

Protocol for the management of Major Traffic Incidents on motorways in the Greater Dublin Area

Version 1.7 (Living Document)

Interagency Incident Coordination Group

An Garda Síochána
Dublin Fire Brigade
Dublin City Council
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council
Fingal County Council
South Dublin County Council
Health Service Executive
Dublin Airport Authority
Dublin Port Company
Transport Infrastructure Ireland
Motorway Operations Control Centre
Kildare Fire Service
Department of Transport



1 Introduction

The purpose of the Interagency Incident Coordination Group (IICG) is to establish the framework for a coordinated approach to the management of Major Traffic Incidents that occur on motorways in the Greater Dublin Area¹ (GDA).

The IICG is comprised of a number of agencies involved in the management of such incidents and this protocol has been developed by the IICG to describe the roles and responsibilities of each of these Member Agencies.

The IICG will hold regular scheduled meetings to discuss ongoing issues and shall also be stood up in the event of a Major Traffic Incident, as described in this protocol.

Note that where a Major Emergency has been declared, the requirements of the Major Emergency Management Framework will always take precedence over this protocol.

The document owner is TII and they shall carry out regular reviews as described below in section 4.

2 Scheduled Meetings

The IICG shall meet regularly to discuss ongoing issues related to the management of traffic incidents. As a minimum, one meeting will be held per year.

3 IICG Stand-Up

3.1 Membership

For the purposes of standing up the IICG outside of scheduled meetings, each Member Agency shall be represented by a Nominated Person who shall be contactable on a 24/7/365 basis. In order to ensure system redundancy, Member Agencies shall also nominate a secondary contact who shall fulfil the role of Nominated Person in the event that the primary contact is unavailable.

Each Member Agency shall ensure that their Nominated Person is a senior person with experience in the management of Major Traffic Incidents and the authority to make autonomous decisions on behalf of their agency in respect of the management or such incidents.

Details of the Member Agencies and their respective primary and secondary contacts for the role of Nominated Person are listed in Appendix A attached.

3.2 Stand-Up Procedure

The IICG shall be stood up for Major Traffic Incidents on motorways² in the Greater Dublin Area i.e. those which are expected to cause prolonged and widespread traffic disruption.

¹ The combined area of responsibility of the various Member Agencies is the Dublin county boundary.

² The remit of the IICG shall include Major Traffic Incidents within the Dublin Tunnel.

Any Member Agency can make a request to stand up the IICG by contacting the Motorway Operations Control Centre (MOCC) who shall then be responsible for contacting the Nominated Person from each other Member Agency.

An off-site coordination centre will be selected if required as the meeting point for the IICG. This will be either the TII Major Incident Room at the MOCC or other suitable location, to be agreed depending on the circumstances of the incident. In choosing the meeting point, the IICG will take cognisance of the accessibility of the meeting point for participating members and the requirement for the IICG members to receive direct information on the incident. An alternative is for a Member Agency to commence an online meeting and invite the respective Nominated persons from the required Agencies.

In certain instances, a Member Agency may judge that its participation in the incident is not necessary or that their management of the incident would be better served by not attending at the meeting point.

In such circumstances, Member Agencies may decline to attend at the meeting point after consultation with the other members, but they shall provide a single point of contact by telephone in case developments or unanticipated events precipitate the need for their increased involvement.

The MOCC shall record details on the Incident Management System (IMS) of the notification time, the stand-up time, decisions taken, and the stand-down time of the IICG. These details shall form part of the overall incident log maintained by the MOCC for the incident.

The MOCC shall issue an incident update email using the IMS system confirming that the IICG has been stood-up.

3.3 Facilities

The selected meeting point will comprise a dedicated meeting room for the IICG members which is fully equipped and fit for purpose including appropriate welfare, catering and office facilities.

Details of the facilities to which the IICG will need access are contained in Appendix B.

As far as possible, each Member Agency shall facilitate remote access to information within its control in order to facilitate effective information sharing.

In order to achieve this, consideration should be given to the use of conference call facilities, desktop sharing and remote access arrangements.

3.4 Decision-Making

The primary purpose of the IICG is to provide a forum for effective communication between all Member Agencies, develop initiatives in relation to co-ordination of resources and enable decision makers from each agency to coordinate a combined multiagency response to Major Traffic Incidents. The latest information relating to an incident will be discussed including the wider impact of its decisions with other agencies in advance.

The aim is to ensure that each member can make informed decisions for the most efficient management and earliest possible resolution of incidents.

The responsibility and authority of each agency shall not be changed by the existence of the IICG or by it being stood up.

The decision-making process will be dynamic, involving on-going monitoring of the scene and varying responses may be applied throughout the lifecycle of the incident as appropriate.

Road Closures

The decision to fully or partially close the M50 carriageway will remain with the emergency services. Once the emergency services have completed their work at the scene, they shall hand the area over the road operator (M50 Concession Ltd, GJ Ltd or ERTO for Dublin Tunnel) who shall remove debris and clean the road surface prior to reopening. The road operator shall be responsible for the decision to reopen the road.

Diversion Routes

The decision to implement a diversion route may be taken by either AGS or TII in consultation with the other Member Agencies.

