



I-35 Closure Operations Manual



Updated November 2023

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I. Background

In the years 1998 to 2001, MnDOT has closed Interstate 35 at least once per year when severe winter conditions blew through south central Minnesota and northern Iowa. Sometimes, the closures are due to Iowa's closing of Interstate 35 and requesting we close I-35 at Albert Lea and sometimes due to poor visibility on I-35 in south central Minnesota. Other closures have occurred after tractor trailers have jack-knifed due to severe winter weather conditions or were carrying hazardous materials. Closing a road takes place when there are stranded motorists, who need to be rescued, or when the road is blocked but not closed (due to weather conditions or crashes), creating the risk for additional accidents. In this situation, emergency shelters are often filled. Sometimes, the road is closed when whiteout conditions (lack of visibility) occur.

Typically, closures occur during periods of zero visibility, wind velocity greater than 35 miles per hour, and wind chills of -30 to -70 degrees F. Closures can and have also occurred due to tractor-trailer crashes involving hazardous materials.

Minnesota Statute (M.S.) 160.27, Subdivision 5 (14) makes it a misdemeanor for anyone to "drive over, through, or around any barricade, fence, or obstruction erected for the purpose of preventing traffic from passing over a portion of a highway closed to public travel or to remove, deface, or damage any such barricade, fence or obstruction." Besides the misdemeanor penalty, the 1998 Minnesota Legislature added M.S. 160, Subdivision 8 that requires MnDOT to notify the public that the road will close. The statute makes that the "person civilly liable for rescue costs" if the individual "fails to obey the direction or instruction of authorized personnel at the location of the closed highway, or drives over, through or around a barricade erected to prevent traffic from passing over a portion of a highway closed to public travel". This civil liability cannot exceed \$10,000.

Mn/DOT Policy Position Statement No. 83-2 defines some of the conditions for closing a road. Mn/DOT Policy Guideline No. 83-2-G-1 lays out the roles and responsibilities involved when closing a road.

On March 14th, 2001, MnDOT District 6B convened a meeting in Owatonna, MN with stakeholders from Freeborn County, Steele County, Rice County, Minnesota State Patrol, MnDOT, cities of Faribault, Albert Lea, Owatonna, Medford, Ellendale, and Geneva. The purpose was to develop a written procedure(s) for closure of I-35 in the form of a manual. A working group met several times and drafted the manual, which follows.

Definitions and criteria for closures

MnDOT Policy Position Statement No. 83-2 distinguishes between road closures and barricaded roads. A road is declared closed by work through news media or other informational source. A road is declared closed and barricaded when there are few access points or short sections of roadway where local access to the highway can be reasonably controlled through physical restrictions. FOR PRACTICAL PURPOSES, THIS MANUAL'S USE OF THE TERM ROAD CLOSURE IS INTENDED TO MEAN CLOSED AND BARRICADED TOADS.

Conditions leading to road closures included severe winter storms and natural disasters. The severity, projected duration, geographic coverage, the quality of information and judgment of the key responsible parties determine the level and the type of response to the disaster or storm.

Conditions to Consider

- Visibility
- Rapidly falling temperatures
- Snow drifts
- Crashes
- Snow depth
- Slick roads
- Natural disaster
- Hazardous material spills
- High wind forecasts
- Blowing snow

MnDOT in cooperation with Minnesota State Patrol & State of Iowa should seek to strike a balance between closing a road too soon or too late during storm situations or natural/man-made disasters. The goal is to ensure safe travel; however, early, and unnecessary closings should be weighed against late closures that could delay reopening the road because of vehicles stuck in snow. Ideal closures are anticipated by reading approaching storm conditions; announced early enough to allow travelers to seek shelter; and affected to allow a final sweep of the closed segments when yet possible to prevent stranded motorists.

When the closure point(s) are identified, it is possible that certain segments and/or directions of travel may be closed or opened, independent of other adjacent areas. For instance, there may be a situation where I-35 is open from Iowa to, and including, I-90 at Albert Lea; yet I-35 is closed near Ellendale. Likewise, I-35 could be open for travel along the northbound lane while the southbound lanes are closed to clear snow.

Scenarios

Possible scenarios that could warrant closing I-35 include:

- Winter whiteout conditions that include zero visibility and blizzard conditions (wind velocity of 35 miles per hour or greater)
- Strong and long-lasting blizzard conditions that not only cause truck rigs to become stuck in snow, but also create the situation where plows cannot keep the roads passable.
- Hazardous material spills

Functions of Key Players

MnDOT Transportation Equipment Operators (Snowplow Operators)

Observe local road and weather conditions and advise Subarea Supervisor as changes occur.

MnDOT Maintenance Superintendent

Manage the closure and opening of the interstate. Communicates with the MnDOT Public Affairs Coordinator regarding weather and road conditions. Inform Transportation Operation Control Center (TOCC) of times of closing and opening of the road.

MnDOT Area Maintenance Engineer (AME)

Notify and discuss the anticipated closure or barricading with the District State Patrol Captain/designee, adjacent MnDOT AME, and the Iowa Operations Engineer. Makes the decision to close.

MnDOT Public Affairs Coordinator (PAC)

Provide changes in road and travel condition information to the appropriate media, as well as the MnDOT Road and Vehicle Information and Services Section and other appropriate information.

Minnesota District State Patrol Captain/Designee (MSP)

Discuss with the MnDOT AME the conditions that require closing the interstate. Notify county sheriffs and patrol districts in adjacent areas and states, if necessary. Coordinate the notification of manning closure point(s) and needs to county sheriffs.

MnDOT Emergency Operations Director

Notify other state agencies and offices of road conditions through the Minnesota Condition Acquisition and Reporting System (MnCARS).

Minnesota Condition Acquisition and Reporting System (MnCARS)

CARS is a situation reporting system that allows state, local and regional agencies input information regarding road incidents, weather conditions, and traffic situations.

Transportation Operation Control Center (TOCC)

In most cases it will be the local State Patrol Communications Center, MSP Comm Center. The TOCC's main responsibility is the receiving and coordinating information between multiple agencies via phone and 2-Way radios. The TOCC personnel are called Radio Communications Operators.

County Dispatch Points

The main communication points within each county. These points are communication centers, and they are responsible for receiving and coordinating information between multiple agencies within their jurisdictions, which is typically county wide. County Dispatch Points have instant communication with police, sheriff, fire, EMS, and public utilities.

County Emergency Managers

Personnel who are responsible for planning, implementing, and managing emergency events within their jurisdictions.

