MDOT

West Michigan Transportation Operations Center

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2024
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The West Michigan Transportation Operations Center (WMTOC) focuses on the Michigan Department of Transportation's (MDOT) goals of improving safety, mobility, and economics through incident management, crash reduction, and traveler information activities.

This report includes a snapshot of our performance in the areas of traveler information, incident management, event management, and intelligent transportation systems maintenance. We are committed to providing the Grand Region with the highest level of transportation management, disseminating reliable traveler information to the public, and supporting goals of all our partners.

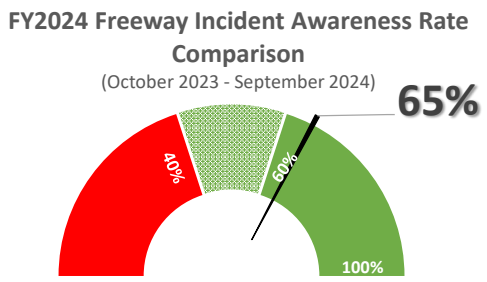
The WMTOC is operational 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This coverage increases the awareness of incidents impacting travel and provides motorists throughout the region with up-to-date notifications.

Additional detailed information is available in the monthly reports on our website located at www.Michigan.gov/WMTOC or by contacting Tim Schneider, P.E., WMTOC engineer, by calling 616-240-9813 or emailing SchneiderT6@Michigan.gov.

Traveler Information

Disseminating Essential Traveler Information for West Michigan Motorists

- The WMTOC has maintained a content accuracy level of 96 percent for messages sent to the public.



	2023	2024	Growth
Crash Incident Notification Subscribers	41,795	44,066	5.4%
Construction Notification Subscribers	41,689	44,114	5.8%

The WMTOC values relationships with our region partners and continually works to improve communications with them. One method of outreach is in-person visits to the communications centers in all of our counties. This interaction fosters positive working relationships and helps us as we collaborate and find better solutions to make information sharing more efficient and accurate. We have seen a marked improvement in our overall incident awareness rate in the past years, in part, due to the increased efforts we have placed on outreach activities. The awareness rate is a comparison between crashes with WMTOC involvement versus the total number of police-reported crashes on Grand Region trunklines. Not all incidents have an impact on traffic mobility and safety so they do not all require WMTOC involvement.

Social Media

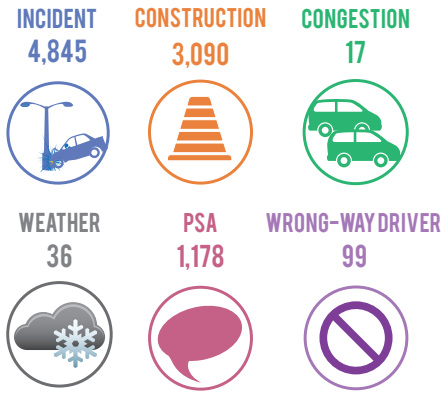
WMTOC operators assist the MDOT Grand Region communications representative in providing up-to-date information to the general public through social media, such as X. @MDOT_West X (www.x.com/MDOT_West) followers increased from 22,928 to 25,277 this year, more than a 10 percent increase.

Dynamic Message Signs

Within the Grand Region, MDOT has 41 dynamic message signs (DMS) used to provide information for the traveling public. These signs display messages regarding incidents, weather, safety, construction, special events, congestion, and AMBER Alerts. DMS are also utilized to display auto-response messages for weather events and slow or stopped traffic. Weather messages are displayed when environmental sensor stations detect certain weather conditions ahead of the DMS location. Motorists are alerted to the upcoming conditions to help them navigate the changing road conditions. Similarly, vehicle detection systems are used to identify traffic that is slow or stopped on the freeway. Using the DMS to display warnings for upcoming slow traffic, along with providing travel times, helps reduce the number of crashes related to speed differential.

There were 30,190 congestion-related auto-responses in FY 2024.

DMS Messages by Type



Incident Management

Supporting Coordination of Incident Response and Clearance Efforts to Increase Safety and Reduce Congestion

- WMTOC supported the most incidents per month in January 2024.

Incident clearance time and roadway clearance time are key metrics that MDOT reports annually to the Federal Highway Administration on all incidents that block at least one lane of the trunkline. MDOT continues to offer training to area responders of police, fire, EMS agencies, and towing companies along with internal employees in an effort to improve clearance times. This training, coupled with incident debriefs, has proven valuable by sharing areas that can be improved and best practices from the different disciplines. Responder agencies are able to raise awareness of dangers and work toward a shared goal of reducing responder exposure and secondary crashes.

The chart below shows the average incident and roadway clearance time. June 2024 had the longest duration for clearance times, while February 2024 had the lowest. MDOT works with responding agencies to improve roadway and incident clearance times while maintaining responder safety as the first priority.

TOTAL UNPLANNED INCIDENTS
6,678

SECONDARY CRASHES
17

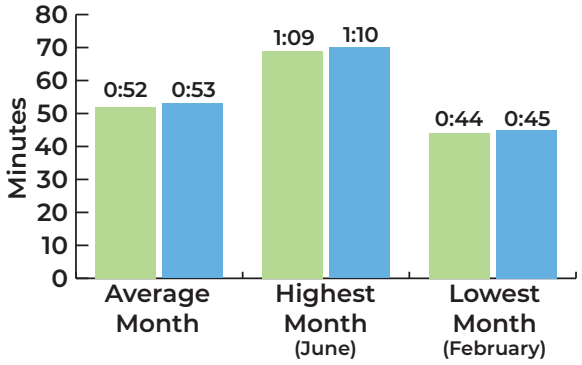
HOUR OF HIGHEST INCIDENTS
3 P.M.

