Federal Highway Administration Road Weather Management Program

SAVING LIVES AND PRESERVING MOBILITY UNDER THE WORST CONDITIONS

Weather has a costly effect on our Nation's roadways.

Severe weather has a major impact on the daily operations of our Nation's roads, from the Interstate system to rural routes. These roads connect people to each other and to their livelihoods. In a major metropolitan area, a one-day shutdown caused by heavy snowfall can cost tens of millions of dollars. But even more important, about 7,000 people lose their lives and 450,000 incur injuries under adverse weather conditions.

So it's vitally important to develop integrated weather information systems that keep everyone moving safely and allow for efficient treatment of weather threats. Toward this end, the Federal Highway Administration is bringing people together at the national level to create a common vision of a Road Weather Management Program, and to help develop the leadership necessary at the State and local levels.

We will make road weather information available to everyone.

Whether it's snow and ice, rain and flooding, fog, wind, hurricanes, or tornadoes, the Nation's transportation users are impacted by—and have a low tolerance for—the delays, crashes, and reduced levels of service that come with severe weather. Experience has shown that tailoring information systems to regional and local transportation requirements can reduce the costs and impacts of such meteorological events. Most of these efforts, however, are fragmented by geography, type of information or means of dissemination.

In response to this challenge, the Federal Highway Administration has implemented the Road Weather Management Program. The goal of this program is to facilitate the deployment of integrated road weather information systems that meet the needs of all users of the transportation system—commuters, travelers, transit operators, and commercial vehicle operators—in all areas of the United States.

The combined efforts of the U.S. transportation community and the Federal Highway Administration will focus on making weather and road condition information fully accessible in decision support applications. But perhaps more important, these efforts will result in coordination of operations both within and between State and local departments of transportation. Over time, this will mean not only increased coverage of

road conditions nationwide, but also the incorporation of road weather data into broader meteorological networks.

To save lives and keep our customers moving, we will keep road weather technology moving forward.

The Federal Highway Administration is in a unique position to see that accurate and understandable weather and road condition information systems are deployed, bridging the meteorological and surface transportation communities. To achieve this end, the objectives of the program are:

- Building national consensus and strengthening the relationships between meteorologists and transportation professionals. This will provide the leadership required for State efforts and create a shared vision for a national program.
- Providing improved weather and road condition information. This means combining all environmental information sources as needed, and improving observation networks that provide the quantity and quality of data necessary to make informed decisions.
- Developing advanced maintenance tools and technologies that are designed to restore road levels of service efficiently and with minimum environmental harm.
- Enhancing transportation management practices to better address the impact of weather on traffic operations including hurricane evacuations.
- Developing outreach and training course material for program delivery, training, and promotion, and coordinating with current Federal programs such as Intelligent Transportation Systems Professional Capacity Building and the Local Technical Assistance Program.

Accurate road weather information is more than just convenient. It's critical.

The development of integrated weather and road condition information systems is a critical step in keeping the Nation's transportation system moving safely and efficiently. Taking this step means continuing to bring people together at a national level in an ongoing process of leadership-building at the State and local levels, and the creation of a truly national vision of overall program design.

For more information, log on to our web site or contact Paul Pisano at **paul.pisano@fhwa.dot.gov**.

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