



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF  
TRANSPORTATION

# Order

Subject: **EMERGENCY REPORTING PROCEDURES**

**Federal Highway  
Administration**

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5181.1C

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Office of Primary Interest  
HOTO

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1. What is the purpose of this directive?
2. To whom does this Order apply?
3. Does this Order cancel an existing directive?
4. What authorities govern this Order?
5. What are the general responsibilities associated with this Order?
6. What are the general reporting criteria for highway incidents?
7. What are the notifications, requirements, and procedures for reporting highway incidents?
8. What are the reporting requirements for cybersecurity incidents affecting the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) or partner agencies?
9. What are the reporting requirements for non-highway significant incidents affecting FHWA employees or facilities?
10. What reports are required in preparing for, during, or following an incident of regional or national significance?
11. What are the reporting procedures when the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Emergency Response Team (ERT) is activated?
12. Where can I get additional information?

1. **What is the purpose of this directive?** This Order amends the procedures and criteria for FHWA Headquarters (HQ) offices and FHWA field offices to report significant incidents and events that affect the readiness and capabilities of the National Highway System (NHS), the Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET), and other major arterials, or any incident that causes damage to an FHWA field office, equipment, facility, or death or injury to an FHWA employee or contractor.
2. **To whom does this Order apply?** This Order applies to FHWA HQ, FHWA field offices, and all FHWA personnel.
3. **Does this Order cancel an existing directive?** Yes, this Order supersedes FHWA Order 5181.1B, Emergency Reporting Procedures, dated May 10, 2018.
4. **What authorities govern this Order?**

- a. Presidential Policy Directive (PPD) 8, National Preparedness, dated March 30, 2011.
- b. PPD 21, Critical Infrastructure and Resilience, dated February 12, 2013.
- c. PPD 40, National Continuity Policy, dated July 15, 2016.
- d. Federal Continuity Directive (FCD)-1, Federal Executive Branch National Continuity Program and Requirements, dated January 17, 2017.
- e. FCD-2, Federal Executive Branch Mission Essential Functions and Candidate Primary Mission Essential Functions and Submission Process, dated June 13, 2017.
- f. U.S. Department of Homeland Security, National Response Framework, Fourth Edition, dated October 28, 2019.
- g. FHWA Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan, dated May 1, 2014.
- h. FHWA Emergency Preparedness Program, Order 1910.2C, dated August 16, 2021.
- i. U.S. Department of Commerce, National Institute of Standards and Technology, Special Publication 800-61 Revision 2 – Computer Security Incident Handling Guide, dated August 6, 2012.
- j. FHWA Cybersecurity Program Handbook, Version 2, Appendix D “FHWA Security Incident Reporting Procedures”, dated December 2017.
- k. FHWA Information Security Incident Handling Procedures, Version 2.1, dated April 21, 2019.

**5. What are the general responsibilities associated with this Order?**

- a. Associate Administrators, the Chief Counsel, the Chief Financial Officer, Directors of Field Services, Federal Lands Highway (FLH) Division Directors, and Division Administrators (DA) provide prompt initial notification, and necessary follow-up information regarding reportable highway incidents, evacuation from an FHWA field office or facility, significant damage to an FHWA field office or facility, or death or significant injury to an FHWA employee or contractor within their areas of responsibility damage or loss of FHWA equipment or vehicles caused by significant incidents (severe weather, acts of terrorism, civil unrest, etc.).
- b. DAs and FLH Division Directors coordinate with appropriate Federal, State, Tribal, and Territory officials to ensure that FHWA offices are

informed of highway incidents that meet the reporting criteria described in this Order.

