

TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT FOR THE BALTIMORE REGION (TIMBR) COMMITTEE

Wednesday, March 6, 2024
10:00 A.M.

MINUTES

1. WELCOME AND SELF-INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Eileen Singleton welcomed attendees and attendees introduced themselves. She noted that Chair JJ Lynott was unable to attend.

2. REVIEW OF MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 6, 2023

There were no comments on the minutes.

3. USE OF GREEN EMERGENCY LIGHTS

Mr. Kevin Fox and Ms. Roxane Mukai presented on the history and use of green flashing warning lights on highway maintenance and service vehicles.

The bill allowing use of green lights was passed by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor in 2022; and it took effect on October 1, 2022. The law allowed highway maintenance and service vehicles to add green lights. The law includes that the number of green lights must be equal to and not exceed the number of amber lights. The law is Maryland Transportation Article Section 22-218.

At the time this legislation was moving through Maryland legislature, 12 states had already allowed use of other colored lights with amber and four states had started using green lights on maintenance vehicles with positive results.

MDOT SHA and MDTA do not have the green lights installed yet; green lights will be installed on dump trucks, maintenance of traffic trucks, trailer attenuators, team leader trucks, and maintenance bucket trucks.

Ms. Mukai noted that owners of private sector vehicles are supposed to get approval for use of colored flashing service lights from MDOT Motor Vehicle Administration; she added that this is not always done.

In the early 2000, lighting studies were finding that too much lighting could hamper visibility of responders on incident scenes. Over the last few years, the lighting standards have been undergoing updates to incorporate latest safety and research findings. Over the last several years, SAE updated its vehicle lighting standards. The current NFPA lighting standard, 2024 NFPA 1900, combines and updates several previous lighting standards. Previous standards had included only minimum lighting, to ensure visibility during the day but no maximum standard. The new standard includes maximum standard for nighttime lighting as guidance in an appendix; there is not enough research to define a maximum yet; that is expected in the next update in 2028.

Maryland has updated [MD 104.01-18A Standard for Vehicle Conspicuity and Lighting of Work Vehicles](#) to allow green lights to be used on highway maintenance vehicles used for snow removal or protection of highway workers. Green lights must be used with amber lights in an alternating pattern, with the number of green lights not more than the number of amber lights. The lights must also be “symmetrical” meaning light is spread in all directions.

Ms. Mukai provided a summary of vehicle lighting history, details are in the presentation.

Research found that the best combination for visibility is green-amber lighting. Recent NCHRP [Report 1085 Development of Guidelines for Vehicle and Equipment Marking and Lighting](#) provides a summary of research and guidelines for vehicle and equipment color, marking, and lighting practices. Conclusions of the study (see slides 18 – 20) found:

- Vehicle markings improve scene worker visibility at night as long as the markings are common and simple.
- Use of more lights in an array increases the message of urgency ahead but the increased lights also increases distraction and glare.
- Use of multi-color lights increases driver perception of urgency, particularly because green is still a new color so draws driver attention. In the future, it’s unknown if this impact of green and amber will still be as impactful.
- An asynchronous flash pattern reduces driver ability to detect workers. It also conveys a less urgent situation than an alternating pattern.

It is important to be able to control the intensity of flashing lights.

CHART patrol vehicles are registered as emergency vehicles and use red lights so those vehicles will not use green lights (or red and green).

There was a question about whether green lights would make drivers think they should go, but the research found that this was not the case.

SHA put out a press release in July 2023, to inform the public about the use of green lights.

It is important that green lights only be used on allowed vehicles so drivers continue to pay attention to them when the lights are encountered on the road.

