positioning.
- **PSAs and Training Videos:** Professionally-produced and expert-vetted PSAs and training videos on hot topics in traffic incident management.
- **Struck By and LODD Incident News:** A repository of struck by and LODD incidents during roadway responses, which provide important lessons learned.
- **Near Miss Database Search:** A cooperative effort with the National Miss Database to properly categorize near miss incidents that occur during roadway response makes those roadway-related reports available to ResponderSafety.com visitors directly from the National Near Miss database. Visitors can query the NNM database directly from ResponderSafety.com and view matching reports in detail.

ResponderSafety.com is the flagship project of the Emergency Responder Safety Institute (ERSI), a committee of the Cumberland Valley Volunteer Firemen's Association (CVVFA). ERSI also conducts outreach at limited access highway rest areas to interact with the public on responder safety issues, distribute educational materials, and learn firsthand how to better address safety issues with the general public.

ERSI/CVVFA maintains close relationships with like-minded organizations, including the Federal Highway Administration, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the National Fire Protection Association, the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, and the Towing & Recovery Association of America.



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INFOGRAPHIC**

# RUNNING THE ROADS

## FIRE DEPARTMENT RESPONSES TO ROADWAY INCIDENTS

LOCAL FIRE DEPARTMENTS RESPONDED TO

# 5,282,000

**INCIDENTS ON ROADWAY PROPERTIES IN 2018**

14% of fire department responses were to roadway properties



**2/3** of roadway responses were  
**EMS CALLS OR RESCUES**

**27%**  
**OF ROADWAY INCIDENTS**  
occurred on  
highways or divided highways



# 2020

**42,338** people died in motor vehicle crashes

**TOP 3 CAUSES**

**ALCOHOL, SPEEDING, and LACK OF SEAT BELT USE**

Number of **FIREFIGHTERS**  
**STRUCK & KILLED**  
on roadways from 2000-2021

# 102

# 177

as of 4/20/2022

Number of **EMERGENCY RESPONDERS**  
**STRUCK & KILLED**  
from 2019 to April 2022

**PROTECT YOUR RESPONDERS**  
**AT ROADWAY SCENES.**



**PUT DOWN YOUR PHONE.**  
**SLOW DOWN AND MOVE OVER**  
**GIVE THEM ROOM TO SAVE LIVES!**

### DATA SOURCES

Fire Department Roadway Responses: Ahrens, Marty and Ben Everts. [Fire Department Roadway Incidents](#). National Fire Protection Association. December 2021.

Motor Vehicle Fatalities: [Motor Vehicle Injury Facts Overview Introduction](#). National Safety Council. [Safety on the Road](#). National Safety Council. 2022.

Firefighter and Emergency Responder Fatalities: Fahy, Rita. [U.S. Firefighters Killed When Struck by Vehicles: 2000-2020](#). January 2022. National Fire Protection Association; ResponderSafety.com [Yearly Fatality Reports](#).

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PUSHCARD**

# MOVE OVER SLOW DOWN FOR STOPPED EMERGENCY VEHICLES



## IT'S THE LAW

THIS YEAR,  
OVER 3400 PEOPLE WILL DIE  
& 390,000 WILL BE INJURED  
DUE TO DISTRACTED DRIVING.\*

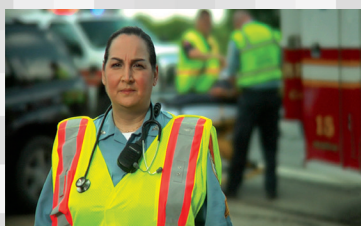
\*SOURCE: NHTSA

WILL YOU  
BE ONE  
OF THEM?

PUT DOWN YOUR PHONE  
NO Call. NO Text. NO Livestream.



WE'RE OUT HERE EVERY DAY.  
HELPING YOU WHEN YOU NEED IT.  
NOW YOU CAN HELP US OUT.  
**GIVE US ROOM TO SAVE LIVES.**



## IF YOU ONLY KNEW WHAT WE KNOW

Over and over, we see accidents that were preventable.  
On this card are things we wish every motorist would do.

