

Meeting Summary
Emergency Route Working Group
January 9, 2017

Committee Members: Alex Appel, Brent Baker, Michael Callahan, Jamie Clark, Richard Cofer, Patti Early, , Matthew Hedge, Tom Kearney, Jonathan Mallard, Tom Moran, Joe Salamy, David Schilling, Jeff Short, Aaron Strickland, Michael Temple, Steven Todd, David White, Bill Wondrachek

Public Participants: Mary Kenkel, Steve Park, John Berg, Wayne Davis, Troy Thompson, Jeff Pulia, Tim Vitalman, Veronica Martin

Date and Time: Monday, January 9, 2017 – 8:30am – 4:00pm

Location: U.S. Department of Transportation Conference Center
1200 New Jersey Ave SE, Washington, D.C. 20590

Purpose: Discuss the challenges associated with emergency permitting and routing of vehicles before, during, and after emergencies; Develop draft recommendations for best practices in emergency permitting and routing before, during, and after emergencies.

U.S. DOT and Consultant Staff: Crystal Jones (FHWA), Designated Federal Officer, Laurence O'Rourke (ICF), Jessica Klion (ICF)

Meeting Summary:

The discussion followed the issues and general timing presented in the meeting agenda (Attachment A); however a formal discussion on advice and recommendations was tabled until the next meeting due to time constraints. Below is a summary of the discussion during this first meeting of the Federal Advisory Committee on Emergency Routing.

Crystal Jones, Designated Federal Officer (DFO) and Lead Transportation Specialist in FHWA's Office of Freight Management and Operations, and Michael Callahan, Committee Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Electric Cooperative of Mississippi provided opening remarks.

Welcome and Introductions:

Crystal Jones and Michael Callahan facilitated the work group's welcome and introductions. Each member of the work group in addition to the public members in attendance, both in person and on the phone, introduced themselves and provided a brief background on their interest in the group.

Scope of the Committee:

Crystal Jones provided an overview of the scope of the committee, highlighting the legislative language used in the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. The group is responsible for developing a report for the Secretary of Transportation on best practices for expediting the issuance of permits for vehicles in emergency situations. The workgroup will terminate one year after the Transportation Secretary receives the report.

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Scoping of the Problem:

Each member of the committee provided a short description of the scope of the problem in order to get all of the issues out on the table. For the majority of committee members the problem centered on not being able to get to an emergency to provide support due to differing state permitting requirements.

Electric utilities sought to move equipment across state lines to provide mutual aid. In many cases this equipment was legal for intrastate operation, but lacked appropriate registrations (IFTA, IRP) or permitting (oversize) for interstate operations. Less common loads, such as transformers, are major oversize/overweight movements that require permits in all states. FEMA moves transitional housing units that require oversize/overweight permits. Some vehicles experienced delays at weigh stations and tolls. Equipment or vehicles may be coming from far away and be required to move through multiple states. Obtaining permits from multiple agencies can cause delays.

One issue identified was that agencies engaged in a response may wish to pre-position equipment prior to an emergency, and before emergency waivers have been initiated. After an emergency has occurred and vehicles have obtained waivers to move through a state, enforcement officials did not always recognize those waivers. National awareness of local disasters, such as small tornados, may be limited. Enforcement officials in surrounding regions or states may thus be unaware of waivers that have been issued, or less likely to use their enforcement discretion to facilitate the movement of vehicles. Permitting agencies may require that oversize vehicles and shipments only move at certain hours of the day, or avoid traffic generated by special events. When the recovery process is extensive, equipment may need to be repositioned long after the emergency has occurred and after emergency waivers have expired.

Federal and State Roles – Vehicle Size and Weight and Special Permitting:

John Berg, Program Manager, FHWA Vehicle Size and Weight, provided an overview of Federal Truck Size and Weight limits. His presentation covered a number of topics regarding the authorities involved with vehicle size and weight policies. The presentation laid out the responsibilities of FHWA, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), and state agencies. Mr. Berg also provided an overview of Federal size and weight laws.

Matthew Hedge, Pennsylvania DOT, provided a best practice case study for an Emergency Response Process. His presentation laid out the processes Pennsylvania DOT has in place in order to respond to an emergency. The state utilizes an automated permit routing analysis system (APRAS) for most emergency situations.

Literature Review of Special Permitting During Emergency Response and Recovery:

Laurence O'Rourke, ICF, provided an overview of a literature review that identified best practices for expediting oversize vehicle permits in the event of an emergency. The literature review examined a broad range of strategies at both the state and Federal levels.

A number of opportunities exist to improve the integration of vehicle permitting into the emergency planning and response process. These include:

- Improving emergency operations plans to define staff interactions with permitting officials;

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- Educating agency executives on the complexity of permitting;
- Reducing institutional barriers in emergency response;
- Providing information for transportation providers to determine eligibility for waivers; and
- Integrating emergency oversize permitting to emergency operations and planning resources.

