

Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission

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Richard A. Hodges
Executive Director

The Honorable Robert F. Hagan
Ohio House of Representatives
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Representative Hagan:

Thank you for your letter regarding the tragic accident which occurred on the Ohio Turnpike on Thanksgiving Day. I appreciate the opportunity to respond to your concerns.

First, I would like to assure you that the Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission maintains a traffic management and incident response policy. The most recent review of this policy was just completed this summer. I have attached a copy of the policy and a PowerPoint presentation on the procedures for your review.

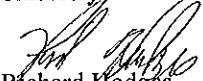
I believe it is important to point out that the Ohio Turnpike, Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) and other local partner agencies are considered an industry leader in "quick clear" procedures and often used as a model by other organizations in developing such policies. We strictly adhere to national traffic safety standards in order to protect the safety of the traveling public. In adhering to national standards, the OSHP, as a rule, will not authorize u-turning traffic in these situations. The liability of doing so is simply too great for a variety of reasons.

We are aware of the circumstances involving the diabetic individual, and pleased that the safety service professionals on scene were able to quickly and appropriately respond to the situation. Although this particular incident is being used by some to demonstrate some sort of breakdown in the system, it is a direct result of the traffic management procedures that were in place that night which allowed emergency crews to reach this individual so quickly; as traffic remained static thereby maintaining clear lanes for public safety and emergency response vehicles.

As a matter of policy, we do not believe improvisation during a horrific accident serves the priority of safety. Unfortunately, there are no perfect solutions to extraordinary situations, such as the one we encountered on Thanksgiving Day. Fortunately, such occurrences are extremely rare. Regardless, we are committed to reviewing and refining our policies on a continual basis in an effort to always provide the best response to any unforeseen event.

Again, thank you for your letter. I hope you find the information I provided helpful. Further, if you're interested, I would welcome the opportunity to host a meeting for you at our headquarters for a presentation from our incident response management team. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,


Richard Hodges
Executive Director