



# FREEWAY INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

February 28, 2005

# BACKGROUND

- Freeway traffic accidents are the most dangerous traffic incidents responded to by public safety personnel.
- Police officer and firefighter deaths and injuries have occurred at the scene of freeway accidents.
- Prior to 2004, the Dallas Police Department did not have a written policy regarding the clearance of freeway accidents.
- As traffic congestion increases, it is imperative that every effort be made to clear accidents and open the freeways as soon as possible.

## BACKGROUND (cont.)

- To address this issue, meetings with personnel from the Police, Fire-Rescue, and Public Works and Transportation Departments, the Texas Department of Transportation, and independent traffic consultants began in March 2004.
- These meetings resulted in the development of the DPD/DFD Quick Clearance Policy, which was implemented on July 30, 2004.

# QUICK CLEARANCE POLICY

- DPD and DFD personnel move vehicles from traffic lanes as soon as possible on all incidents involving less than life threatening injuries.
- Drivable vehicles are moved to the shoulder of the roadway or a safe location.
- Officers are authorized to use push bumpers to clear traffic lanes when vehicles cannot be driven.
- Officers are urged to order wreckers immediately, even if the vehicles cannot yet be towed or moved.

## QUICK CLEARANCE POLICY (cont.)

- Texas Department of Transportation (TXDoT) courtesy patrols routinely respond to freeway accidents and have authority to clear traffic lanes.
- TXDoT is responsible for the clearance of spilled cargos from commercial vehicles.
- A committee was formed by the Public Works and Transportation Department to initiate expedited wrecker service.

# TRAINING

- Safety Bulletin 23-04, which authorizes the Quick Clearance Policy, was issued on July 30, 2004.
- Freeway Incident Management training is provided by the North Central Texas Council of Governments.
- The Dallas Police Academy has incorporated the Quick Clearance Policy into its recruit curriculum.

# FUTURE PLANS

- Enhanced wrecker service.
- Enhanced training for accident investigators and Patrol officers.
- Quick Clearance Policy will be incorporated into Police Department General Orders.
- Improvements in accident reporting:
  - Personal computers in all marked vehicles, and
  - New and improved mapping program.
- Computerized ST3 reporting.