



U.S. Department of Transportation  
**Federal Highway Administration**

Office of Operations

# Emergency Route Resource Development: Implementation Activities

Talking Freight  
November 4, 2021



# Overview

- Describe the work of the Emergency Route Working Group (ERWG) and their recommendations
- Describe the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) activities and next steps related to improving emergency routing and resilience



Source: FHWA

# Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act

## Section 5502

- Requires the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) to create an Emergency Route Working Group (ERWG)
- ERWG required to provide recommendations to the Secretary of Transportation on:
  - Impediments to expeditious State approval of special permits for emergency response and recovery vehicles
  - Whether it is possible to pre-identify and establish emergency routes among States
  - If a State could pre-designate an emergency route as a certified emergency route
  - Online map of pre-designated emergency routes

# Emergency Route Working Group (ERWG)

- Was composed of 21 members representing:
  - State Departments of Transportation (DOTs)
  - Relevant USDOT modal agencies
  - Emergency response experts
  - Safety groups
  - Other entities affected by special permit restrictions during emergency response efforts
- Full membership list, meeting minutes, and other meeting materials can be found online at: <https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/fastact/erwg/>

# ERWG Recommendations

Recommends that the Secretary of Transportation:

- R1:** incentivize States' **automated permitting** (reduce delays)
- R2:** fund multi-state **emergency route scenario study**
- R3:** develop response **vehicle pre-identification process**
- R4:** **convene meeting** among International Registration Plan (IRP) International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA) and utility representatives
- R5:** create permitting and regulatory compliance **online resource**
- R6:** **arrange meeting** with industry associations on oversized/ overweight permitting practices
- R7:** assess feasibility of **alert system** for local authorities about traffic of emergency vehicles through area
- R8:** **inform Congress** of positive impact of **expanding coverage** of 23 U.S.C. 127 (i) to Governor-declared emergencies

# FHWA Activities

- Continuing to develop resources to improve emergency routing and resiliency, including:
  - Assessment of auto-issue permit systems in the U.S.
  - Multi-state emergency route scenario study
  - Research on the National Bridge Inventory (NBI)
  - Research on military preclearance processes
  - Feasibility study of nationwide alert system
  - Assess feasibility of emergency routing web map
  - Guidebook on Federal regulations related to emergency response

# Assessment of Auto-Issue Permit Systems

- Automated permitting significantly streamlines the permitting process.
  - Accept, analyze, process, and issue permits
  - Issue single trip permits for oversize/overweight (OS/OW) vehicles
  - Issue OS/OW permits for width, height, length, and weight
  - Operational 24-hours per day, seven days per week
- The ITAP model online system allows carriers to login, apply for a permit, obtain routing and receive permission to move over State.
- Assessment documented States with auto-issue permit systems and planned developments and will be updated as additional States provide systems.

# Emergency Route Scenario Study

- Scenarios and impacts on multi-state emergency response:
  - Impacts and needed emergency response efforts
  - Length of response effort
  - Types of supplies/services required
  - Number/type of equipment/vehicles required
  - Number from out-of-state
  - States vehicles had to travel through
  - Baseline routing conditions
  - Estimated delays associated with permitting

## Scenarios:

- East Coast Tropical Storm
- Florida Hurricane
- Midwest Tornado
- West Coast Wildfire
- Colorado Flood