Read this card, and you'll know what we know.

Protect yourself.

Protect your family.

Protect us.

We don't want to meet you out here on the roadway.

A public service message courtesy of



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National Law Enforcement Officers  
MEMORIAL FUND  
RESPECT. HONOR. REMEMBER.



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**PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER & PUBLIC EDUCATOR  
SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORIES**

## **PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE:

CONTACT:

PHONE & EMAIL:

### **Fender Bender? It's OK to Move It!**

*Move It is the Law in Multiple U.S. States*

Did you know that if you are involved in a minor traffic accident with no injuries and your vehicle is drivable, you should move your vehicle off the roadway? It's true. You don't need to leave it on the roadway for insurance purposes. You don't need to leave it on the roadway for law enforcement investigation of the incident; law enforcement will still investigate the incident and file a report even if you have moved the vehicle. Your insurance company, the police, and all first responders want you to move your vehicle to a safe location out of the traffic lanes. This action reduces your chances of being hit by oncoming traffic and keeps traffic moving. In fact, in many states, Move It is the law. **NOTE IF YOUR STATE HAS A MOVE IT OR FENDER BENDER LAW AND, IF SO, WHAT IT SAYS**

Here are some tips from **DEPARTMENT NAME HERE** for how to be safe after an accident.

- Move your vehicle off the roadway and call **911 [OR INSERT LOCAL EMERGENCY NUMBER]** for assistance. When you call, give an exact description of your location, including route or street, direction driving, city or town, and distance to the nearest landmark.
- Do not get out of your vehicle to inspect the damage; this exposes you to being struck by a passing vehicle. Stay in your vehicle. If you must leave your car, keep away from traffic and stay on the shoulder or the grassy area off the shoulder.
- Do not cross a highway on foot or try to stop traffic by hand.
- If you get out to exchange information with the other driver, do so as far as possible off the roadway and away from traffic.
- If you are injured and/or the vehicle is not drivable, call 911. Stay in your vehicle unless it is unsafe to do so. If you must leave, get off the roadway and wait for assistance.

**[IF YOU ARE DISTRIBUTING THIS ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE MEDIA, INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION AS WELL.]** A PSA on Move It is available for you to share with your audience. You can download it at <http://www.responder-safety.com/Videos/Move-It.aspx> and share it freely.

**CONTACT NAME AND INFORMATION HERE** from **DEPARTMENT NAME HERE** is available for interviews to talk more about the Move It law and how motorists in minor accidents can react in ways that make them, the public, and first responders safer as they wait for assistance. By sharing these tips with the public, we can reduce the number of secondary crashes that occur every year and protect first responders from struck-by deaths and injuries.

###



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## PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE:

CONTACT:

PHONE & EMAIL:

### **“Move Over Slow Down” PSA Helps Public Understand the Importance of Giving First Responders Room to Save Lives on the Roadway!**

*Move Over Slow Down is the Law*

**WHO:** **NAME OF DEPARTMENT**  
In cooperation with ResponderSafety.com

**WHAT:** **PSAs on Move Over Slow Down Laws**  
Every day across America, distracted and uninformed drivers pose a major threat to the safety and wellbeing of first responders who risk their own lives on roads and highways to assist those involved in traffic incidents. As part of a national effort to reduce the number of first responder fatalities, struck-bys, and near miss incidents, two PSAs from ResponderSafety.com are available to help the public understand their legal and moral responsibility to change lanes and slow down when approaching a stationary emergency response vehicle on the roadway. All 50 states have a Move Over Slow Down law on the books. In **NAME OF STATE**, our law requires **DETAILS OF LAW HERE** (see <http://www.moveoverlaws.com/>).

**WHERE:** <http://www.respondersafety.com/Videos/Slow-Down-Move-Over.aspx>  
<http://www.respondersafety.com/Videos/Its-No-Picnic-Out-Here.aspx>

**WHEN:** Available 24/7/365 on the web

**WHY:** Every year, an estimated average of 5 firefighters, 12 law enforcement officers, and more than 60 employees of state departments of transportation are struck and killed while working roadway incidents. The number of near misses and injuries is far higher, but unknown.<sup>1</sup> Vehicle-related incidents are the second leading cause of firefighter deaths<sup>2</sup> and the second leading cause of law enforcement officer deaths<sup>3</sup>.