MONTH OF HIGHEST INCIDENTS
JANUARY 2024
790

TOTAL CALLS/ EMAILS
8,582 / 22,263

TOTAL WORK ZONE INCIDENTS
115

Roadway/Incident Average Clearance Times



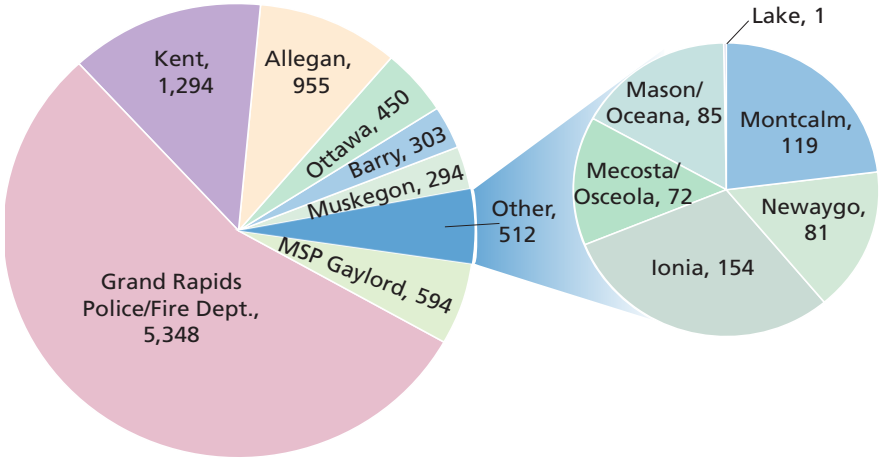
Roadway Clearance Time
(Time between incident confirmation to the time when all lanes are available to traffic.)

Incident Clearance Time
(Time between incident confirmation and when all first responders have left the scene.)

Incident Response

In order to manage incidents and reduce congestion, WMTOC operators actively monitor freeways and state trunklines within the 13 counties of MDOT's Grand Region. Operators maintain close contact with state and local dispatch centers, MDOT, and county partners while also monitoring radios and other tools that provide traffic incident information within the Grand Region.

Total Communications with Dispatch



Effective incident management requires the support of many partners actively working together to provide timely support to the traveling public. The chart above provides a snapshot of the level of coordination and communication between the WMTOC and local dispatch centers. We worked with several of our partners to automate the notification process, which makes it easier for their dispatchers to get the information to us in a timely manner.

Event Management

Informing Motorists of Special Events and Work Zone Activities

FY 2024 Spotlights

Wrong-way Driver Detection Devices

Over the past several years, MDOT has been committed to eliminating wrong-way driving throughout the state. MDOT continued its partnership with the Michigan State Police (MSP) to reduce the risk and occurrences of wrong-way driving, especially in higher-risk areas. In 2024, MDOT added a detection system with flashing/backlit signs to existing devices and measures installed to champion efforts warning drivers that they were going the wrong way. When a wrong-way driver approaches, it triggers an optic sensor that activates a series of lights that flash on the wrong-way signs and alerts authorities. Some of the devices include a video clip from a camera positioned to observe the wrong-way driver.

The WMTOC traffic operations specialists perform weekly checks to ensure that devices are operating and MDOT electricians extract data from the devices for further prevention consideration.

MDOT installed these signs at:

- Southbound US-131 at Ann Street
- North and southbound US-131 at Leonard Street
- Southbound US-131 at MLK Jr. Street
- Southbound US-131 at Hall Street
- Southbound US-131 at Burton Street
- Southbound US-131 at M-11 (28th Street)
- Southbound US-131 at Market Avenue

WMTOC Motorcade Support

In late May 2024, MSP began training for supporting political candidate motorcades and doing exercises to streamline processes. This training was to help MSP troopers, Kent County Sheriff's Department, and various local police officers prepare to assist with escorting the motorcade for campaign stops in west Michigan. The WMTOC prepared by training our team to effectively follow the motorcades with camera functionality and blocking relevant camera feeds to the public, all while being assigned specific tasks during motorcade movement.

The team quickly learned the routine of the monitored route coverage. Motorcades typically ran some variation along the route from Gerald R. Ford International Airport to Grand Rapids. MSP consistently notified the team regarding motorcade detail scheduling, including the route that would be used. Some motorcade details included 20 or more law enforcement vehicles with additional support also being utilized. We observed that one or two uniformed officers positioned incrementally would block the freeway. Their position was related to cross streets so a vehicle could not enter the motorcade path from the left or the right, or from any road behind or in front when the motorcade was traveling. Freeway routes were not blocked until the motorcade was moving; however, staging began in advance of the airport departure. In addition to shutting down freeways, MSP also closed all entrances and overpasses as well. MSP used the Safety Service Patrol on occasion to help block when needed. The whole team was very successful in planning, monitoring, and assisting the motorcades throughout the campaigning season.