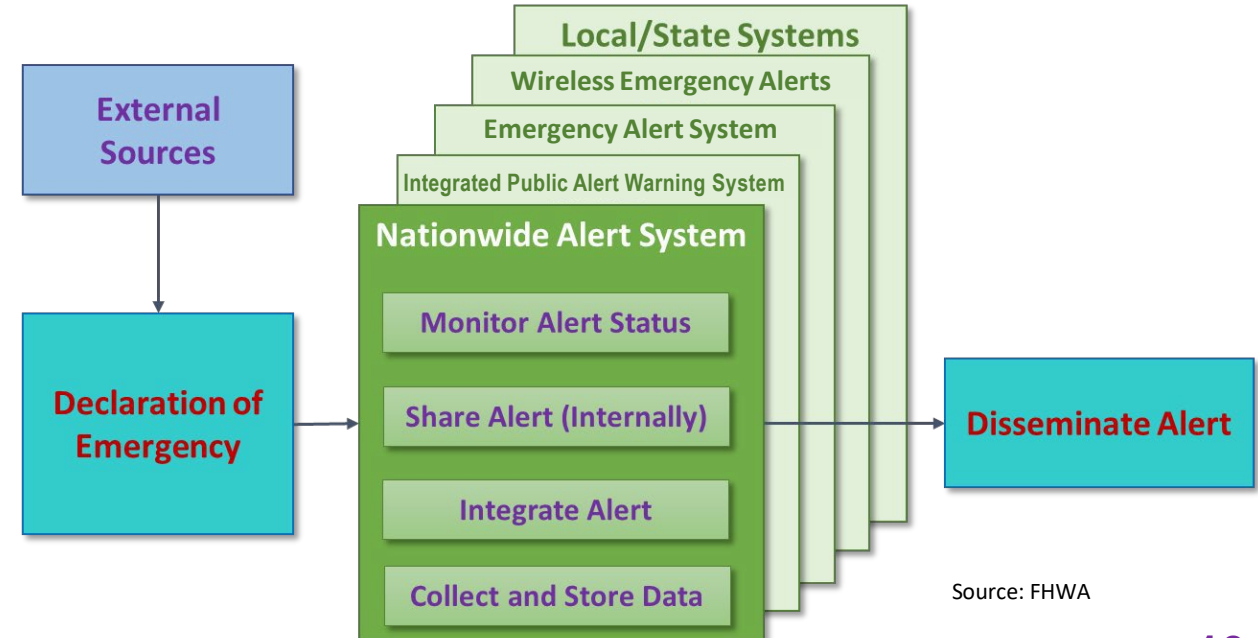


# Military Preclearance Processes

- Convoy communications
  - State DOTs and Transportation Management Centers (TMCs)
  - State Defense Movement Coordinators
  - Emergency operations centers
- Convoy planning
  - Identifying Oversized/Overweight (OS/OW) convoy vehicles
  - Determining convoy route
  - Identifying facilities requiring preclearance
- Convoy movement
  - Organizing convoy vehicles for movement
  - Identifying convoy vehicles
- Applications to non-military emergency response vehicles

# Nationwide Alert System Feasibility

- Nationwide alert system to ensure State and local authorities are aware of emergency response convoys
- Surrounding regions are notified consistently with severity of the emergency
- Streamline communications with State and local authorities about movement of emergency response convoys
- High-level framework of emergency response alert system



# Emergency Routing Web Map Feasibility

- Study on communication channels to share information with drivers before, during, and after emergency response travel
- Information coordinated among:
  - State 511 websites
  - State permitting websites
  - State emergency declarations
  - FMCSA declarations

## Web Map Tool Alternatives:

1. Database table to query States and receive links to information by State
2. Interactive map, built from static database
3. Interactive map that provides real time information and routing capability
4. One-stop interactive tool that handles all permitting/waivers, along with interactive map and routing capabilities

# Guidebook on Federal Regulations and Requirements for Emergency Response

Guidebook resource for States and local governments, utilities, and other stakeholders of emergency responses

- Legal & Regulatory Requirements
- Understanding Waivers
- Tips for Trip Planning
- Case Studies
- State Level Policies
- Checklists



Source: FHWA

## Next Steps

- Complete FHWA research and preliminary implementation activities
- Convene Emergency Routing Subject Matter Expert Group to discuss FHWA research activities
- Implement appropriate solutions and identify additional possible actions based on research and feasibility studies

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**FHWA Freight Management and Operations**

<https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/index.cfm>