



Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency
2605 Interstate Drive
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9364

Subject: Movement of Authorized Persons on Commonwealth Highways During a Disaster	Number: D2008-1
Date Published: August 18, 2008 Expiration Date:	By Direction of: Robert P. French, Director

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Directive is to provide guidance to all state agencies and departments, as well as county and municipal emergency management agencies with regard to which persons are authorized to travel on Commonwealth highways after the occurrence of a declared disaster that affects travel in the Commonwealth.

II. AUTHORITY

The Governor has the authority to issue a Proclamation of Disaster Emergency for any type of natural or man-caused disaster or emergency in accordance with Section 7301(c) of the Emergency Management Services Code (35 Pa. C. S. § 7301(c)). In the event of a declared National, State, or local emergency, the Governor has the power to close or modify the travel provisions on any or all highways in the Commonwealth. The Governor's action is effective at any or all hours of the day or night with respect to any or all types or classes of vehicles. The Governor's authority to take this action is set forth in Section 6108 of the vehicle code (75 PA. C. S. § 6108).

III. POLICY

In order to better prepare for future all hazard emergencies or disasters in Pennsylvania, the following emergency management policy has been adopted by the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA), the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP), and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT). All county and local emergency management agencies and all municipal police departments are encouraged to adopt and implement this policy whenever a major disaster affects the health and safety of the general public living within their county or jurisdiction. This policy applies to two separate and distinct emergency management stages: the Pre-Emergency Preparedness Stage; and, the Disaster Response Stage.

IV. PRE-EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS STAGE

A. Short-Term Preparedness

Prior to the occurrence of any potential disaster event, PEMA, PennDOT, and PSP officials will coordinate the issuance of appropriate travel advisories or warnings to the public media for further broadcast and dissemination to the general public. Such notices and advisories will warn the general public about the expected disaster, the probability of deterioration in road and travel conditions, and other related matters.

The general public will be warned to stay off the highways. At the county and municipal level, county emergency management agencies and municipal police departments will be encouraged to issue similar types of travel advisories or warnings as road conditions warrant within the county or municipality.

B. Long-Term Preparedness

All county and municipal emergency management offices are encouraged to identify key facilities within their county, which need to operate on a 24-hour basis. These facilities include hospitals, nursing homes, county prisons, electric and fuel generating plants, and certain other types of industrial and commercial facilities that maintain either manufacturing or other types of processes on a continuous 24-hour basis. The owners and operators of these key health care and industrial facilities should then be advised to prepare and adopt an Emergency Preparedness Plan for their facility, which can be implemented before the occurrence of a disaster. A facility's Emergency Preparedness Plan should include the following:

1. The owner or operator's designation of which facility workers or categories of workers are necessary to maintain the ongoing operation of the facility during the occurrence of the disaster.
2. An emergency staffing pattern, which uses the minimum number of employees necessary to carry on the services or functions of the facility during the disaster. Employees should be informed that once they report to their assigned work location or station, they will be required to remain at that location until the conditions have subsided and the highways have been declared to be safe for travel by either the Governor or other designated state or county official.
3. A clear and well defined Employee Notification and Call-up System, which the facility owner or operator can implement before the roads and highways become dangerous and impassable due to the disaster. Once the disaster strikes the area where the facility is located, it is too late to implement any type of employee call-up plan. By that time, the life and safety of the facility's employees will be endangered by the hazardous or impassable road conditions created by the disaster.
4. The facility owner or operator should periodically practice the implementation of the facility's Emergency Preparedness Plan so that all employees are familiar with its use.
5. The owner or operator of any facility mentioned above **MUST** implement their Emergency Preparedness Plan or employee call-up system before highways become dangerous and impassable or the Governor issues a Road Closure Order.

V. DISASTER RESPONSE STAGE

A. The Governor may declare a disaster emergency in all counties impacted by the disaster. In addition, the Governor may be forced to close, all or most of, the highways in those disaster-declared counties in order to protect the health and safety of the general public. Should the Governor close all highways in the disaster emergency, PEMA, PennDOT, and PSP will implement the following emergency management policies during the period of time that the highways are closed:

1. PEMA, PennDOT and PSP personnel will follow the emergency management principal that protection of the general public's health and safety is the most important issue and concern during the occurrence of any disaster. All other issues or concerns are of secondary importance. Those secondary issues or concerns include the desire of businesses and facilities to carry on normal, non-emergency and non-health or safety business functions and operations, the possible loss of business or individual income, the desire of individual business owners or their employees to report for work, and other non-emergency matters.
2. PEMA, PennDOT and PSP personnel will recognize only those individuals engaged in critical

emergency services as being authorized to be on state highways during the period of time that the Governor has closed the roads to the general public. Those engaged in critical emergency services shall include the following categories of individuals:

- a) State, city, and municipal police officers.
- b) City and municipal-paid or volunteer firemen and fire police.
- c) State, county, and municipal emergency management personnel.
- d) Emergency medical service or rescue personnel.
- e) Emergency communications personnel assigned to county and city 911 centers or other emergency dispatch centers.
- f) Correctional officers and other staff assigned to state, county, and city correctional institutions.
- g) Personnel engaged in disseminating news and weather reports via radio, television, or newspaper.
- h) Doctors, nurses and other medical care personnel who are traveling to a hospital, nursing home, or other health care facility or are responding to an emergency call for medical assistance.
- i) Electric, natural gas, telephone, water, and other public utility personnel who are responsible for maintaining, repairing, or operating a public utility system.
- j) Heating oil and fuel oil delivery personnel who are responding to an emergency call for fuel at a home or business.
- k) Food delivery and personnel involved in pickup or delivery of milk.
- l) Maintenance personnel who are responsible for maintaining the 24-hour operation of generators, heating systems, or other related systems at a business or industrial facility.
- m) State, county, city, and municipal snow clearance personnel and their support workers. Private contractors hired by any governmental unit to remove debris or plow or remove snow.
- n) Other persons as authorized by PSP, city, or municipal police officers on an individual case-by-case basis.

3. The owner or operator of any critical emergency service facility should adopt a credentialing or authorization system as a part of their Emergency Preparedness Plan. In the event a Road Closure Order is issued by the Governor, their employees will be more easily identifiable to law enforcement personnel. A sample travel authorization letter is set forth in Attachment A.

4. Any individual who cannot document or demonstrate, through appropriate credentials, the fact that he or she is performing critical emergency services will be considered to be in violation of the Governor's Road Closure Order. Should the individual be stopped by a law enforcement officer or needs to receive emergency medical, wrecker, or other forms of emergency assistance due to his or her actions, that individual may receive a traffic citation for violating the Governor's travel ban. Each law enforcement officer should exercise his or her best judgment at the time of the incident before deciding whether to issue a traffic citation to the motorist.


B. As soon as highway conditions improve, PEMA, PennDOT and PSP officials will consult with the Governor's Office concerning the termination of the Governor's Road Closure Order. Once the Governor determines that the travel restrictions are no longer needed to protect the health and safety of the general public, the Governor's Road Closure Order will be terminated. PEMA will convey the Governor's decision to the public media so it may then be broadcast and disseminated to the general public and all county emergency management agencies.

VI. RESCISSION:

This Directive rescinds PEMA Emergency Management C2000-12 dated December 15, 2000.

VII. DURATION OF POLICY

This Policy shall remain in effect until superseded or suspended.


Robert P. French
Director

Distribution:

PEMA Executive Office
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PEMA Administration
PEMA Area Offices (3)
PEMA Bureau of Operations & Training
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PEMA State Agency Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officers (EPLOs)
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
Pennsylvania Office of the State Fire Commissioner (2)
Pennsylvania State Police
County Emergency Management Agency Offices

**Company Name/Logo
Here**

[Click **here** and type return address]

**Appendix 1
Travel Authorization Sample
Letter**

Month Day, Year

TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION LETTER DURING A DECLARED STATE OF EMERGENCY

Law Enforcement Official:

The bearer of this letter, accompanied with a valid driver's license and official identification/credential, is deemed to be essential personnel for emergency operations vital to sustain the general public's health or safety by *(list the critical function(s) this individual would need to perform which would make it necessary for him/her to be on the highway, i.e. utility repair, essential commodity deliveries, health care, law enforcement...)*.

Please grant this individual access to roads that are passable but ordered closed or restricted to the general public, due to the declared state of emergency while engaged in or traveling to and from the aforementioned activities.

Validation of this person's status as essential may be made by contacting his/her immediate supervisor, *Supervisor's Name*, at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

This letter does not supersede enforcement of the provisions set forth in Pennsylvania Vehicle Code, Title 75.

Thank you for your cooperation,

[Click **here** and type your name]

[Click **here** and type job title]