MnDOT Regional Traffic Management Center (RTMC)

Metro area to program changeable message signs. RTMC is staffed Monday-Friday, 5:00 am – 8:30 pm, Saturday, 10:00 am – 6:00 pm, and Sunday, 11:00 am – 7:00 pm. All calls during the above operating hours should be directed to RTMC to allow their staff to energize the appropriate message boards and to make any last-minute corrections.

Information Sources

- AME or Superintendent
- Maintenance workers and supervisors
- National Weather Service
- Road Weather Information System
- Law enforcement officers
- MnCARS
- Emergency Alert System

Information Dissemination

- Maintenance supervisors from Iowa Department of Transportation
- An area group FAX provides information to media, such as local radio and television stations, newspapers, state patrol and departments of transportation in northern Iowa and adjacent maintenance areas.

Incident Command

The Minnesota Incident Management System (MIMS) protocol will be used to bring state and local agencies together when dealing with freeway closure incidents.

Dealing with freeway closure incidents will be dealt with in a “phased in” fashion. The initial response to an incident will be with a *Command Post*. A command post is more of a function than physical location. The command post can be at the scene or in a command van or next to a public vehicle. The command

post can be scaled up or down, depending on the incident. This is the lowest level of incident management.

If the incident requires, the command post can be scaled up to an Emergency Operations Center.

The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is considered to be a fixed facility away from the actual incident operation. The EOC's location is dependent upon each local's version of an EOC if one exists. A typical EOC contains the necessary phones, fax and other communication equipment as deemed necessary for the incident. Representatives from each of the affected agencies shall be assigned to the EOC. The EOC does not need to be staffed with the highest-ranking member of the affected agencies. With respect to a freeway closure, the EOC shall be established at the location with the greatest amount of impact as agreed by the agencies.

Multiple EOC's can be established along the route of a freeway closure with the knowledge that the command of the freeway rests with the priority EOC. Local Command Posts can also remain in operation even though an EOC has been established.

Agencies that may be affected by a freeway closure may include but not limited to: MnDOT, local police, local sheriff, State Patrol, Division of Emergency Management, local emergency management, Red Cross, Salvation Army, public works departments and local fire departments.

II. Snow and Ice Emergency Closures

Section 1: Annual Pre-Snow Preparation

Roles and Responsibilities

MNDOT Transportation Equipment Operators

- By October 15th, check equipment for readiness.

MnDOT Sign Shop Supervisor/Designee

- By October 15th, check equipment for readiness:
 - Barricade trailer
 - Check portable changeable message board signs (CMS)

MnDOT Subarea Supervisor

- By October 15th, ensure that field system is in place and operation, including signs and changeable message signs.

MnDOT Superintendent

- If necessary, provide financial resources to ensure closure readiness.
- Receive assurance that the closure plan is operational, notify Area Maintenance Engineer the status of operations.
- By September 1st, distribute to county sheriffs the technical service agreements and requests for estimated costs per hour of uniformed officers and marked vehicles for the purpose of staffing I-35.
- By October 15th, ensure that all communication systems are in place and functional. These systems include:
 - Radio communications
 - Group FAX
 - Changeable message signs software and computer hardware.
 - MnCARS
- Establish procedures to track financial information related to unnecessary rescue operations and to ensure appropriate billing.

Transportation Operations Control Center

- Radio Communications Supervisor
 - Ensure all dispatchers receive training to operate these systems:
 - Activate Emergency Notification List (ENL)
 - MnCARS operations

- Response to field needs for assistance
 - Notify Traffic Management Center (TMC) area to activate permanent mount changeable message signs
 - Radio communications
- Dispatcher
 - Sharpen skills to operate the above systems

MnDOT Area Maintenance Engineer

- By October 15th, receive assurance that all closure systems are ready and operational.
- Ensure all post-storm evaluations are considered and systems and procedures are revised as necessary.
- By October 15th, make sure all agreements are enacted with county sheriffs with respect to staffing the interstate.

County Sheriffs

- By September 15th, provide requested information from MnDOT area offices on the estimated costs per hour of uniformed officers and marked vehicles at specific closure point areas for staffing purposes.
- Execute technical service agreement with MnDOT regarding staffing closure point(s) by following MnDOT lead.
- Request from the AME the use of the MnDOT radio frequency during emergencies, if desired. This is a one-time request.
- County sheriffs will contact local police for assistance, if needed.

Section 2. Closing the Interstates

MnDOT/State Patrol list of contacts as of **November 2023.**

Owatonna – MnDOT

Name	Title	Cell Phone	Office Phone
Tim Zierden	D6 West Area Maintenance Superintendent	507-456-5348	N/A
Mark Panek	D6 West Area Maintenance Engineer	507-363-1179	N/A
Ron Heim	D6 West Owatonna Subarea Supervisor	507-456-5340	507-446-5507
Cam Ihrke	D6 West Albert Lea Subarea Supervisor	507-456-5346	507-379-3414
Drew Fischbach	D6 East Area Maintenance Superintendent	507-273-0668	507-286-7575

District State Patrol Captains

Name	Title	Phone	Alternate Phone
Brian Buck	Rochester Patrol Captain	507-923-2051	OneCall 320-318-1162
Jean Cemensky	Mankato Patrol Captain	507-363-1179	OneCall 320-289-6598

Iowa Department of Transportation

Name	Title	Cell Phone	Office Phone
Barry Thede	District 2 Area Maintenance Manager	641-430-1469	641-422-9475
Pete Andera	District 2 Highway Maintenance Superintendent	641-425-2236	641-896-3100

Iowa State Patrol

Name	Title	Cell Phone	Office Phone
Dana Knutson	Lieutenant Iowa State Patrol	641-430-7695	641-424-3625

Mankato – Adjacent MnDOT Maintenance

Name	Title	Cell Phone	Office Phone
Scott Morgan	District 7 Area Maintenance Engineer	507-327-7149	507-327-6589
Bryan Lillie	District 7 Area Maintenance Superintendent	507-327-8092	N/A

Metro – Adjacent MnDOT Maintenance

Name	Title/Hours of Operation	Cell Phone	Office Phone
Todd Stevens	Metro Area Maintenance Engineer	651-775-3714	651-234-7901
Bill Augello	Field Operations Manager	651-775-9531	651-234-7906
Metro Dispatcher	Staffed 24/7/365	N/A	651-234-7110
RTMC	Mon-Fri 5:00 am – 8:30 pm Sat 10:00 am – 6:00 pm Sun 11:00 am – 7:00 pm	N/A	651-234-7092

MnDOT Policy Guidelines for Closure of State Highways

Sever Winter Storms or Natural Disaster Responsibilities (Highway No. 83-2-G-1)

- See Appendix C

Criteria for staffing the closure

- Prior to closing the interstate, the AME and State Patrol Captain/Designee will confer and agree on the necessity of staffing the closure point(s).
- For initial purposes, MnDOT, State Patrol, and local sheriff office will coordinate the staffing of the closure point area(s). After the storm subsides and prior to re-opening. MnDOT, State Patrol, and local sheriff will coordinate.
- Every effort will be made to hire uniformed officer in marked cars.

