

STATEMENT TO SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

June 10, 2014



Good morning Chairman Rafferty, Chairman Wozniak, and members of the Senate Transportation Committee. I am Major Edward C. Hoke, Director of the Bureau of Patrol. I am accompanied today by Major George A. Kuzilla, Area III Commander, and Captain Gregory M. Bacher, Troop T, Commanding Officer.

The Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) takes great pride in serving the citizens and visitors of this Commonwealth. Every day, the men and women of the PSP respond to emergency incidents of varying size and complexity. Whether the incident involves a single vehicle crash where no one has been injured, a mass casualty criminal incident, or a natural disaster affecting the entire state, the goals of the responding Troopers are always the same; protection of life, incident stabilization, preservation of property, and the restoration of order.

PSP Troopers are highly trained to achieve these goals and to manage emergency incidents effectively and efficiently. Department policies and procedures provide the necessary guidance and direction, and perhaps even more importantly, the authority for our personnel to work together with our local, state and federal law enforcement partners and emergency management agencies to ensure a positive outcome. Utilizing the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and operating under a unified command structure, Troopers work with our partners to develop strategic goals, establish tactical objectives, and coordinate resources and personnel to fulfill the mission.

Multiple vehicle crashes present many unique and significant challenges which can often push emergency resources to their limit. While a unified effort helps to mitigate some of the challenges faced by emergency responders, it does not remove those responsibilities specific to an agency. From the initial response to the scene through the investigation phase, Troopers are tasked with many responsibilities. Some of these are shared with other agencies and others are not. Whether providing or summoning medical assistance for the injured, requesting additional resources to aid in the clearing of the highway, checking on motorists trapped in a queue, or establishing detours, tasks are prioritized and must be accomplished. Once all of these priorities have been met it is only then that the investigation begins into the cause, which is the direct responsibility of the PSP.

Department policies and procedures for multiple vehicle crashes are consistent with the protocols established by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for Traffic Incident Management (TIM). To ensure that best practices are continually being utilized, regular reviews of department training, policies, and procedures are conducted so we can continue to provide the best possible police service to the public.

For example, in July of 2003, the Pennsylvania Criminal Intelligence Center (PaCIC) was established in an effort to provide all law enforcement in the Commonwealth with one central point of contact for their information needs. Over the last ten years, PaCIC has evolved and now includes representatives from a multitude of Commonwealth and federal agencies. These include the Governor's Office of Homeland

Security as well as private corporations such as utility companies, all housed together under one roof at PSP department headquarters. PaCIC is currently recognized across the country as Pennsylvania's official Fusion Center.

On December 14, 2007, the Department took another substantial step toward improving its operational capabilities when it established the Department Watch Center (DWC) following the "Valentine's Day snowstorm" in February of that year. The mission of the DWC is to provide situational awareness reports, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The DWC, which works in conjunction with PaCIC, provides accurate and timely information to offer a common operating picture from across the state to all levels of PSP command, 1,000 law enforcement agencies, the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. During major emergencies, both PaCIC and the DWC work together with the PSP Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officer in the State Emergency Operations Center to further assist in the coordination efforts of state agencies.

Further, consistent evaluation of significant incidents has brought forth a host of other operational and regulation protocols to include the following:

- establishment of station "watch officers" on every shift equipped with "smart phones", to integrate field operations with advanced technology,
- significant vehicle upgrades in favor of all wheel drive capability,
- establishment of procedures to check on stranded motorists in trapped backlogs,
- establishment of major highway detour plans,

- proactive staffing and equipment deployment in conjunction with severe weather forecasting,
- increased coordination of reporting with PEMA, PennDOT, PSP Watch Center and Troopers on the ground, and
- advanced training for all Troopers in protocols of the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

In the near future, all Troopers will receive nationally modeled traffic incident management (TIM) training and updated regulations codifying established roadway closure notification procedures. All of these aforementioned measures are part of the on-going refinement of procedures consistent with national trends and “lessons learned”. Together, they represent a comprehensive approach to serve the citizens of Pennsylvania and the millions of motorists who use our highways each year.

I am proud of the members of the PSP who strive each day to fulfill the mission of providing police services with professionalism and pursuing our core purpose which is to seek justice, preserve peace, and improve the quality of life for all. We appreciate this opportunity to highlight our advancement in recent years and I will be happy to take any questions you may have.