- c. Each FHWA field office will develop written procedures to ensure timely receipt of information from appropriate counterparts regarding incidents and events that meet the reporting criteria in this Order. These procedures will include:
- (1) A process for identifying the Field Emergency Coordinator (EC) and Alternate Field EC. In addition, annual performance plans for each Field EC and Alternate Field EC will have language inserted in critical job elements reflecting their Field EC or Alternate Field EC duties;
  - (2) A process for notifying the FHWA HQ EC, FHWA HQ Transportation Security Coordinator, or designee [hereafter referred to as "FHWA HQ EC"], when the field office identifies a new staff member who is responsible for Field EC or Alternate Field EC duties;
  - (3) Steps to update the FHWA Field Emergency Coordinator Directory, located on the FHWA Emergency Operations SharePoint site;
  - (4) A process for receiving reports of incidents or events involving highways or highway infrastructure (and obtaining additional details, when necessary or upon request) from appropriate State departments of transportation or Federal Land Management Agencies [hereafter, "State DOT"], highway agencies, public safety agencies, emergency management agencies, and open-source media; 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (applies only to Federal-aid and FLH division offices); and
  - (5) A process for reporting incidents or events involving highways or highway infrastructure (applies only to Federal-aid and FLH division offices), FHWA or State DOT cybersecurity, significant damage to an FHWA field office or facility, death or significant injury to an FHWA employee or contractor within their areas of responsibility, or damage or loss of FHWA equipment or vehicles caused by significant incidents (severe weather, acts of terrorism, civil unrest, etc.) to the FHWA HQ EC in a timely manner when deemed necessary based on reporting criteria established in this Order.

6. **What are the general reporting criteria for highway incidents?** Highway incidents (including those that affect infrastructure) and other incidents or events meeting one or more of the following criteria shall be reported to the FHWA HQ EC:

- a. Any incident or event that, in the opinion of the DA or FLH Division Director, will generate immediate national interest or media coverage.
- b. Incidents or events that create disruption to NHS operations for 8 hours or more. These incidents can include, but are not limited to:
  - (1) The closure of highways or highway infrastructure, caused by crashes, terrorist or criminal acts, or unknown causes.
  - (2) The closure of highways or highway infrastructure caused by acts of nature including, but not limited to, earthquakes, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, or wildfires.
    - (a) For closures due to winter weather, only report closures to the Interstate Highway System;
    - (b) For closures due to incidents that affect multiple locations, (i.e., floods, earthquakes), list impacted roads by geographic jurisdiction as appropriate (e.g., by county, or by city, or by parish, etc.)
  - (3) The activation of contraflow operations for any evacuation conducted for any reason.
- c. Incidents that result in damage to infrastructure:
  - (1) Any bridge failure (NHS or non-NHS).
  - (2) Any damage to, or failure of, any NHS bridge that results in the full closure of the facility for 8 hours or more.
- d. Other highway incidents (NHS and non-NHS) that shall be reported regardless of the duration of the disruption:
  - (1) Crashes involving six or more fatalities.
  - (2) Crashes involving 10 or more vehicles.
  - (3) Commercial vehicle crashes resulting in two or more fatalities or receiving statewide media attention.
  - (4) Any highway fatalities directly related to a natural disaster.
  - (5) School bus crashes resulting in any serious injuries, fatalities, or statewide media attention.

- (6) Passenger bus crashes (including transit buses and private motorcoach operations) resulting in two or more fatalities, five or more serious injuries (requiring transport), or receiving statewide media attention.
  - (7) Crashes or other incidents involving significant damage to highway infrastructure.
- e. Cyber incidents resulting in the disruption of FHWA division office activities or State DOT activities, including, but not limited to the closure of a State DOT traffic management center or administrative offices, or the disruption of automated traffic control devices or automated infrastructure.

**7. What are the notifications, requirements, and procedures for reporting highway incidents?**

- a. All reporting shall be made by email to FHWA\_HQEC@dot.gov in accordance with FHWA Emergency Operations Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) 2: FHWA Field EC Incident Reporting. During times when reporting on all required elements of information via formatted email is not possible in a timely manner or when detailed information about an incident meeting the criteria identified in Section 6 is unavailable, the Field EC should submit their initial report based on available, confirmed information to ensure timely reporting. Report should be submitted by email to FHWA\_HQEC@dot.gov but other communication methods may be used, including text message, instant message, or direct telephone contact with the FHWA HQ EC, to ensure timely receipt. Additional information shall be provided in an update when the information becomes available.
- b. Other FHWA leadership shall be notified as deemed necessary by DAs and FLH Division Directors.
- c. All highway incident reports shall include the following information (See FHWA Emergency Operations SOP 2 for examples and additional information on formatting requirements):
  - (1) Reporting Agency (i.e., State DOT).
  - (2) Incident Type (based on reporting criteria identified in Section 6 a-e).
  - (3) Incident Location (including incident city and State, as well as approximate distance from nearest major city).
  - (4) Incident Report.

