

Traffic Incident Management Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2026



Who We Are

The Iowa TIM Team is led by Ted Shipley (Statewide TIM Coordinator), Dawn Williams (TIM Program Planner), and Dan Noonan-Day (TIM Program Administrator.) The TIM Team’s goal is to create a coalition of responders and partners dedicated to keeping motorists and responders safe while restoring traffic flow as quickly, and as safely, as possible after an incident. Together, these groups form a unified front to reduce secondary crashes, protect lives, and keep Iowa’s roadways moving.

Our Mission Statement

The Iowa TIM Team is dedicated to ensuring the safety of responders and the public through coordinated, multi-agency collaboration and rapid, efficient response to traffic incidents. We strive to protect lives, minimize roadway disruption, and uphold a commitment to excellence in service and continuous improvement.

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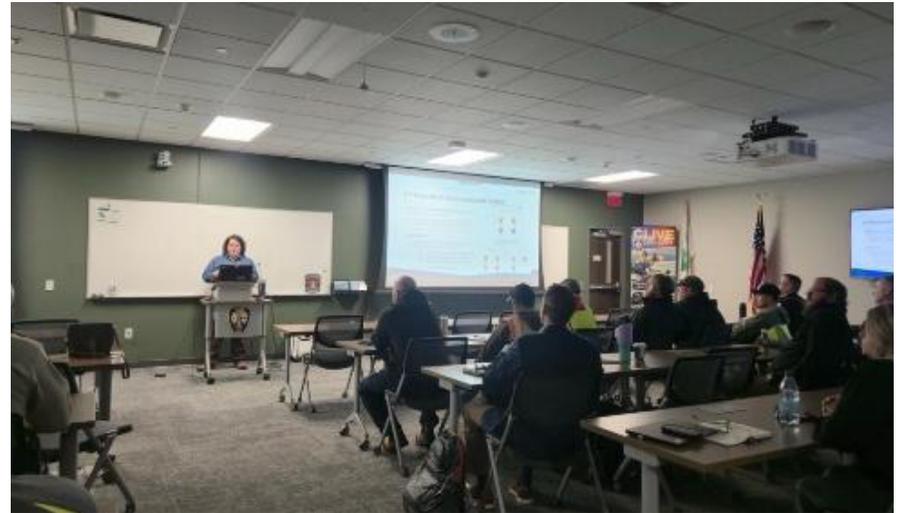
Looking Ahead: Iowa DOT TIM Team Priorities for 2026

As 2026 began, the Iowa DOT Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Team prepared for a busy year focused on improving responder safety, strengthening interagency coordination, and expanding TIM knowledge across the state. Building on lessons learned and strong partnerships, the team continued working with responders and stakeholders to promote safe and efficient incident response on Iowa's roadways.

In February, district-wide TIM meetings were held across the state. These meetings highlighted how the Traffic Management Center (TMC) supported responders in real time through communication, monitoring, and coordination during incidents. Attendees also learned more about the Highway Helper program and how it assisted with traffic control, scene safety, and clearance efforts, as well as how 511 served as a valuable tool to enhance situational awareness and improve traveler information during incidents.

TIM Responder Training will continue to ramp up throughout the year as Iowa contributes to the Federal Highway Administration's national goal of training 1,000,000 responders across the United States. The TIM Team will focus on increasing training opportunities and reaching responders from all disciplines, reinforcing best practices that reduce secondary crashes, protect responders on scene, and support quick clearance principles. These training efforts remain a cornerstone of Iowa's commitment to traffic incident management and responder safety.

The TIM Team also remains available to support agencies through incident research, data collection and analysis, and facilitation of after-action reviews. By bringing responders together to discuss what worked well and identify opportunities for improvement, these reviews help strengthen communication, coordination, and overall response effectiveness. As always, the Iowa DOT TIM Team looks forward to collaborating with partners statewide in 2026 to continue advancing traffic incident management and keeping responders and the traveling public safe.