**HOW:** The **NAME OF DEPARTMENT** is available for interviews and further details on the tragedy of first responders being struck by cars while rendering emergency assistance on the roadway in conjunction with these PSAs and the issues they raise. **CONTACT NAME AND INFORMATION OF AVAILABLE INTERVIEWEES**

As a public service, media outlets can show the Move Over Slow Down PSAs free of charge. These PSAs inform viewers of the existence of Move Over Slow Down laws and the importance of giving first responders room to work on the roadway — saving lives, helping disabled motorists, and clearing accidents.

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<sup>1</sup>Source: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/publicroads/14julaug/05.cfm>

<sup>2</sup>Source: <http://www.nfpa.org/~media/files/news-and-research/fire-statistics/fire-service/osfff.pdf>

<sup>3</sup>Source: <http://www.nleomf.org/facts/officer-fatalities-data/causes.html>



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## PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE:

CONTACT:

PHONE & EMAIL:

### What To Do When You Approach An Emergency Scene on the Road

Many drivers who approach an emergency scene on the roadway don't know how to react or what to do. This confusion can be deadly for first responders, vehicle crash victims, and other motorists approaching the scene. **DEPARTMENT NAME** wants to share some tips for what to do when you are approaching an emergency scene on the roadway, whether it's an accident, a disabled car, a weather-related issue, or a planned closure.

- If at all possible, avoid the area and take an alternate route. Do not make an illegal turn to avoid the incident, but instead plan a different route when you hear there is an issue.
- **SLOW DOWN** as you approach and pass the incident. Remain alert for unexpected occurrences, as this is a different situation than normal roadway driving.
- **MOVE OVER** any time you approach a stopped emergency vehicle. Move your vehicle over a lane away from the incident, as long as it is safe to do so. This gives first responders room to work on the incident.
- If no responders are yet on the scene and you have a hands-free cell phone, call **911/YOUR LOCAL EMERGENCY NUMBER** to report the incident. Note the location by mile marker and/or landmark so you can report it accurately.
- Look for and obey all temporary traffic control signs and direction from first responders, including lane closures. Temporary traffic control creates a safe work area for first responders to treat victims and remove damaged vehicles; motorist cooperation with traffic control is needed for the work area to be truly safe.
- Never attempt to go around an emergency scene on the shoulder, drive through it, or turn around to avoid it or the traffic queue. These actions put you, other motorists, and first responders at risk of death and injury.
- Do not take photos or video of the incident as you pass it and do not post on social media. This distracts you from driving, which may cause an accident. It is also disrespectful to the victims and their families, who are going through a traumatic experience. There have been situations where families of victims have found out their loved ones were injured or deceased from social media posts, rather than through an official notification from emergency services, who can provide needed support during the notification. Don't put a family through the trauma of finding that out in a public forum.
- Do not pick up your cell phone to notify friends, family, or others of the emergency scene or that you will be delayed. Distracted driving kills 3400 people every year and injures 390,000, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Don't be one.
- Remain alert, even if you have to sit in traffic. Now is not the time to let your attention wander or use your cell phone. Unexpected events can happen at emergency incidents and you must be alert so you can react.

**CONTACT NAME AND INFORMATION HERE** from **DEPARTMENT NAME HERE** is available for interviews to talk more about how the motoring public can assist first responders with safe, quick clearance of roadway incidents and safer incident response. By sharing these tips with the public, we can reduce the number of secondary crashes that occur every year and protect first responders from struck-by deaths and injuries.