- (a) Time incident occurred.
- (b) Time FHWA office was notified of incident.
- (c) Brief bullet points summarizing incident.
  - 1 Impact to operations (i.e., road closure).
  - 2 Number of fatalities or serious injuries.
  - 3 Damage to facility (if any).
  - 4 Detours in place (if any).
- (5) Actions/Follow Up (Select one).
  - (a) Update to follow;
  - (b) No further reporting unless warranted; or
  - (c) Incident closed.
- (6) Additional Information (narrative description, images, Websites).
- d. In general, follow-up reports (if applicable) shall be provided only as the incident or event changes, or when significant new information is received. However, for certain incidents or events identified by the FHWA HQ EC, the FHWA Administrator, or the Secretary of Transportation, one or more situation reports may be requested in accordance with an established operational tempo.

**8. What are the reporting requirements for cybersecurity incidents affecting FHWA or partner agencies?**

- a. Reporting for cybersecurity incidents resulting in the disruption of FHWA or State DOT operations and/or disruption of automated traffic control devices/structures should be handled in accordance with the protocols established for non-cyber related events.
- b. All events directly affecting FHWA information technology assets should be handled according to the procedures annotated within the “FHWA Information Security Incident Handling Procedures”.

**9. What are the reporting requirements for non-highway significant incidents affecting FHWA employees or facilities?**

- a. All field and HQ offices shall report on the following items describing the status of FHWA employees and facilities after significant incidents (e.g., severe weather, acts of terrorism, civil unrest, etc.):
  - (1) Real-world (non-drill) evacuation from an FHWA office or facility.
  - (2) Significant damage to an FHWA office or facility.
  - (3) Significant injury or death of an FHWA employee or contractor due to natural or manmade incident or work-related activities.
- b. Field ECs should submit their initial report based on available, confirmed information to ensure timely reporting. Report should be submitted by email to FHWA\_HQEC@dot.gov but other communication methods may be used, including text message, instant message, or direct telephone contact with the FHWA HQ EC, to ensure timely receipt. Missing information shall be provided in an update when the information becomes available. Other FHWA leadership shall be notified as deemed necessary by DAs and FLH Division Directors.
- c. Follow-up reports shall be made in accordance with procedures identified in Section 7 d.

**10. What reports are required in preparing for, during, or following an incident of regional or national significance?**

- a. The term “incident” includes any occurrence, natural or manmade, that necessitates a response to protect life or property and includes planned events, as well as emergencies or disasters of all kinds and sizes. Incidents of regional or national significance may include catastrophic incidents that impact a city, State, Territory, region, or the entire Nation. These incidents are of such severity or magnitude that governmental capabilities to manage response requirements may be overwhelmed, thereby posing potential threats to regional or national security, regional or national economic security, and/or the public health and safety of the region or the Nation.
- b. Essential Elements of Information (EEI) are best described as a series of data points and information requirements that must be tracked throughout an incident to ensure effective and efficient coordination of disaster response resources and timely infrastructure reopening.
- c. For an incident of regional or national significance, the FHWA HQ EC initiates EEI reporting by issuing an Incident Reporting Order (IRO) to work unit leadership, Field ECs, and Alternate Field ECs in affected States/Territories. The IRO notifies Field ECs of their reporting

responsibilities and identifies DOT and FHWA response operations (including potential DOT HQ Transportation Operations Center (TOC) activation). Field offices shall acknowledge receipt of the IRO in a timely fashion and shall respond to the FHWA HQ EC with EEIs in accordance with the reporting operational tempo established within the IRO.

- d. The IRO requires field offices and HQ offices (as applicable) to report on the following items throughout an incident. If an incident occurs with advance notice, the pre-incident IRO will be replaced by a post-incident IRO. In addition to the below EEIs, Field ECs shall continue to submit incident reports for significant highway and non-highway incidents in accordance with Sections 6, 7, 8, and 9 above. When reporting requirements have concluded, the FHWA HQ EC will notify work units that the IRO has been rescinded and reporting for the incident has concluded.