Highway Helper Response Highlights Safety and Hands-On Training

During a recent response to a disabled vehicle in Lane 1, the Highway Helper team demonstrated both strong incident response practices and a commitment to training the next generation of operators. A tow unit had already been dispatched to the scene, but the Highway Helper crew responded to assist with traffic control and ensure the safety of both the stranded motorist and approaching traffic.

The response also served as a valuable hands-on learning opportunity. Brendan and Paul worked alongside trainee Jordan, walking through proper scene management procedures and reinforcing the importance of situational awareness while operating in live traffic environments.

Upon arrival, the team quickly implemented proper traffic control measures to establish a safe work zone. Front cones were placed approximately three to four car lengths ahead of the disabled vehicle to create a protective buffer for responders and the motorist. To further protect the scene, an additional six cones were positioned behind the vehicle as part of the Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) setup, guiding approaching motorists safely around the incident and helping maintain steady traffic flow.

Responses like this demonstrate the importance of teamwork, training, and consistent adherence to Traffic Incident Management principles. By combining effective traffic control with real-world training opportunities, the Highway Helper team continues to enhance safety for motorists while preparing new operators to respond confidently and effectively to roadway incidents.

Guns N' Hoses Charity Hockey Game Brings Community Together

Public safety professionals recently took to the ice in West Des Moines for the annual Guns N' Hoses Charity Hockey Game at the MidAmerican Energy Company RecPlex. The event featured firefighters and law enforcement officers facing off in a friendly competition while raising money for charity. The game brought together first responders and community members for an afternoon of hockey and support for a good cause. Events like Guns N' Hoses continue to highlight the strong partnership between public safety agencies and the communities they serve, while celebrating the dedication and camaraderie of Iowa's first responders.



State Wrestling Tournament

District 1 – Des Moines

From February 18–21, 2026, approximately 60,000 families traveled to Des Moines to attend the Iowa State Wrestling Tournament at the newly renamed Casey's Center.

To put that into perspective, this influx of visitors was roughly equivalent to the entire population of Dubuque arriving in downtown Des Moines over the course of the event.

Thanks to strong coordination and proactive planning, the large crowds were managed safely and efficiently without any major incidents. The Des Moines Police Department played a key role in securing city streets and directing traffic to available parking areas, helping maintain steady traffic flow throughout the downtown corridor. At the same time, the Traffic Management Center supported operations by utilizing three overhead Dynamic Message Signs (DMS) along I-235 to guide motorists to the appropriate exit ramps. This effort highlights how coordination and traffic management strategies help support large-scale events safely and efficiently.

Responder Safety Starts With Us

In February, Iowa TIM partners gathered for an After-Action Review following a complex incident on US-18 near Ventura involving extremely limited visibility conditions and a firefighter being struck while operating on scene. The review brought together fire, law enforcement, and Iowa DOT personnel to evaluate the response and identify opportunities to improve responder safety and traffic management during similar events. Responders noted that fog and blizzard-like conditions created near-zero visibility for approaching traffic, particularly in areas with hills that limited sight distance. Participants emphasized the importance of earlier upstream traffic control, expanded warning zones, and proactive speed reduction strategies to better protect responders working in hazardous conditions.

The discussion also reinforced the need to balance resources on scene. While adequate staffing is critical, too many vehicles or personnel can unintentionally create additional hazards. Clear role assignments, minimal essential staffing, and timely demobilization were identified as key practices for maintaining safe and efficient incident scenes. Strong communication and coordination among agencies were identified as essential components of the response. Early notification to the Traffic Management Center (TMC), coordination with law enforcement, and shared situational awareness helped responders manage the incident environment more effectively.

The review also reinforced that even modest speed reductions upstream—such as slowing traffic from approximately 50 mph to 30 mph—can greatly improve safety for responders working on the roadway. Despite the challenging conditions, responders successfully managed a complex operational environment and maintained control of traffic approaching the scene. The AAR demonstrated the continued commitment of Iowa’s TIM partners to improving responder safety, strengthening interagency coordination, and learning from real-world incidents to enhance future responses across the state.