A suite of diversion routes for the M50 has been agreed by the Member Agencies. For each diversion route, a corresponding recommended action plan has been developed detailing supplementary actions to be taken to support the diversion e.g. AGS presence at critical junctions, changes to traffic lights sequence etc.

Any decision to implement diversion routes as a result of an incident on the M50 will require reference to these diversion documents and selection of the most appropriate route or routes. The decision to implement a diversion route shall be taken having cognisance of the time taken to implement, the likely incident duration, and the expected traffic flow patterns that will ensue as a result. AGS will endeavour (if resources permit) to send a vehicle to drive the diversion route in advance of it being used to ensure there are no incidents, roadworks or other restrictions which might prevent its use.

It should be noted that diversion routes are unlikely to be able to accommodate the volumes of diverted traffic for any closure of the M50 during busy periods.

Permanent diversion symbols have been placed on existing road signs along the diversion routes which will reduce the time required to bring diversions into effect.

Variable Message Signs (VMS)

The MOCC shall control messages to be displayed on the Variable Message Sign system. A library of approved VMS messages has been compiled and will form the basis for deciding which messages to display to motorists. Where extenuating circumstances require the use of messages not contained within the approved library, TII shall have the authority to use alternatives in consultation with the MOCC Manager.

Motorist Welfare

The IICG shall take cognisance of the requirement to provide welfare facilities for confined and delayed traffic where incidents last several hours and diversions are not practicable.

The safety of vulnerable road users, emergency responders and motorists is the priority, and once this is secured and being managed, each Member Agency will undertake to manage incidents such that the occurrence of trapped traffic is avoided where possible.

The scope of motorist welfare to be provided should be appropriate to the duration, scale and circumstances of the incident. Motorist welfare should not be provided if it will introduce similar or greater risks to the safety and welfare of the public and responders, on or off the Motorway / Dual Carriageway Network. Motorist welfare should only be initiated under exceptional circumstances, usually where there are significant numbers of people affected and only after all other incident management measures have been considered,

and, as the case may be, attempted and failed. Where this issue arises, the Member Agencies shall agree an approach and will undertake to facilitate the provision of water, food, fuel, blankets, first aid etc. as necessary in order to ensure the well-being of motorists stranded within a closed section of the motorway.

Records

Records of all IICG decisions made will be logged on the IMS system by the MOCC.

3.5 External Communications Procedure

Early notification of Major Traffic Incidents is critical in order to encourage commuters to postpone or delay their planned journeys. For this reason, the IICG will endeavour to confirm the occurrence of a Major Traffic Incident as soon as possible notwithstanding that full details such as expected duration may not be available at that time. A template for the wording of early notification messages is contained in Appendix C and this shall be used as a basis for the formulation of such messages.

Throughout the duration of the incident, regular updates shall be given to the general public. Information will be disseminated through various different channels, including VMS signs, social media, local/national radio stations and other media.

To avoid the transmission of conflicting information to these various different media channels, the IICG will agree what information is to be issued to the public relating to the incident in advance so that a single co-ordinated message will be communicated by all agencies. The IICG shall consider confirming to the media where a fatality has been involved where this would help explain the requirement for forensic investigations.

The primary mechanism for the delivery of information to the media shall be the AGS Press Office.

In terms of intra-agency communications, each Nominated Person shall issue instructions to their own on-site and off-site staff only and the existing lines of communications within all agencies shall be preserved.

3.6 Stand-Down Procedure

It is acknowledged that the nature of the work of each Member Agency is distinct; each may not be involved for the entire duration of the incident, if at all. Member Agencies whose involvement concludes early in the incident may stand down individually after consultation with the other Member Agencies but they shall provide a single point of contact by telephone in case they are needed.

The IICG/MOCC shall continue to provide information to the general public after the incident has been resolved until normal traffic flows have been restored.

Depending on the circumstances, a hot debrief may be held. Records of the incident held on the IMS will inform this debrief.

If one is required, a date shall be agreed for a cold debrief. This shall be held as soon as practicable and in any case within 14 days of the incident.

The IICG shall then be stood down and the stand-down time recorded on the MOCC IMS.

4 Validity of the Protocol

It is not intended that this protocol will create binding obligations on any of the agencies or that it will vary their current level of responsibility or authority. It is a statement by the various agencies that they will use their best endeavours to provide all available resources to carry out the steps described herein. If circumstances are encountered which are not anticipated by the measures described herein, the member agencies are free to deviate from these requirements after notifying the other Member Agencies.

5 Ongoing Development

Readiness Exercises should be held every two years to test the protocol, however these may be merged/combined with other planned exercises by Member Agencies . The specific details of this exercise shall be agreed by the Member Agencies but it shall require each agency to demonstrate its readiness to respond to a Major Traffic Incident scenario.

TII shall arrange yearly inspections on the emergency diversion routes as part of its MMarC contracts requirements.

Successive annual Readiness exercises should be led by different Member Agencies in order to ensure good knowledge sharing of different approaches to scenario-based training.

This protocol shall be updated annually to incorporate any lessons learned from the Readiness Exercise and from post incident debriefs carried out during the period.