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**PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER & PUBLIC EDUCATOR  
SAMPLE MEDIA CONTACT EMAILS**

# SAMPLE MEDIA CONTACT EMAIL FOR INCIDENT-RELATED SAFETY PRACTICES

Dear **INSERT CONTACT NAME:**

As you may know, we recently had a very serious traffic incident here in **INSERT COMMUNITY NAME. INSERT BRIEF DETAILS OF INCIDENT.** Our department has put together critical information for our community to help motorists react properly when approaching and passing an emergency scene on the roadway. It is our hope that you will help us protect the driving public and our first responders by sharing these lifesaving tips when reporting on traffic accidents and other roadway incidents so motorists know how to safely avoid or pass the scene.

## IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION FOR MOTORISTS APPROACHING ROADWAY EMERGENCY SCENES

- If at all possible, avoid the area and take an alternate route. Do not make an illegal turn to avoid the incident, but instead plan a different route when you hear there is an issue.
- **SLOW DOWN** as you approach and pass the incident. Remain alert for unexpected occurrences, as this is a different situation than normal roadway driving.
- **MOVE OVER** any time you approach a stopped emergency vehicle. Move your vehicle over a lane away from the incident, as long as it is safe to do so. This gives first responders room to work on the incident.
- Look for and obey all temporary traffic control signs and directions from first responders, including lane closures. Temporary traffic control creates a safe work area for first responders to treat victims and remove damaged vehicles; motorist cooperation with traffic control is needed for the work area to be truly safe.
- Never attempt to go around an emergency scene on the shoulder, drive through it, or turn around to avoid it or the traffic queue. These actions put you, other motorists, and first responders at risk of death and injury.
- Do not take photos or video of the incident as you pass it and do not post on social media. This distracts you from driving, which may cause an accident. It is also disrespectful to the victims and their families, who are going through a traumatic experience. There have been situations where families of victims have found out their loved ones were injured or deceased from social media posts, rather than through an official notification from emergency services, who can provide needed support during the notification. Don't put a family through the trauma of finding that out in a public forum.
- Do not pick up your cell phone to notify friends, family, or others of the emergency scene or that you will be delayed. Distracted driving kills 3400 people every year and injures 390,000, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Don't be one.
- Remain alert, even if you have to sit in traffic. Now is not the time to let your attention wander or use your cell phone. Unexpected events can happen at emergency incidents and you must be alert so you can react.

If you would like to do a story regarding this information, please let me know. Every day across America, distracted and uninformed drivers pose a major threat to the safety and wellbeing of first responders who risk their own lives on roads and highways to assist those involved in traffic incidents. We need your help to reach the traveling public with roadway incident response messages that will help keep them and our first responders safe. Thanks for your time and for your commitment to getting public safety information out to our community!

Best regards,

**INSERT PIO'S NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION**



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## SAMPLE MEDIA CONTACT EMAIL FOR A VIDEO PSA

Dear **INSERT CONTACT NAME:**

I'd like to share with you an excellent roadway safety PSA from ResponderSafety.com that contains some very important roadway safety information the public needs to know. Every day, our **firefighters and EMTs** respond to many incidents on the roadways in our community — vehicle accidents, fires, weather-related events, emergency medical calls, and more. We have found that the safety of our firefighters and first responders is in jeopardy when we respond to motor vehicle accidents — we are vulnerable to being struck by passing vehicles, which sometimes travel at very high speed. **INSERT DESCRIPTION OF CONNECTION TO LOCAL INCIDENT OR NEAR MISS IF POSSIBLE**

The goal of this PSA, **INSERT PSA NAME**, is to reduce deaths and injuries to our firefighters, EMTs/paramedics, State Troopers, police officers, sheriff's deputies and others who respond to emergency situations. Please help us raise public awareness about the need to **INSERT TOPIC OF THE PSA: move over and slow down if they are passing a stationary emergency vehicle / move their car off the roadway after a minor accident with no injuries / other PSA or video topic description.**

Please take just a minute to watch this PSA. If you would like to do a story regarding this information, please let me know. We want to educate the public on how important it is to **INSERT THE ASK, SUCH AS give us some room when we are responding to and working these incidents / keep the roadways clear of minor incidents / other action statement.**

**INSERT URL OF PSA**

If I can help you all with anything else please let me know. Thanks for your time and for your commitment to getting public safety information out to our community!

