STATE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT DURING EMERGENCIES
State Emergency Management Policy No. 4.8

**Amendment List**

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**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** Executive Officer – State Emergency Management Committee

**DATE FOR REVIEW:** 13 December 2015

**APPROVED AT SEMC MEETING**

**RESOLUTION NO:** 118/2010

**DATE APPROVED:** 13 December 2010
DEFINITIONS

1. Terminology used in this policy shall have the meaning as prescribed in section 3 of the Emergency Management Act 2005 and the WA Emergency Management Glossary of Terms.

2. **Controlling Agency**: the agency with overall responsibility for the management of the response to an incident or emergency under the Emergency Management Act, 2005 or any other enabling legislation.

INTRODUCTION

3. Emergencies have the potential to impact on the movement and safety of vehicle and pedestrian traffic across Western Australia. The primary responsibility of the Controlling Agency is the safety of people, property and the environment.

4. In order to ensure community safety it is often necessary to alter the normal flow of traffic through an area affected by an emergency or its immediate surrounds.

5. The management of traffic during an emergency requires coordinated planning by both the agency responsible for managing the emergency and the road owners.

6. Emergency management agencies should implement appropriate agency specific procedures and training in accordance with this Policy and the “Traffic Management in Emergencies” Guide for the conduct of immediate traffic management upon arrival at an emergency.

AUTHORITY

7. This State Emergency Management Policy is prepared under the authority of section 17 of the Emergency Management Act 2005.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR REVIEW

8. The responsible officer for this Policy must conduct a review of the Policy by the agreed review date and make appropriate amendment recommendations to the State Emergency Management Committee.

APPLICATION

9. This Policy applies to all agencies involved in the control, planning and management of traffic movement within or adjacent to an area affected by any emergency [*all hazards*].

10. It is acknowledged that agencies with core emergency service responsibilities and enabling legislation, conduct traffic management activities relating to the response to incidents outside of the scope of the Emergency Management Act 2005. For the purpose of consistency, those agencies are recommended to conduct those activities within the framework created by this Policy.

AIM

11. The aim of this Policy is to provide guidance on the minimum consideration for agencies when conducting traffic management activities directly related to emergencies in Western Australia.
CONSIDERATIONS

12. When conducting traffic management activities during emergencies, the Controlling Agency will ensure the following considerations are included during the planning process. All traffic management planning during emergencies should be undertaken with reference to the State Emergency Management Committee “Traffic Management during Emergencies” Guide.

13. All critical decisions must be documented to ensure transparency of decision making during any review process.

Planning

14. The safety of both emergency services personnel and the public is the overriding interest in the management of traffic, both pedestrian and vehicular, during an emergency.

15. The Incident Controller has overall responsibility for the management of traffic during an emergency.

16. Traffic management includes the management of the movement of all vehicles, persons and animals within the identified area.

17. Traffic management includes but is not limited to the restriction of access to an incident area, the closure of roads and the diversion of traffic around an area affected by the emergency by an alternative safe route.

18. Development of traffic management strategies during emergencies should be conducted [where practical] in full consultation with the asset owner and /or Main Roads Western Australia to ensure the suitability and capacity of alternative routes.

19. Consideration should be made for the provision of security of inaccessible areas [i.e. within closed roads cordon].

20. All traffic management plans must be approved by the Incident Controller prior to implementation.

21. All traffic management plans must include direction as to the legislation which authorises and/or empowers the personnel conducting the activity to engage in the directed traffic management.

Implementation

22. Travel through an area affected by an emergency may be dangerous and potentially fatal therefore, such travel should be controlled and minimised.

23. All traffic management plans should be implemented in accordance with the approved plan and shall not be altered without the approval of the Incident Controller [except in life threatening situations].

24. Where a traffic management plan is altered without the prior approval of the Incident Controller [due to a life threatening situation] the Incident Controller is to be advised of the action immediately for determination of any further action required and is to be document as a critical decision including time, date, action taken and rationale for the decision.

25. All traffic management plans are to remain in place until the Incident Controller returns management of the road to the owner.
26. The Incident Controller shall conduct a risk assessment to identify any residual risk from the emergency prior to returning management of traffic to the asset owner.

27. Upon completion of a satisfactory risk assessment within the affected area the Incident Controller shall return responsibility for the management of traffic to the asset owner [i.e. Main Roads, Local Government etc].

28. It is the responsibility of the asset owner to determine the most appropriate traffic management strategy to ensure community safety following hand back from the Controlling Agency.

29. The responsibility for the provision of public information in relation to traffic management during an emergency is the responsibility of the Incident Controller. This information should be distributed in partnership with the asset owners and included in Main Roads Western Australia Traffic advices.

30. Following the hand back of traffic management to the asset owners it is the owner’s responsibility to ensure the provision of public information in relation to road conditions and other traffic management strategies in place.

**Welfare**

31. The welfare of people affected by road closures remains the responsibility of the Controlling Agency at all times.

32. The provision of welfare to people affected by the closure of roads need to be considered by the Controlling Agency, in consultation with the Department for Child Protection (DCP) and/or local government.

33. Short term welfare and minor inconvenience issues may be dealt with by the Controlling Agency by utilising resources for short term relief [i.e. incidental water / food].

34. For extended disruptions, major welfare issues must be considered by the Controlling Agency, in consultation with the Department for Child Protection and/or the local government. Consideration should be given to the establishment of a welfare centre or welfare point [i.e. community centre or roadhouse location] in accordance with the Local Emergency Management Arrangements;

35. The Department for Child Protection has responsibility for the co-ordination of services provided under Westplan Welfare in relation to the welfare needs of those affected.

**REFERENCES**

36. Other documents which should be referred to in relation to this policy include:

- Emergency Management Act, 2005
- Local Emergency Management Arrangements
- State Emergency Management Committee Westplans
- Westplan Welfare
CONSULTATION

37. Stakeholder consultation for this Policy is undertaken by way of correspondence with identified stakeholders. Organisations consulted in the development of this policy include:

- Child Protection [Department for]
- Education [Department of]
- Environment and Conservation [Department of]
- Fire and Emergency Services Authority
- Health [Department of]
- Main Roads Western Australia
- SEMC sub Committees
- St John Ambulance [WA]
- WA Police
- Western Australian Local Government Association [liaison with local government]

JUSTIFICATION

38. If a State Emergency Management Policy for traffic management is not prepared the risks to State emergency management practice include:

- ineffective traffic management during emergencies resulting in death or injury;
- inconsistent traffic management practices during emergencies causing confusion amongst responding agencies;
- provision of contradictory public information;
- inappropriate or unsafe use of roadways during and following an emergency;
- affected community not being cared and provided for.

39. This Policy provides direction to emergency management agencies in planning for and the conduct of, traffic management activities during emergencies.