



## Position Statement

### Smart Motorways – Road Safety Considerations

#### Background

Smart motorways use of a range of technologies and traffic management measures to monitor and respond to fluctuating traffic conditions. Signals are used to inform road users of conditions on the network and to indicate a lower Variable Mandatory Speed Limit (VMSL) in response to congestion or incidents. On All Lane Running (ALR) and Dynamic Hard Shoulder Running (DHSR) smart motorways additional capacity is provided by either temporarily or permanently opening the dynamic hard shoulder to traffic.

Highways England (now National Highways) developed [Smart Motorways \(all lane running and hard shoulder running\) Initial Incident Response Emergency Services and Highways England National Operating Agreement December 2017](#).

The Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA – now NFCC) are highlighted as partners in the operating agreement. This operating agreement is non-contractual, and its principal function is to guide the operational partnership between National Highways, the emergency services and strategic partners, applying to smart motorways ALR and DHSR schemes. This agreement is primarily in relation to initial incident response.

#### Roles and responsibilities

The aide memoir **CLEAR** (section 1.6 of the document) outlines the roles and responsibilities of the key organisations involved in traffic incident management on the strategic road network, setting out a joint outcome. **CLEAR** has been referenced to help improve the understanding of the priorities of each organisation and the collective joint working principles between stakeholders, to improve communications and collaboration, more effective incident management and a reduction in incident duration.

#### **CLEAR:**

**Collision** - Collisions and other incidents can close carriageway lanes which adversely affects the economy.

**Lead** - Effective leadership needs to be established to co-ordinate the incident response.

**Evaluate** - Understanding the scale of the incident ensures a proportionate response.

**Act** - All incident responders act in partnership, recognising and respecting differing organisational priorities.

**Re-open** - Carriageway lanes are re-opened ASAP to reduce the impact of incident closures on road users and the economy.

**NFCC (Road Safety) will:**

- Continue to work in supporting the National Operating Agreement and the **CLEAR** principles when responding to incidents on smart motorways.
- Promote road safety advice for smart motorway users.
- Continue to attend the Department for Transport Road Safety Delivery Group meetings and the National Roads Policing Operations, Intelligence, and Investigation (NRPOII) meeting to consider national road safety issues.
- Consult on strategic network reviews.
- Continue to support further constructive national debate and consideration on the safe use and operating of smart motorways and will continue to support the Department for Transport and National Highways as a key partners to progress further safety improvements, as evidenced in the written statement to Parliament: National Highways (NH) second year progress report on smart motorways stocktake: <https://nationalhighways.co.uk/media/uivj2zem/smart-motorways-stocktake-second-year-2022.pdf>

NFCC Road Safety (Prevention Committee)

Approved by NFCC Operations Committee