Best regards,

**INSERT PIO'S NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION**



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**PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER & PUBLIC EDUCATOR  
PRESS RELEASE**

# ResponderSafety.Com Breaks New Ground in Distracted-Driver Effort!

## ResponderSafety.Com Launches New PIO and Public Educator Page with “Distracted Driving Endangers First Responders” Messaging and Resources

*New PIO and Public Educator Page Delivers Much-Needed Public Education Resources*

ResponderSafety.Com is equipping public information officers (PIOs) and public educators with new tools to get the message out to the public about the dangers distracted drivers pose to emergency responders operating on the roadway and safe driving practices when approaching and passing roadway incident scenes. Every year, dozens of responders from fire, law enforcement, EMS, DOT, safety service patrols, and towing and recovery are killed and many more injured when they are struck by passing vehicles at roadway incidents. These deaths and injuries are preventable. For well over a decade, ResponderSafety.Com has been working to train responders how to improve their safety practices during roadway response. Progress has been made toward improving adoption of these safety practices and reducing struck bys. However, there has been a missing piece of the puzzle — motivating the public to exercise due care when approaching and passing emergency scenes on the roadway.

ResponderSafety.com is taking up this challenge with a new page of resources and information at [respondersafety.com/PIO](https://respondersafety.com/PIO) specifically for PIOs and public educators to use to educate the public about what to do — and not do — when emergency responders are present on the roadway. The page includes video PSAs, media advisory templates, sample media contact emails, downloadable resources including a push card, a press packet, a backgrounder for leadership, new stories and case studies on struck by incidents, free training modules, and much more to help PIOs and public educators communicate messages like Move Over Slow Down, Move It (Fender Bender laws), and anti-distracted driving. ResponderSafety.com has partnered with the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, and the PA Fireman magazine to promote this page and its resources. The new page builds on a successful pilot program in Pennsylvania and Maryland where first responders engaged with the public and directly at Visitor Centers and explained how distracted driving was endangering responder lives.

The new page debuts during National Traffic Incident Response Week whose theme “We’re All in This Together” fits perfectly with ResponderSafety.com’s mission to improve safety and traffic incident management for all agencies who respond to roadway incidents. During this week, departments are asked to examine and redouble their efforts to teach each other and the public about traffic incident response issues. “Our timing is perfect,” said Jack Sullivan, Director of Training for ResponderSafety.com. “We’ve been working on safety and traffic incident management issues for a long time within the responder community and it became clear to us that, to truly reduce the number of struck by incidents to zero, we needed to involve the public as an active partner. This PIO information page does just that — we are putting public education tools in the hands of our education and communications specialist who can carry safe driving messages into their communities. If the public takes these messages to heart, our responders are going to be a lot safer and we are going to have fewer traffic fatalities for motorists as well.”

Departments in all disciplines are encouraged to check out the new resources page at [respondersafety.com/PIO](https://respondersafety.com/PIO). If your department’s jurisdiction includes a rest area, service area, or travel plaza, reach out to ResponderSafety.com by emailing [CVVFAResponderSafety@yahoo.com](mailto:CVVFAResponderSafety@yahoo.com) so we can help you plan an event where responders engage with the public and distribute printed educational materials on distracted driving and responder safety and/or provide you with a video loop of safe driving messages that can play on service area televisions.

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Respondersafety.com and The Responder Safety Learning Network are projects of the Emergency Responder Safety Institute, a Committee of the Cumberland Valley Volunteer Fireman’s Association. The Emergency Responder Safety Institute (ERSI) serves as an advisory group of public safety leaders and transportation experts committed to reducing deaths and injuries to America’s emergency responders. ERSI is dedicated to the safety of these men and women by engaging in and promoting activities that include developing educational material to support responder safety training; promoting the National Unified Goal (NUG) for Traffic Incident Management (TIM) including responder safety; safe, quick clearance and interoperable communications; encouraging the development of TIM Teams, promoting collaboration, communication and cooperation among the nation’s emergency responders and keeping emergency responders up to date on national rules, regulations and trends related to safe roadway incident operations.