The literature review also revealed a number of best practices for emergency permitting. These include:

- Developing harmonized emergency permits
- Providing additional emergency permit types
- Improving implementation of multi state permits/ developing a regional permitting processes
- Developing mechanisms to better utilize data to determine routing
- Improving communications with stakeholders
- Automating permitting
- Developing plans to reduce pinch points

Discussion of Topical Areas for ERWG Consideration and Deliberation:

Laurence O'Rourke, ICF, led a discussion on four topical areas. These topical areas were based on the questions identified in the charter of the work group. The group tackled the following questions:

- Do impediments currently exist that prevent expeditious state approval of special permits for vehicles involved in emergency response and recovery?
- Is it possible to pre-identify and establish emergency routes between states through which infrastructure repair materials could be delivered following a natural disaster or emergency?
- Can a state pre-designate an emergency route as a certified emergency route if a motor vehicle that exceeds the otherwise applicable Federal \state truck length or width limits may safely operate along such a route during periods of declared emergency and recovery from such periods?
- Can an online map be created to identify each pre-designated emergency route, including information on specific limitations, obligations, and notifications requirements along that route?

During the discussion, a number of impediments associated with the permitting process were identified. These include differing processes between states, different amounts of time required, different rules for allowable vehicles and a lack of harmonization of those rules between states. Knowing who to contact and being able to reach them in an emergency were challenges.

The discussion of all the topic areas ultimately brought up a number of issues that could be organized into two broad categories: timing and major challenges. There are two types of major challenges. The first being getting legal trucks to an emergency. Legal trucks refers to the majority of trucks on the road, which are neither oversize nor overweight. While these trucks are legally allowed on roads, some may typically only operate intrastate. They may lack the proper registrations (IRP, IFTA) to travel between states. In addition, some vehicles may be legal vehicles in one state, but not legal in another due to differences in size and weight rules between states. . The second type of challenge are those trucks that are oversize/overweight. These trucks need special permits and have challenges outside of those related to legal trucks. Permits need to be obtained from each state traversed and a specific route designated. Regarding timing, permitting issues can be segmented by phase of the emergency: pre-deployment

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(movement of vehicles prior to a declared emergency), response, recovery, and return of emergency vehicles (after the declared emergency has ended).

Outside of these challenges is the added challenge of routing vehicles. The group discussed the requirements for defining an emergency route. An envelope vehicle for the emergency route would need to be defined. The envelope vehicle would designate the maximum dimensions (or weight/axle configuration) that would be allowed on the emergency route. If the envelope vehicle is very over-dimensional or overweight, it may create longer routes to reach a destination. State laws also restrict the time of operation for loads of specific dimensions and weights.

While data and technology are available to create an online map that could pre-designate emergency routes, institutional barriers make implementation challenging. National datasets do not have the information needed to define routes. The necessary information exists in state-level databases. Private vendors control some of the state mapping software and data that are in use. Another challenge identified was that construction or the emergency itself may alter the routes available. A map of emergency routes would need to be updated regularly. Creating a national map would be expensive.

Advice and Recommendations on Best Practices:

This topic was tabled due to time constraints and will be discussed during the second work group meeting.

Attachment A

AGENDA

Emergency Route Working Group

Monday, January 9, 2017

- 8:30** **Getting Started – Administrative**
- 9:00-9:30** **Welcome and Introductions**
- Crystal Jones**
 Lead Transportation Specialist – Designated Federal
 Officer Office of Freight Management and Operations
 Federal Highway Administration
- Michael Callahan**
 Vice President and Chief Executive Office, Electric
 Cooperatives of Mississippi
 Chairman – Emergency Route Working Group
- Bill Wondrachek**
 Director of Freight Engineering, Wisconsin Department
 of Transportation
 Vice Chairman – Emergency Route Working Group
- 9:30-9:45** **Scope of the Committee – Crystal Jones**
- 9:45-10:45** **Scoping of the problem by ERWG members – with Public Comments**
- 10:45-11:00** Break
- 11:00-11:45** **Federal and State Roles – Vehicle Size and Weight and Special Permitting**
 – With Public Comments and Committee Discussion
- **John Berg**
Program Manager – FHWA Vehicle Size and
 - **Matthew Hedge**
Special Hauling Permit Manager
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
- 11:45-12:15** **Literature Review of Special Permitting During Emergency Response**
and Recovery – with Public Comments and Committee Discussion
- **Laurence O’Rourke** – ICF
- 12:15-12:30** **Preparatory for Afternoon**
- 12:30-1:30** **Session Lunch**

Attachment A

- 1:30-3:30** **Discussion of Topical Areas for ERWG Consideration and Deliberation**
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 - Can an online map be created to identify each pre-designated emergency route, including information on specific limitations, obligations, and notification requirements along that route?
- 3:30-3:45** **Break**
- 3:45-4:30** **Advice and Recommendations on Best**
- 4:30** **Practices Adjourn**