(1) Pre-incident

- (a) **Internal** (questions to be answered about the FHWA office potentially in the area of impact)

- 1 Is the office in the anticipated area of impact?  
*If the answer to #1 is "Yes" or "Unsure" answer #2-4 below.*
- 2 How many employees normally work in your duty location (including Professional Development Program participants, interns, Alternative Duty Location employees physically located in your office, etc.) [For HQ organizations, how many employees are physically located in HQ? How many participate in Remote Work and where are they located?]
- 3 Have COOP and other office emergency plans been reviewed and appropriate actions taken? What actions have been taken to prepare for the incident?
- 4 Are alternate communications capabilities and procedures tested and available?
- 5 Have employees been briefed regarding accountability procedures and requirements?
- 6 Have any employees from your office been deployed as Emergency Support Function (ESF 1) Regional Emergency Transportation Cadre Members by the Regional Emergency Transportation Representative for



this incident? If so, please identify those employees and the location(s) to which they have been deployed.

(b) **External** (to be answered about counterpart offices – i.e., State DOT)

- 1 Has Division Leadership briefed State DOT leadership regarding Emergency Relief (ER) Program procedures?
- 2 Are evacuations in place or being considered?
- 3 Are contraflow operations being considered to facilitate evacuation? What is the contraflow plan (lanes being used for contraflow/hours of operation/agency administering contraflow)?
- 4 To what extent is your State or counterpart office actively coordinating with neighboring State(s) or jurisdictions within the region to identify unmet needs, share transportation infrastructure status or to facilitate evacuation operations?
- 5 Identify any significant traffic incidents (crashes, queues) identified by your State or counterpart office as a result of the incident. How will these incidents affect evacuation or other disaster operations?
- 6 Identify all tolled facilities in the affected region, grouped by toll facility operators. Do toll facility operators have plans in place to allow waivers for first responders or utility operators. Are there plans for the suspension of toll collection?
- 7 Has your State or counterpart office suspended ongoing construction activities or work zone operations?

(2) Mid/Post-Incident or Event

(a) **Internal** (questions to be answered about the FHWA office in the area of impact)

- 1 Are there any FHWA employees or contractors who are unaccounted for?
- 2 What is the status of FHWA field office facilities and equipment?

- 3 What is the estimate for your office returning to normal operations?
- 4 Have any employees been deployed as an ESF 1 Regional Emergency Transportation Cadre Members by the Regional Emergency Transportation Representative for this incident? If so, please identify those employees and the location(s) to which they have been deployed.
- 5 Please identify any unmet needs that your work unit has identified.

(b) **External** (to be answered about counterpart offices – i.e., State DOT)

- 1 What is the status of the highway infrastructure in your State? Please identify closures, significant infrastructure damage, bridge and tunnel status, or anything else that is noteworthy on the following networks:
  - NHS
  - STRAHNET
  - Other major arterials
  - Intermodal transportation facilities
  - State and local infrastructure necessary to facilitate response to the incident
- 2 What is the highway infrastructure damage assessment schedule? If assessments are ongoing or are complete, what are the results?
- 3 Is your State/counterpart planning on requesting FHWA ER funds? Do you anticipate a request for ER quick release funds?
- 4 Identify any activities that your office has taken to assist your State/counterpart.
- 5 If evacuation occurred as part of this incident, what is the status for re-entry planning and re-entry operations?

(3) At all times, work units should be prepared to:

- (a) Respond to requests for information (RFI) from FHWA HQ, DOT personnel, ESF 1 personnel, and other interagency partners.

- (b) Coordinate with your State or counterpart offices to respond to RFI or to deconflict reports on transportation infrastructure status.
- (c) Identify office personnel supporting the response, including their names, their locations, and their contact information.

**11. What are the reporting procedures when the DOT ERT is activated?** When the Secretary's ERT is activated and FHWA representatives must provide staffing to the DOT HQ TOC to support the response to an incident or event, the FHWA HQ EC will issue an IRO, as outlined in Section 10. The IRO will include information about the ERT activation and FHWA reporting requirements, including operational tempo. Field ECs and Alternate Field ECs shall provide information to the FHWA HQ EC in accordance with the operational tempo identified within the IRO, including nights and on weekends, when applicable. Members of the FHWA HQ Emergency Response Cadre, FHWA's emergency coordination surge capacity, may be asked to provide availability information for in-person staffing of the TOC. The FHWA HQ EC, or representative at the TOC, will prepare situation reports and keep the FHWA Administrator, HQ staff, and affected field offices informed.

**12. Where can I get additional information?** For additional information, contact the FHWA HQ EC at [FHWA\\_HQEC@dot.gov](mailto:FHWA_HQEC@dot.gov) or 202-366-6738.



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