How Your Agency Can Partner With the TIM Team

The Iowa DOT’s TIM Team stands ready to assist all responders throughout the state by hosting After-Action Reviews (AARs.) These discussions are held in a classroom setting and provide the group time to learn from each other’s perspective for further understanding of what went well, what could be improved upon, and how we can apply better techniques down the road.

The below QR code can be utilized to request an AAR. Once the form is received by the TIM Team, an investigation is conducted to gather crash reports, data points, and all relevant information to the incident. While this information is being collected, a date, time, and location will be decided on by the requesting agency and invites will be sent out to all personnel involved and those who want to engage as well. The most important piece to a successful AAR discussion are all attendees keeping an open mind.

Request an After-Action Review

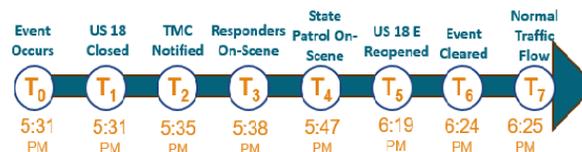


Incident Overview
 On December 23, 2025, emergency responders were operating at a crash scene on US-18 near Ventura when a Ventura Fire Department firefighter was struck by a passing vehicle while managing traffic and scene operations. The firefighter sustained non-life-threatening injuries and was transported to a local hospital. The vehicle was stopped by law enforcement, and the roadway was temporarily closed to restore scene safety and investigate.

Why This Matters
 This incident occurred after responders were already on scene, highlighting the ongoing danger of secondary impacts and traffic intrusion — even during routine traffic control and cleanup.

Key TIM Focus Areas for Review

- Was traffic control established early and clearly?
- Were blocking, tapering, and advance warning sufficient for approaching motorists?
- Was there adequate space for responders to work safely?



TIM Tip of the Quarter

Emergency lighting is essential for alerting motorists to an incident scene and protecting responders working along the roadway. However, during nighttime operations or in reduced-visibility conditions such as fog, snow, or heavy rain, overly bright or rapidly flashing emergency lights can unintentionally create additional hazards.

High-intensity lighting can cause glare, wash out other important visual cues, and reduce a driver's ability to clearly identify responders, traffic control devices, and lane closures ahead. When visibility is already limited, motorists approaching an incident scene may struggle to process too many competing light sources. Rapidly flashing lights can overwhelm a driver's eyes, making it harder to determine the direction of travel or identify where responders are located. In some cases, glare from emergency lights can actually reduce a driver's reaction time rather than improve it.

Whenever equipment allows, responders should consider dimming emergency lights or reducing flash intensity once a scene is established and proper traffic control is in place. Slowing flash patterns and limiting unnecessary lighting can help minimize glare while still maintaining adequate warning to approaching traffic. This simple adjustment helps drivers better interpret the scene ahead and can significantly improve safety for responders working on the roadway.

From the Field

“I enjoy conducting TIM trainings for the opportunity to communicate with other responders from various disciplines. It goes well beyond presenting the material. When we have a better understanding one another and the challenges we all face, it makes it easier to work together and safely and efficiently manage traffic incidents. At each training it is my goal that every attendee takes even one small piece of information that will help them remain safe while dealing with the dangers of traffic incidents.”