The District State Patrol Captain/Designee contacts include:

- Iowa State Patrol
- Minnesota County Sheriffs/designee
- State Duty Officer

See Appendix G for the lists of MnDOT and State Patrol Contacts

Roles and Responsibilities

MnDOT Transportation Equipment Operators

- Monitor and report road and weather conditions in sufficient detail to the subarea supervisor on the need to close the interstate.
- Follow specific incident directions from the subarea supervisor to display advanced signing and closing.
- Make every attempt to “sweep” the closure segment in partnership with law enforcement officials to screen for standard motorists.
- Report the results of the “sweep” to the subarea supervisor

MnDOT Subarea Supervisor/Designee

- Monitor weather forecasts and roadway condition reports from field staff to assess the need to close the interstate.
- Recommend to the Superintendent or the AME the need to close the interstate.
- Follow specific incident directions from the superintendent and direct the subarea closure operation.
- Ensure and guide the proper reporting and “sweeps” of road segment to the TOCC and superintendent.
- Responsible for deploying portable CMS.

MnDOT Superintendent

- Monitor weather forecasts and analyze road and weather condition reports from field staff supervisors, and adjacent area superintendents.
- Recommend and assist the AME with the closure decision and plan. (MIMS protocol)

- Direct and communicate the closure plan to the subarea supervisors.

Transportation Operations Control Center

- Monitor and record roadway and weather conditions. Request assistance, if necessary.
- MnCARS update.
- Record closure points and times.
- Notify RTMC to activate permanent mount changeable message signs.
- National Weather Service update

MnDOT Area Maintenance Engineer (AME)

- Confer with the appropriate State Patrol Captain/designee and the MnDOT superintendent and agree on which method of road closure is appropriate.
- Decide which points are to be closed.
- Request State Patrol and the county Sheriff's to arrange for staffing the closure point(s). (MIMS protocol)
- Work with MnDOT Public Affairs Coordinator to disseminate the appropriate communications.
- Inform the MnDOT District Engineer of the decision to close the interstate.
- Assign designee to Local Command Center/EOC at primary closure point(s) if applicable.

MN State Patrol Trooper

- Communicate with the TOCC and MnDOT informing of the road and weather conditions that could lead to closing.

MN State Patrol Captain/Designee

- Assemble information from the troopers regarding road and weather information
- Discuss and recommend the closure with the MnDOT AME in terms of the duration and places for closing.
- Communicate staffing needs with the local county sheriffs. (MIMS protocol)
- Assign MSP personnel to Local Command Center/EOC at primary closure point(s).

County Sheriffs

- Make the arrangements to staff the closure point(s). (MIMS protocol)
- Follow specific incident instructions with regards to staffing locations and durations. This depends on specific storm locations and intensity.
- Public Information Officer (PIO) contact TOCC when Local Command Center/EOC is activated.

MnDOT Public Affairs Coordinator

- Provide timely and pertinent weather and travel condition information to the appropriate media anytime significant via group fax changes occur.

- Group fax should include Iowa DOT, Iowa State Patrol, TOCC, local sheriffs dispatch centers and county EOC.

Section 3: Monitoring the Closure Points

Roles and Responsibilities

MnDOT Transportation Equipment Operators

- Discuss monitoring the efforts with the Subarea Supervisor.

MnDOT Subarea Supervisors

- Monitor rad and weather conditions of the subarea and plan for opening the road.

MnDOT Superintendent

- Monitor the regional road and weather conditions and plan for reopening the road. Update key players on condition of closure.

Transportation Operations Control Center

- Monitor and update the system information as changes in road and weather conditions occur.

MnDOT Area Maintenance Engineer

- Assist the Superintendent as needed.

MnDOT Public Affairs Coordinator

- Provide timely and pertinent weather and travel condition information to the appropriate media.

Violations

- M.S. 160.271 (14) states that is unlawful for motorists to “drive over, through, or around any barricade, fence, or obstruction erected for the purpose of preventing traffic from passing over a portion of a highway closed to public travel or to remove, deface, or damage any such barricade, fence, or obstruction.” This violation is a misdemeanor.
- M.S. 160.27, Subdivision 9 states that a person who violates M.S. 160.2715 is “civilly liable for rescue costs” to be paid to “a state agency or political subdivision for costs incurred for the purpose of rescuing the person, any passengers, or the vehicle.” Furthermore, the state agency or political subdivision can bring a civil action to “recover the civil liability and related legal, administrative, and court costs.”

Section 4: Opening the Interstate

Criteria for opening the Interstate

To reopen the interstate, these conditions must be met:

- The interstate is cleared, so that nearly two lanes are open to traffic, without the use of special traffic control measures.
- One lane must be cleared for traffic and special traffic control measures are used, according to the Minnesota Field Manual for Temporary Traffic Control Layouts (latest version).
- All stalled vehicles are removed from the roadway (i.e. through lanes). Vehicles that are not blocking through traffic, but are stalled in ditches or along shoulders, shall not be the cause of holding up reopening the road to through traffic.
- Visibility is adequate and predicted to remain so for an extended period of time.

Roles and Responsibilities

MnDOT Transportation Equipment Operators

- Provide information to Subarea Supervisor on the conditions of the segments that would help to determine the possibility of opening.
- If requested, open and secure the ramps and traffic control devices.
- Report the closure point(s) and time of reopening to the Subarea Supervisor.

MnDOT Subarea Supervisor/Designee

- Monitor and report the subarea road and weather conditions to the TOCC.
- Advise the Superintendent on the possibility of opening segments of the roadway in the subarea.
- Follow specific incident directions from the Superintendent and direct the opening operations in the subarea.
- Ensure and guide the proper reporting of closure point(s) and times of reopening to the TOCC.
- Responsible for retrieving portable CMS.

MnDOT Superintendent

Based on monitoring and advice from the field:

- Decide on the time for opening the interstate.
- Direct the opening plan.
- Ensure the appropriate communication to the media through the Public Affairs Coordinator.
- Communicate with the Superintendents in adjacent regions and advise appropriate maintenance staff in Iowa.

- Consult with the State Patrol personnel to ensure the State Patrol agrees that the interstates should be reopened and decide whether a State Patrol vehicle should “pace” the traffic upon opening, especially when the road ahead is not yet fully opened.
- MIMS protocol continues.