[Presentation: Roadway Vehicle and Equipment Warning Lights]

4. STATE AND LOCAL TIM UPDATES

- TIM Training Update
 - Maryland has trained 44.9% responders.
 - Mr. Fox noted that he is waiting for the updated TIM training course materials from FHWA; the update will incorporate information from the newest versions of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and the Model Minimum Uniform Crash Criteria (MMUCC). He will customize the national version for Maryland as had been done previously.
 - Mr. Fox wants to reengage with the trained trainers once the updated course is available.
 - Each state gets allocated funds through the FHWA State Transportation Innovation Council (STIC). These funds are allocated through each state STIC group, overseen at the state. This could be a source of funds for TIM.
- [HB0513 Motor Vehicles – Work Zone Speed Control Systems](#) - Revisions (Maryland Road Worker Protection Act of 2024; cross-filed with SB0479)
 - The impetus for the legislation is the work zone crash in March 2023.
 - Staff from various organizations testified in support of this bill, including MSP.
 - The bill includes: increase in fines for speeding in a work zone (to bring the fine to the level of an in person citation), allowing local jurisdictions to use speed cameras in work zones, and allowing multiple speed cameras to be used in a work zone.
- State Towing Updates
 - First Sergeant John Pietanza provided an update on tow rates. The state Tow Committee approved new tow rates for state police for medium and heavy tow trucks. The new rates went into effect in February. The new rates are above the industry standard; the goal is to have greater availability of towers.
 - The Tow Committee will meet once per year to review the rates and outcomes.
 - There was no update related to towing electric vehicles.
- General TIM Updates:
 - April 15 to 19 is National Work Zone Safety Awareness Week. There will be a national press event on April 16 from 12 PM to 1 PM (the press event will be invitation only). It will be held on westbound I-70 at the top of the triple bridges, necessitating road closures including westbound I-70 coming out of the park and ride lot. There will also be a response vehicle unity ride in memory of the six roadway workers that were killed. The ride will start at BWI at 11:45 AM and end at the state fairgrounds in Timonium about 2 PM.
 - FHWA is working with state staff to prepare the Maryland version of the MUTCD.
 - CHART Eastern Shore Transportation Operations (ESTO) will start the weekend before Memorial Day. There will be ramp management on both sides of the bridge to keep travelers on the main road and off side roads (in effect eastbound on Friday and Saturday and westbound on Saturday and Sunday). Ramps just prior to the bridge will be closed (Oceanic Drive going eastbound and MD Route 8 going westbound).

- Upcoming events:
 - March 28th is Orioles opening day.
 - Maryland Fleet Week will be June 12 – 18 and take place at the Inner Harbor and Martin State Airport. Planning is underway.
 - Maryland Cycling Classic will be September 1, being held again over Labor Day weekend.
 - Maryland Highway Safety Summit will be May 13. There will be a TIM session on the agenda.
 - Intelligent Transportation Society of Maryland Tech Fair in Annapolis on March 20. There will be a demonstration of [RealScene Extended Reality training tool](#) from Jacobs. Anyone can attend.

[Handout: Traffic Incident Management for the Baltimore Region Committee, March 6, 2023]

5. OTHER BUSINESS

2024 meetings: June 5, September 4, December 4

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ATTENDEES

Members:

Golnaz Askari, MDOT State Highway Administration OTMO
Andrew Burke, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments/TPB
Kevin Fox, MDOT State Highway Administration OTMO
Qiana Gabriel, Baltimore City Dept. of Transportation
Sgt. John Harvey, MDTA Police
Breck Jeffers, Federal Highway Administration, Maryland Division
Bill Johnson, MDOT State Highway Administration
Tanya King, Daniel Consultants
Jeremy Lanning, MDOT State Highway Administration OTMO
David Larsen, MDOT
David Lewis, Maryland Fire Chief's Association/Cumberland Valley Firemen's Association
Alvin Marquess, Jacobs
Roxane Mukai, Maryland Transportation Authority
Tim Peck, MDOT State Highway Administration OTMO
F/Sgt. John Pietanza, Maryland State Police, CHART Liaison
Lt. David Ryan, Maryland State Police
Raj Sharma, MDOT SHA OTMO
Sgt. Mike Smith, Baltimore Co Police
Eric Tabacek, Anne Arundel Co Dept. of Public Works
Lt. Chris Valentine, Howard Co Police
Jennifer Woo, Howard Co. Dept. of Public Works

Staff and Guests

Cindy Burch, Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC)
Eileen Singleton, BMC