

Agreement signed to speed up responses to incidents on roads

Highways England and emergency services across the West Midlands have signed up to a new agreement which will see incidents on roads dealt with more swiftly.

The agreement cements the collaboration between the services and sets out clear roles to enable more efficiency at the scene as well as managing the road network, meaning less disruption for drivers.

The memorandum of understanding has been signed by police, fire and rescue and ambulance services across the region as well as Highways England and its maintenance contractor Kier.

The 52-page agreement will:

- improve the management of traffic
- encourage a greater degree of operational cooperation
- enable more information sharing between the organisations
- provide enhanced support for dealing with incidents

Highways England Service Delivery Manager David Yates said:

Any incidents on the network can cause widespread disruption and we all want to manage the situation as efficiently as possible and get traffic moving again.

With so many organisations often on scene, good collaboration and communication is essential. These agreed protocols ensure our roles are set out beforehand and better enable us to deal with incidents smoothly, swiftly and effectively.

All of the partner organisations have been working together for some time on this agreement and we are delighted that it has now been agreed and signed by all concerned.

It is essential when dealing with incidents that arrangements for coordinating the individual organisations are established in the early stages.

The agreement covers the roles and responsibilities of each service, consistency of approach, information sharing, and incorporates the procedures in the National Operating Agreement for smart motorways.

The Memorandum of Understanding 2021, which will be reviewed annually, has been signed by:

- Highways England
- Warwickshire Police
- West Mercia Police
- Central Motorway Police Group
- Kier
- West Midlands Ambulance Service
- Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service
- West Midlands Fire Service
- Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service.

A West Midlands Ambulance Service spokesman said:

By the nature of our job, the quicker we can get to patients in distress and begin treating them, particularly when seriously injured, the better.

Therefore, we very much welcome this new agreement and will be working with Highways England colleagues and other emergency services to help provide the very best level of care possible whenever a road traffic collision takes place.

Area Commander Steve Vincent, of West Midlands Fire Service, said

Our aim is to get to all serious incidents within five minutes, by signing this agreement we can work even more closely with Highways England and our emergency service partners to continue to provide a first-class service.

It will also enable our crews to work more safely, assertively and effectively at incidents to help save lives.

Inspector Sion Hathaway, of the Central Motorway Police Group, said:

We're really happy that this agreement is now in place as it will allow us, and our partner organisations, to carry on keeping the region's roads safe.

This agreement gives us better chance at responding swiftly and safely to road related incidents, thus ensuring we are in the best position to save lives and causing minimum disruption in the process.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact

centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.