Transportation Operations Control Center

- Report on MnCARS the periodic road and weather conditions, the times and segments of roadway that will open.
- Record the closure point(s) and times open from the field staff.
- Notify TMC area to deactivate permanent mount changeable message signs.

MnDOT Area Maintenance Engineer

- Assist the Superintendent as needed.

MN State Patrol Trooper

- Provide field information to the TOCC on the condition of the roadway segments that the trooper observes. This helps determine the possibility of opening.

MN State Patrol Captain/Designee

- Assemble information from the troopers and discuss with the Superintendent and AME.
- Continue to communicate with the county sheriffs.
- Assist the Superintendent in decision to “pace” traffic upon openings and arrange for “pace” vehicle.
- MIMS protocol continues.

MnDOT Public Affairs Coordinator

- Provide timely and pertinent weather and travel condition information to the appropriate media via a group fax including county sheriffs dispatch centers and EOC.
- Provide updates to Road and Vehicle Information and Services Stations regarding changes in road conditions.

Section 5: Post-Closure Evaluation

Roles and Responsibilities

MnDOT Transportation Equipment Operators

- Check the equipment for readiness.
- Participate in post-closure debriefing with supervisor.

MnDOT Subarea Supervisor

- Guide the equipment readiness checks of the transportation equipment operator (snowplow drivers)
- Conduct and participate in post-closure debriefing sessions.

MnDOT Superintendent

- Analyze post-closure debriefing information.
- Ensure appropriate adjustments are made.

Transportation Operations Control Center Dispatchers

- Participate in post-closure debriefing with Radio Communications Supervisor.
- Check communication equipment for readiness.

Transportation Operations Control Center Radio Communications Supervisor

- Guide the communication equipment readiness checks.
- Conduct and participate in post-closure debriefing with dispatchers.
- Report the results of the debriefing to the Maintenance Superintendents and attend debriefing meeting.

MnDOT Area Maintenance Engineer

- Assist the Maintenance Superintendent as needed.
- Where necessary lead any effort to revise systems and procedures indicated by the post-closure evaluations.
- Coordinate changes with all stakeholders.
- Coordinate post closure debriefing with key players.
- Set up debriefing meeting within 72 hours (as needed).

III. Non-Snow and Ice Emergency Closures

Section 1: Annual Preparation

Roles and Responsibilities

MnDOT Transportation Equipment Operators

- Check equipment for readiness

MnDOT Sign Shop Supervisor/Designee

- Check for equipment readiness
 - Barricade Trailer

MnDOT Subarea Supervisor

- Ensure that field system is in place and operational, including signs and changeable message signs.

MnDOT Superintendent

- If necessary, provide financial resourced to ensure closure readiness.
- Receive assurance that the closure plan is operational, notify Area Maintenance Engineer the status of operations. (MIMS protocol)
- Ensure that all communication systems are in place and functional. These systems include:
 - Radio communications
 - Group fax
 - Changeable message signs software and computer hardware
 - MnCARS
- Establish procedures to track financial information related to unnecessary rescue operations and to ensure appropriate billing.

Transportation Operations Control Center Radio Communication Supervisor

- Ensure all dispatchers receive training to operate these systems:
 - Activate Emergency Notification List (ENL)
 - MnCARS operations
 - Response to field needs assistance
 - Notify TMC area to activate permanent mount changeable message signs as needed
 - Radio communications
- Dispatchers
 - Sharpen skills to operate the above systems.

MnDOT Area Maintenance Engineer

- Receive assurance that all closure systems are ready and operational.
- Ensure all post-events evaluations are considered and systems and procedures are revised as necessary.
- MIMS protocol

County Sheriffs

- Request from the AME the use of the MnDOT radio frequency during emergencies (if desired). This is a one-time request.
- County sheriffs will contact local police for assistance if needed.
- MIMS protocol

Section 2: Closing the Interstates/Trunk Highways

MnDOT/State Patrol list of contacts as of **November 2023.**

Owatonna – MnDOT

Name	Title	Cell Phone	Office Phone
Tim Zierden	D6 West Area Maintenance Superintendent	507-456-5348	N/A
Mark Panek	D6 West Area Maintenance Engineer	507-363-1179	N/A
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Name	Title	Cell Phone	Office Phone
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Bryan Lillie	District 7 Area Maintenance Superintendent	507-327-8092	N/A

Metro – Adjacent MnDOT Maintenance

Name	Title/Hours of Operation	Cell Phone	Office Phone
Todd Stevens	Metro Area Maintenance Engineer	651-775-3714	651-234-7901
Bill Augello	Field Operations Manager	651-775-9531	651-234-7906
Metro Dispatcher	Staffed 24/7/365	N/A	651-234-7110
RTMC	Mon-Fri 5:00 am – 8:30 pm Sat 10:00 am – 6:00 pm Sun 11:00 am – 7:00 pm	N/A	651-234-7092

MnDOT Policy Guidelines for Closure of State Highways

Sever Winter Storms or Natural Disaster Responsibilities (Highway No. 83-2-G-1)

- See Appendix C

Criteria for staffing the closure

- Prior to closing the interstate, the AME and State Patrol Captain/Designee will confer and agree on the necessity of staffing the closure point(s).
- For initial purposes, MnDOT, State Patrol, and local sheriff office will coordinate the staffing of the closure point area(s). After the storm subsides and prior to re-opening. MnDOT, State Patrol, and local sheriff will coordinate.
- Every effort will be made to hire uniformed officer in marked cars.

The District State Patrol Captain/Designee contacts include:

- Iowa State Patrol
- Minnesota County Sheriffs/designee
- State Duty Officer

See Appendix G for the lists of MnDOT and State Patrol Contacts

Roles and Responsibilities

MnDOT Transportation Equipment Operators

- Provide advice to Subarea Supervisor on the need to close the interstate.
- Follow specific incident directions from the Subarea Supervisor to display advanced signing and closing.
- Make every attempt to “sweep” the closure segment in partnership with law enforcement officials to screen for standard motorists as needed.
- Report the results of the “sweep” to the Subarea Supervisor/Designee

MnDOT Subarea Supervisor

- Monitor weather forecasts and roadway condition reports from field staff to assess the need to close the interstate.
- Recommend to the Superintendent or the AME the need to close the interstate.
- Follow specific incident directions from the Superintendent and direct the subarea closure operation.
- Ensure and guide the proper reporting and “sweeps” of road segment to the TOCC.

MnDOT Superintendent

- Monitor weather forecasts and analyze road and weather condition reports from field staff, supervisors, and adjacent area Superintendents.
- Recommend and assist the AME with the closure decision and plan.
- Direct and communicate the closure plan to the Subarea Supervisors.