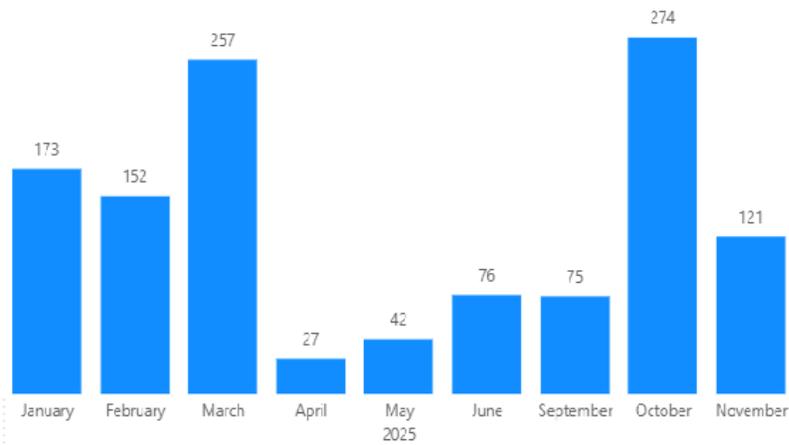


Lt. Jeremy Andreasen has conducted the most TIM Responder Trainings in 2026 and has successfully trained 68 responders in District 5 as of January 22, 2026.

His dedication to advancing Traffic Incident Management education continues to strengthen responder safety and coordination across the region. Congratulations and thank you, Lt. Andreasen, for your continued commitment to training Iowa's responders!

TIM Responder Training Statistics of 2025 & 2026

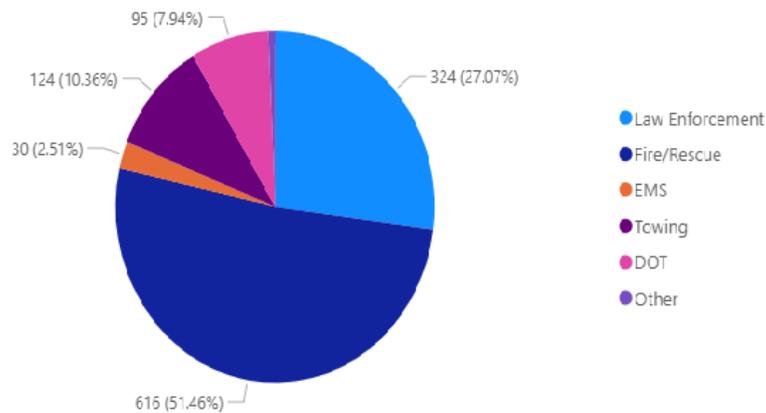
TIM Trained Responders Over Time



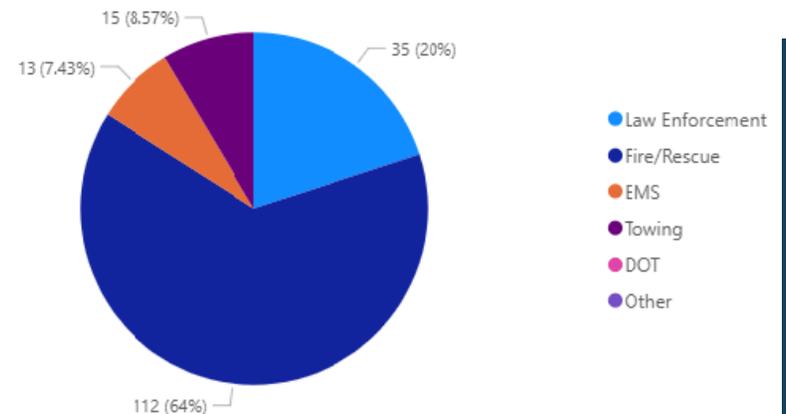
TIM Trained Responders Over Time



Total Responders Trained by Discipline



Total Responders Trained by Discipline



Find the next [TIM Responder Training](#)

Contact

TED SHIPLEY

Statewide TIM Coordinator
Ted.Shipley@iowadot.us

DAWN WILLIAMS

TIM Program Planner
Dawn.Williams@iowadot.us

DAN NOONAN-DAY

TIM Administrator
Dan.Noonan-Day@iowadot.us



Reach out to the Iowa TIM Team to schedule a TIM Responder Training!

These classes are scheduled by request and we are happy to train as many personnel as possible to keep Iowa safe.

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