



Roadway Incident Response : Program Status Update

The Roadway Incident Response Program is a coordinated effort by the Metro Nashville Department of Public Works, the Metropolitan Police Department, and the Mayor's Office of Emergency Management to assist the traffic flow on streets and roadways in emergency situations. This program was initiated in November 2003.

Roadway Incident Response vehicles are available for assistance and are equipped with various traffic control devices including Electronic Variable Message Signs for redirecting traffic and sharing vital information about an emergency situation to motorists. Currently, operational hours are Monday through Friday, 6am until 11pm, and on-call for weekends.

The purpose of the program is to provide the following services:

- Reduce traffic delays caused by vehicle accidents, stalled vehicles, and other lane closing situations on Metro Roadways
- Remove debris, handle small fuel spills, and other traffic obstructions, which may impede or possibly cause or contribute to an accident
- Assist in traffic control during special events in order to reduce area congestion and direct participants in the proper direction
- Aid in scene management during emergency situations involving Police, Fire, OEM units
- Provide help to disabled motorists by assisting in making arrangements for towing, providing small amounts of gasoline, and other minor repair needs

Since the program was implemented in November 2003, the Roadway Incident Response Team has provided protection from oncoming traffic and assisted in getting broken down vehicles on their way to over 1684 motorists who otherwise would have been at risk and stranded. Some of the services provided included changing tires, providing fuel, battery boosts, and calling for a tow truck. Not only does this help the average citizen when their vehicle becomes disabled, it also helps to keep the surrounding traffic flowing by getting everything back to normal as soon as possible.

In addition, these units have worked over 731 traffic accidents since program implementation. These units assisted Police, Fire, and other emergency responders by providing protection for those officers involved in the accident investigation and responders treating the injured on the scene. Through the use of Emergency Lights and Electronic Variable Message Signs mounted on the vehicles, the Roadway Incident Response Units provide traffic control by directing other motorists around the scene, which increases safety for all.

The success of this program has led to requests for an expansion and soon more Roadway Incident Response Units will be hitting the road to answer that call. More specific plans for expanding the program will be available in 2005.

As Nashville continues to grow and traffic becomes more congested, Metro Public Works will be patrolling local streets and roadways, helping those in need, and providing greater safety to both the motoring public and emergency responders.



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Following is an e-mail received from the Metro Police Department in August 2004.

On Thursday, August 5th, a West Bike officer discovered an odd sight in the intersection of Wedgewood at 12th Avenue South. An old 1973 Ford pickup truck with the hood raised was turning circles in the roadway. There was no driver. The vehicle was traveling fast enough that it was unapproachable. I sent officers to help block the intersection while we considered our options. We have spike strips, but we quickly determined that these could not be used because the vehicle could keep going in a more haphazard manner. I asked whether there were any units available without an airbag, and we only had one vehicle available. Officers on the scene quickly advised that the truck was moving far too fast for this to occur safely. A medical unit was requested to stand by in case injuries were received during this sort of a maneuver. It was quickly becoming clear that we couldn't go without action for much longer because the truck was circling closer to a sidewalk, which could have sent it careening down a hill or into the adjacent gasoline pumps. Then, I thought to request a "Baby DOT" truck, as we affectionately call the Public Works trucks. You can't imagine how glad I was to hear that one was nearby. I requested that they run emergency to the scene and they did. Within two minutes, your truck, operated by George Allen, was on the scene. He gave the driverless truck one push, and quickly pushed it again when there wasn't enough response. Mr. Allen safely stopped the truck on the second attempt without any damage to the truck, any injury to any persons or other property, and with minimal damage to the Baby DOT truck. Myself and the other supervisors who were having to try to come up with ways to deal with this situation were SO relieved! Please pass on our gratitude. The training these guys receive was evident today. George Allen did a great job. Our flimsy patrol units would have been no match for that heavy truck, but without your guys we wouldn't have had another option.

THANKS!!

**Sgt. T. Chick
Metro Police Dept, Nashville
Acting Lieutenant, B Detail West**