Transportation Operation Control Center

- Monitor and record roadway and weather conditions. Request assistance, if necessary.
- MnCARS update
- Record closure point(s) and times.
- Notify TMC area to activate permanent mount changeable message signs as needed.
- National Weather Service update.

MnDOT Area Maintenance Engineer

- Confer with the appropriate State Patrol Captain/designee and the Superintendent and agree on which method of road closure is appropriate.
- Decide which points are to be closed.
- Request State Patrol and the county sheriffs to arrange for manning the closure point(s).
- Work with the PAC to disseminate the appropriate communications.
- Inform the Transportation District Engineer of the decision to close the interstate.
- Assign designee to Local Command Center/EOC at primary closure point(s) if applicable.
- MIMS protocol as needed.

MN State Patrol Trooper

- Communicate with the TOCC and MnDOT informing of the road and weather condition that could lead to closing.

MN State Patrol Captain Designee

- Assemble information from the troopers regarding road and weather information.
- Discuss and recommend the closure with the AME in terms of the duration and places for closing.
- Communicate manning needs with the local county sheriffs. (MIS protocol)
- Assign MSP personnel to Local Command Center/EOC at primary closure point(s).

County Sheriffs

- Make the arrangements to staff the closure point(s) as needed.
- Follow specific incident instructions with regards to staffing locations and durations. This depends on specific events.
- Contact TOCC when Local Command Center/EOC is activated.
- MIMS protocol

MnDOT Public Affairs Coordinator

- Provide timely and pertinent weather and travel condition information to the appropriate media via a group fax anytime significant changes occur.
- Group fax should include local sheriff's dispatch centers and EOCs.

Section 3: Monitoring the Closure Points

Roles and Responsibilities

MnDOT Transportation Equipment Operators

- Discussing monitoring efforts with the Subarea Supervisor.

MnDOT Subarea Supervisor

- Monitor the road and weather conditions of the subarea and plan for opening the road.

MnDOT Superintendent

- Monitor the regional road and weather conditions and plan for reopening the road.
- Update key players on condition of closure.

Transportation Operations Control Center

- Monitor and update the system information as changes in road and weather conditions occur.

MnDOT Area Maintenance Engineer

- Assist the Superintendent as needed.

MSP/County Sheriffs/Local Law Enforcement Agencies

- Enforce closure violations.
- Provide the lead on rescue attempts.
- Enforce the new rescue law (M.S. 160.27, Subdivision 8) that provides “a person is liable to a state agency or political subdivision for costs incurred for the purpose of rescuing the person, any passenger, or the vehicle.” Civil liability cannot exceed \$10,000.
- Request MnDOT’s assistance with rescue efforts when needed.
- Coordinate staffing closure point(s) as necessary.

MnDOT Public Affairs Coordinator

- Provide timely and pertinent weather and travel condition information to the appropriate media.

Violations

- M.S 160.271 (14) states that is unlawful for motorists to “drive over, through, or around any barricade, fence, or obstruction erected for the purpose of preventing traffic from passing over a portion of a highway closed to public travel or to remove, deface, or damage any such barricade, fence, or obstruction.” This violation is a misdemeanor.

- M.S. 160.27, Subdivision 9 states that a person who violates M.S. 160.2715 is “civilly liable for rescue costs” to be paid to “a state agency or political subdivision for costs incurred for the purpose of rescuing the person, any passengers, or the vehicle.” Furthermore, the state agency or political subdivision can bring a civil action to “recover the civil liability and related legal, administrative, and court costs.”

Section 4: Opening the Interstate/Trunk Highways

Criteria for opening the Interstate/Trunk Highways

- To reopen the interstate/highways, these conditions must be met:
 - The interstate/highway is cleared so that nearly two lanes are open to traffic. Without the use of special traffic control measures.
 - One lane must be cleared for traffic and special traffic control measures are used, according to the Minnesota Field Manual for Temporary Traffic Control Layouts (latest version).
 - All stalled vehicles are removed from the roadway (i.e. through lanes). Vehicles that are not blocking through traffic, but are stalled in ditches or along shoulders, shall not be the cause of holding up reopening the road to through traffic.

Roles and Responsibilities

MnDOT Transportation Equipment Operators

- Provide information to Subarea Supervisor on the conditions of the segments that would help to determine the possibility of opening.
- If requested, open and secure the ramps and advanced signing.
- Report the closure point(s) and time of reopening to the Subarea Supervisor.

MnDOT Subarea Supervisor

- Monitor and report the subarea road and weather conditions to the TOCC.
- Advise the Superintendent on the possibility of opening segments of the roadway in the subarea.
- Follow specific incident directions from the Superintendent and direct the opening operations in the subarea.
- Ensure and guide the proper reporting of closure point(s) and times of reopening to the TOCC.

MnDOT Superintendent

- Based on monitoring and advice from the field, decide on the time for reopening the interstate.
- Direct the opening plan.
- Ensure the appropriate communication to the media through the PAC.

- Communicate with Superintendents in adjacent regions and advise appropriate maintenance staff in Iowa.
- Consult with State Patrol personnel to ensure agreement that the interstates should be reopened and decide whether a State Patrol vehicle should “pace” the traffic upon opening, especially when the road ahead is not yet fully opened.
- MMS protocol

MnDOT Area Maintenance Engineer

Assist the Superintendent as needed.

Transportation Operations Control Center

- Report on MnCARS the periodic road and weather conditions, the times and segments of roadway that will open.
- Record the closure point(s) and times open from the field staff.
- Notify TMC area to deactivate permanent mount changeable message signs.
- Notify sheriff’s dispatch centers and EOC.

MN State Patrol Trooper

- Provide field information to the TOCC on the condition of the roadway segments that the trooper observes. This helps determine the possibility of opening.

MN State Patrol Captain

- Assemble information from the troopers and discuss with the Superintendent and AME.
- Continue to communicate with the county sheriff’s dispatch centers and EOC.
- Assist the Superintendent in decision to “pace” traffic upon opening and arrange for “pace” vehicle.
- MIMS protocol

MnDOT Public Affairs Coordinator

- Provide timely and pertinent weather and travel condition information to the appropriate media via a group fax including sheriff dispatch centers and EOC.
- Provide updates to Road and Vehicle Information and Service Stations regarding changes in road conditions.

Section 5: Post-Closure Evaluation

Roles and Responsibilities

MnDOT Transportation Equipment Operators

- Check the equipment for readiness.
- Participate in post-closure debriefing with supervisor.

MnDOT Subarea Supervisor

- Guide the equipment for readiness checks of the transportation equipment operators.
- Conduct and participate in post-closure debriefing sessions.

MnDOT Superintendent

- Analyze post-closure debriefing information.
- Ensure appropriate adjustments are made.

Transportation Operations Control Center Dispatchers

- Participate in post-closure debriefing with the Radio Communications Supervisor.
- Check communication equipment for readiness.

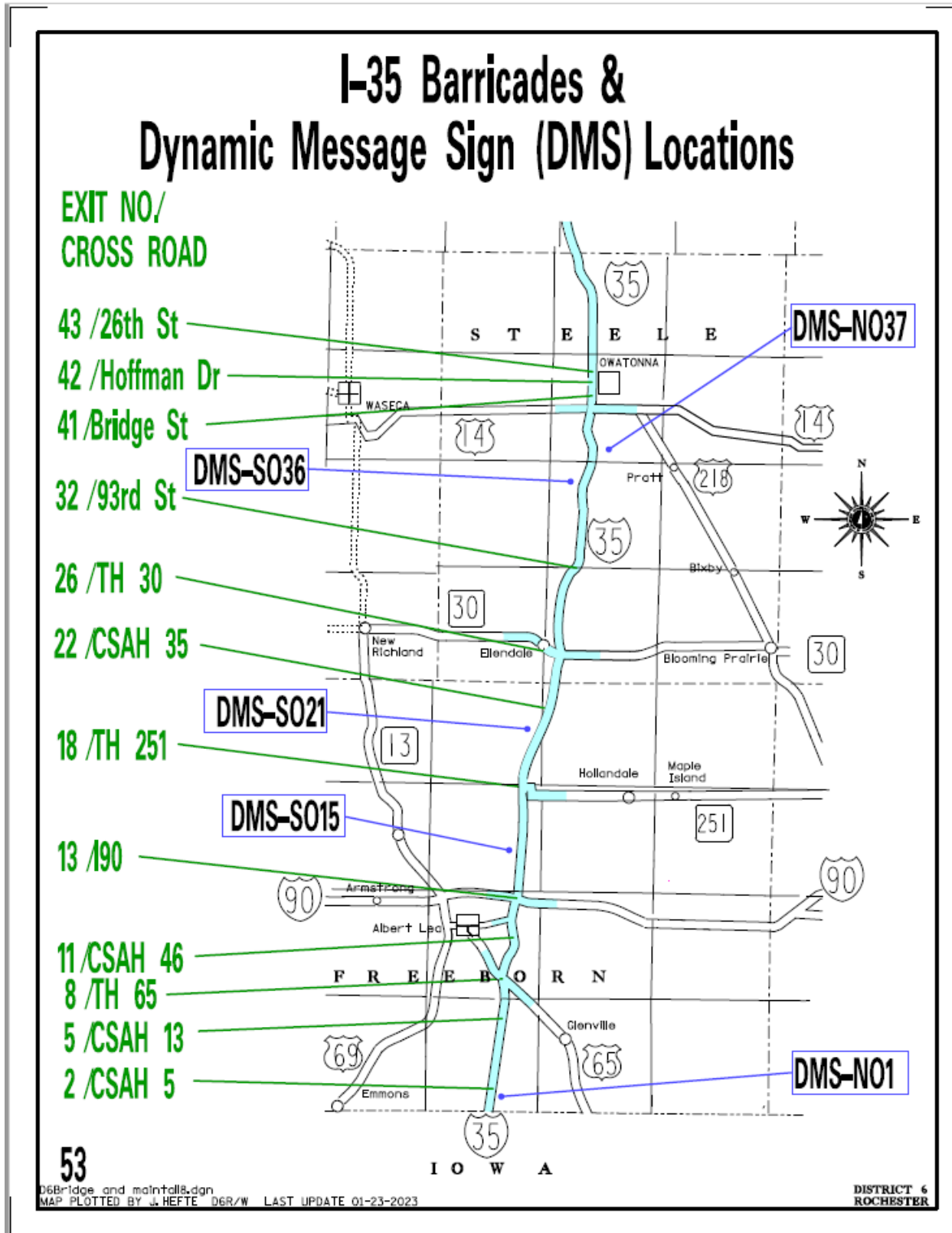
Transportation Operations Control Center Radio Communications Supervisor

- Guide the communication equipment readiness checks.
- Conduct and participate in post-closure debriefing with dispatchers.
- Report the results of the debriefings to the Maintenance Superintendent.
- Attend debriefing.

MnDOT Area Maintenance Engineer

- Assist the Maintenance Superintendent, as needed.
- Where necessary, lead any effort to revise systems and procedures indicated by the post-closure evaluations.
- Coordinate changes with all stakeholders.
- Coordinate post-closure debriefing with key players.
- MIMS protocol.

Appendix A: Map of Barricade Locations



Appendix B: Closure and Opening Tracking Form

Mn/L 1-35 Road Closure Report

Sheet ___ of ___
 Area _____
 District _____

(Report to be completed and filed for future reference for each event.)

Location	Time of Actual Closure	Date	Radio Call #	Initials of Dispatch	Comments	Sweep Completed	Time of Actual Opening	Date	Radio Call #	Comments

Appendix C: Closure State Highway, Severe Winter Storms, Natural Disaster

MnDOT Policy OP6.82.2

- [Policy](#)
- [Guideline](#)



Mn/DOT POLICY GUIDELINE

Date: September 7, 1983

Reference: Highways No. 83-2-G-1
Closure of State Highways
Severe Winter Storms or
Natural Disasters
Responsibilities

Guideline:

Communication is the key factor when a road becomes closed or it is decided to close the road. Information must flow between the departments involved with highway operations; public safety, road users, etc. Included are Highway Patrol Offices, Mn/DOT Area Maintenance Offices, Mn/DOT District Offices, Central Office – Mn/DOT and State Patrol, road user agencies and news media. At times, it may involve adjacent states, municipalities, counties and agencies such as the State Division of Emergency Services and Mn/DOT Office of Communications.

The following responsibilities are assigned to implement the above policy.

1. The following are the responsibilities of Mn/DOT Area Maintenance Engineers:
 - a. Notify and discuss the closure or barricading with District Engineer.
 - b. Notify and discuss the closure or barricading with District State Patrol Commander.
 - c. Notify adjacent Mn/DOT Maintenance Areas, counties, and municipalities through which the route passes.
 - d. Notify Mn/DOT Central Office Maintenance Emergency Operations Section.
 - e. Insure that local news media have been contacted.

2. The following are the responsibilities of the District State Patrol Commander:
 - a. Notify the Mn/DOT Area Maintenance Engineer of conditions that would require the closure of a highway.
 - b. Resolve requests from patrol officers to a close highway with the Mn/DOT Area Maintenance Engineer or Mn/DOT District Engineer.
 - c. Notify their field forces and central office.
 - d. Notify adjacent Patrol Districts.
 - e. Assist in notifying motorists.

3. The following are the responsibilities of Mn/DOT Central Office of Maintenance Emergency Operations Manager:

- a. Notify the Department of Transportation of any adjacent State that will be directly affected.
 - b. Notify any other State agencies or offices that need the information.
 - c. Coordinate with the State Patrol and the Office of Public Information on getting the information to motorists and the public. Incorporate the information in State Road Condition Reports.
4. The State Patrol Central Office shall:
- a. Contact the Mn/DOT Central Office of Maintenance if it is necessary to resolve District level disagreements on decisions-to-close.
 - b. Notify and coordinate with the Police Agencies of any adjacent affected States.
 - c. Notify affected State Patrol Districts not having the information.
 - d. Assist in getting the information to motorists and the public.

For Interstate routes and other major through routes, the re-opening of a route without warning may have as much impact on the adjacent State or District as the closure itself. It could permit a large number of vehicles to enter an area not yet prepared to accept them. Communications and actions by District and Central Offices of Mn/DOT and the State Patrol when considering a decision to re-open an Interstate or other major route should be handled in a manner similar to that used when considering a decision to close a route.

Position Statement Reference:

Issued under Mn/DOT Policy Position Statement Highways No. 83-2.

Background:

Currently, each Maintenance Area has its own policy on closing roads during severe winter storms or natural disasters. The policy and procedures were approved by the Maintenance Standards Advisory Committee with the assistance of the State Patrol, Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

R. J. McDonald, Deputy Commissioner

Any questions regarding this position statement should be directed to:

Lawrence F. McNamara, Assistant Commissioner – Operations, Room 413 Transportation Building. Telephone (612) 296-3008.



Mn/DOT POLICY POSITION STATEMENT

Date: September 7, 1983

Reference: Highways No. 83-2
Closure of State Highways
Severe Winter Storms or
Natural Disasters

Position Statement:

Every effort within the limits of available resources should be made to keep the highways open to traffic at all times.

Safety for the motorists and Mn/DOT employees are primary considerations of Mn/DOT.

Should weather deteriorate to a condition that requires closing the highway to all vehicular travel or should a natural disaster occur which makes the roadway impassable this policy sets forth the general method to follow.

Background:

DEFINITIONS:

Road "Closed" A road declared closed by word only through the news media or other informational sources. Because of the numerous access points to the roadway, it is deemed impractical to barricade all access to it.

Road "Barricaded" A road declared closed and barricaded to physically prevent travel. This would generally occur on freeways because of the minimal number of access points or on short sections of roadway where the local access to the highway can be reasonably controlled.

It is the responsibility of Mn/DOT Area Maintenance Engineer with the concurrence of the District Engineer to determine when a road should be closed or barricaded.

If there is immediate danger of the road becoming impassable or if visibility is so limited that safe travel is impossible, the Area Maintenance Engineer should declare the road "closed".

If conditions are such that the Area Maintenance Engineer deems it advisable and advantageous

to physically prohibit travel, he shall effect closing of the road by placing appropriate barricades and/or traffic control devices and shall declare the road “barricaded”. Prior to barricading a road, the Area Maintenance Engineer and State Patrol Commander will confer and agree on the necessity of this action. When the Area Maintenance Engineer and Commander agree that the motorist will need verbal instructions at the barricade, they will attempt to arrange for qualified personnel to provide these instructions.

The State Patrol has the authority to halt traffic and implement temporary road closures in matters relating to public safety; for example, to allow for emergency services following a major accident or series of accidents.

R. P. Braun, Commissioner

Any questions regarding this position statement should be directed to:
Lawrence F. McNamara, Assistant Commissioner – Operations, Room 413 Transportation Building, Telephone (612) 296-3008.

Appendix D: Pertinent Minnesota Statutes

[2022 Minnesota Statutes Chapter 160](#)

- [160.16 Warning Signs and Detour Signs Subd. 3; Barricades](#)
- [160.2715 Right-of-Way Use; Misdemeanors.](#)

160.16 MS 1953 [Repealed, 1957 c 943 s 72]

160.16 WARNING SIGNS AND DETOUR SIGNS.

Subdivision 1. **Contract to provide for warning signs.** Whenever the road authorities enter into a contract for the construction or improvement of any road, culvert, or bridge thereon they shall, as a condition of the contract, provide therein that the contractor shall place suitable warning signs at the highways intersecting the road so to be constructed or improved warning the public that the road under construction or improvement is impassable at a designated place or distance from the warning sign. The signs shall be placed at such places as will obviate unnecessary travel by persons not otherwise aware of the impassable condition of the roads. Nothing in the provisions of chapters 160 to 165 shall make any town, county, or the state liable in damages for the failure of the road authorities to provide in any contract for the erection of a warning sign as is herein provided for, or the failure of any contractor to erect same in accordance herewith.

Subd. 2. **Contractor to place detour signs.** The contractor, lead supervisor, or person in charge of work or repairs on any public road shall, when the doing of the work or repairs necessitates the closing of a part of the road to traffic, post signs stating that the road is under repair and describing the direction and distance of the detour necessary to avoid the part of the road being repaired. The signs shall be posted at the intersection of the road under repair with the road to be traveled while detouring and at appropriate intervals along the road.

Subd. 3. **Barricades.** The road authorities may also provide, by contract or otherwise, for the erection of barricades, fences or other obstructions so as to prevent traffic from entering any impassable section of road or a section closed to public travel.

History: 1959 c 500 art 1 s 16; 1986 c 444

160.2715 RIGHT-OF-WAY USE; MISDEMEANORS.

(a) Except for the actions of the road authorities, their agents, employees, contractors, and utilities in carrying out their duties imposed by law or contract, and except as herein provided, it shall be unlawful to:

- (1) obstruct any highway or deposit snow or ice thereon;
- (2) plow or perform any other detrimental operation within the road right-of-way except in the preparation of the land for planting permanent vegetative cover or as authorized under section 160.232;
- (3) erect a fence on the right-of-way of a trunk highway, county state-aid highway, county highway, or town road, except to erect a lane fence to the ends of a livestock pass;
- (4) erect or reconstruct driveway headwalls in or on the right-of-way of a highway or road, except as may be allowed by permit from the road authority imposing reasonable regulations as are necessary to prevent interference with the construction, maintenance, and safe use of the highway or road and its appurtenances;
- (5) dig any holes in any highway, except to locate markers placed to identify sectional corner positions and private boundary corners;
- (6) remove any earth, gravel, or rock from any highway;
- (7) obstruct any ditch draining any highway or drain any noisome materials into any ditch;
- (8) place or maintain any building or structure within the limits of any highway;
- (9) place or maintain any advertisement within the limits of any highway, except as provided in section 160.27, subdivision 7;
- (10) paint, print, place, or affix any advertisement or any object within the limits of any highway, except as provided in section 160.27, subdivision 7;
- (11) deface, mar, damage, or tamper with any structure, work, material, equipment, tools, signs, markers, signals, paving, guardrails, drains, or any other highway appurtenance on or along any highway;
- (12) remove, injure, displace, or destroy right-of-way markers, or reference or witness monuments, or markers placed to preserve section or quarter-section corners;
- (13) improperly place or fail to place warning signs and detour signs as provided by law;
- (14) drive over, through, or around any barricade, fence, or obstruction erected for the purpose of preventing traffic from passing over a portion of a highway closed to public travel or to remove, deface, or damage any such barricade, fence, or obstruction.

(b) Any violation of this section is a misdemeanor.

History: 1959 c 500 art 1 s 27; 1973 c 123 art 5 s 7; 1980 c 435 s 1; 1980 c 533 s 2; 1986 c 398 art 27 s 2; 1986 c 435 s 1; 1989 c 179 s 2; 1995 c 23 s 1; 1998 c 283 s 1; 2004 c 295 art 2 s 15

Appendix E: Contacts

MnDOT District 6

Name	Title	Cell Phone	Office Phone
Tim Zierden	West Area Maintenance Superintendent	507-456-5348	N/A
Mark Panek	West Area Maintenance Engineer	507-363-1179	N/A
Ron Heim	Owatonna Subarea Supervisor	507-456-5340	507-446-5507
Dave Johnson	Faribault Transp. Operations Supervisor	507-456-5353	507-446-5508
Cam Ihrke	Albert Lea Subarea Supervisor	507-456-5346	507-379-3414
Kim Swanson	Albert Lea Assistant Supervisor	507-906-0813	507-379-3414
Brandon Enzenauer	Albert Lea Transp. Generalist Sr.	507-456-2615	507-379-3414
Linda Kral	Albert Lea Transp. Generalist Sr.	507-456-5350	507-379-3414
Derrick Crews	Austin Subarea Supervisor	507-456-5342	507-434-2776
Jake Siemers	Dodge Center Transp. Operations Supervisor	507-906-0890	507-374-9378
Drew Fischbach	East Area Maintenance Superintendent	507-273-0668	507-286-7575
Neil Hjelmeland	Dresbach Subarea Supervisor	507-273-0668	507-286-7575
Maceo "Kong" Douangdy	Stewartville Subarea Supervisor	507-951-2442	507-533-4413
Joe Fieseler	Winona Subarea Supervisor	507-251-0139	507-205-6407

James Smidt	Signs Supervisor	507-251-2095	507-286-7618
Mike Dougherty	Public Engagement, Communications Director	507-251-2749	507-286-7684

Minnesota State Patrol

Name	Title	Phone	Alternate Phone
Brian Buck	Rochester Patrol Captain	507-923-2051	OneCall 320-318-1162
Jean Cemensky	Mankato Patrol Captain	507-363-1179	OneCall 320-289-6598
Mitch Elzen	Lieutenant	507-923-2047 cell	507-701-1121 office

Iowa Contacts

Name	Title	Cell Phone	Office Phone
Dana Knutson	Lieutenant – Iowa State Patrol	641-430-7695	641-424-3625
Barry Thede	District 2 Area Maintenance Manager – Iowa DOT	641-430-1469	641-422-9475
Pete Andera	District 2 Highway Maintenance Superintendent – Iowa DOT	641-425-2236	641-896-3100
Jared Arbegast	Sargent – Iowa DOT MVE	515-433-2716	515-237-3219
Pat O'Donnell	Equipment Operator Senior – Iowa DOT	641-430-2486	641-423-9441
John Chrencik	Garage Operations Assistant – Iowa DOT	641-425-0674	641-896-3100
Joel Monroe	District Operations Manager – Iowa DOT	563-880-0410	641-394-5634
Pete Roth	Chief – Clear Lake Police Department	N/A	641-357-7172
Jeff Brinkley	Chief – Mason City Police Department	N/A	641-421-3650

Steve O'Neil	Coordinator – Cerro Gordo Emergency Mgmt.	641-425-0640	641-421-3665
E911	Worth County	N/A	641-324-2481
Iowa Traffic Management Center	IA IIDOT	563-880-0410	641-394-5634

Mankato – Adjacent MnDOT

Name	Title	Cell Phone	Office Phone
Scott Morgan	District 7 Area Maintenance Engineer	507-327-7149	507-327-6589
Chase Fester	District 7 Assistant Maintenance Engineer	507-822-3086	N/A
Bryan Lillie	District 7 Area Maintenance Superintendent	507-327-8092	N/A
Doris Degenstein	District 7 Public Affairs Coordinator	507-381-1557	507-304-6107

Metro – Adjacent MnDOT Maintenance

Name	Title/Hours of Operation	Cell Phone	Office Phone
Todd Stevens	Metro Area Maintenance Engineer	651-775-3714	651-234-7901
Bill Augello	Field Operations Manager	651-775-9531	651-234-7906
Metro Dispatcher	Staffed 24/7/365	N/A	651-234-7110
RTMC	Mon-Fri 5:00 am – 8:30 pm Sat 10:00 am – 6:00 pm Sun 11:00 am – 7:00 pm	N/A	651-234-7092

Other Minnesota Contacts

Name	Title	Cell Phone	Office Phone
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Ryan Shea	Freeborn County Sheriff	507-402-8468	507-377-5105
Todd Earl	Chief Deputy Freeborn Co. Sheriff's Office	507-402-8892	507-377-5235
Rich Hall	Emergency Manager Director Freeborn Co. Sheriff's Office	507-377-5205	507-377-5221
Lon Thiele	Steele County Sheriff	N/A	507-444-2454
Kristen Sailer	Director - Steele County Emergency & Risk Management	507-475-9631	507-444-7501
Tom Karnauskas	Deputy Director – Steele County Emergency & Risk Management	507-461-4521	507-444-7502
Megan Norbeck	Deputy Emergency Management Director – Steele County Emergency & Risk Management	507-461-7524	507-444-7503
Greg Ilkka	Engineer – Steele County Highway Department	N/A	507-444-7671
Kevin Lindquist	Operations Maintenance Supervisor – Steele County Highway Department	507-676-6069	507-444-7570