

MEMORANDUM

State of Alaska

Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
Office of the Commissioner

TO: DOT&PF Division Directors

DATE: September 29, 2025

PHONE NO: 465-3900

FROM: Ryan Anderson, P.E.
Commissioner



SUBJECT: Incident, Event, and Disaster
Guidelines for DOT&PF
Division Directors

These guidelines supersede the guidelines issued on November 2, 2024. They have been updated to include the integration of GIS and remote sensing products into these workflows.

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) has consistently demonstrated its capability as a responder to various events that disrupt transportation systems and communities. In times of crisis, it is crucial that our response addresses not only the essential work happening on the front lines but also the underlying work that ensures the resilience of our support systems. This memo provides step-by-step guidance for responding to incidents, events and disasters, ensuring that our actions comply with State and Federal guidance, regulations, and statutes.

Definitions of events:

Threatening Incident: This is a physical event affecting state infrastructure where there is a risk of interruptions to public travel, facility use, loss of property, or financial risk to the State if no action is taken. By acting proactively, we can mitigate potential delays for the public and reduce future infrastructure losses and associated costs. An example would be increasing river erosion that is likely to impact a roadway within a short timeframe, or major system failure in a facility that if unrepaired, will cause disruptions for workers. Forecasted extreme weather events should be considered threatening incidents.

Disruptive Event: An event has occurred, causing disruption to roads, highways, airports, facilities or marine highway operations. These events may include damage or closure of infrastructure due to:

- Natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, storms, or wildfires, and seasonal storms of record.
- Intentional incidents like criminal activity or terrorism.
- Other disruptive events, such as bridge strikes, collapses, or major traffic disruptions.

Any closures of roads and highways, airports, or significant ferry route delays should be reported as disruptive events. Large scale office closures are classified as disruptive events.

Declared Disaster: A disaster declaration has been issued by the Governor for widespread damage and significant impacts to life and property. During this level of event, the Statewide Emergency Operations Center takes the lead role for the State of Alaska in its response efforts, and formal incident management procedures are followed.

Protocols for responding to events:

1. Communicate:

During a threatening incident, disruptive event, or declared disaster, it is imperative to communicate the threat immediately through the DOT&PF Emergency Events chat in Microsoft Teams. This communication tool serves as the primary channel for notifying the Commissioner's Office, the DOT&PF communications team, and teammates across the State. Ensure that the information shared is both timely and complete, allowing for appropriate public and stakeholder outreach. Photos and video are valuable means of communication in content they provide to the team. For disruptive events and disasters reporting should be at regular intervals (morning and evening or more frequently as needed) and provide sufficient information on the event consequences and actions being taken.

For disruptive events that affect the highway and marine highway system, ensure updates to 511 are implemented immediately with any pertinent information for the public, as specified in P&P 07.05.110 Alaska 511 Information Reporting. If a road closure occurs, ensure appropriate notifications are provided according to Alaska DOT&PF P&P 07.05.110 State Highway System Road Closure Reporting. For National Highway System winter closures exceeding 8 hours, refer to Federal Highway Administration Order 5181.1C for reporting requirements: FHWA Order 5181.1C.

For disruptive events that require large scale closure of State of Alaska office facilities, follow the internal procedures for office closures located at this link: <https://dot.alaska.gov/dfs/leasing/office-closure.shtml>

For all threatening incidents, disruptive events, and declared disasters, initial photo and/or video documentation must be uploaded to the DOT&PF Emergency Events chat in Microsoft Teams immediately, or no later than 8 hours from the time of the event.

If field conditions prevent immediate upload, media should be transferred to a designated on-site team member, Digital Imaging Technician (DIT), or an approved third-party media content management system for expedited processing and submission. This ensures that visual documentation is available for situational awareness, public information, and operational decision-making within the critical first operational period.

Reference the latest version of the **Communications Standards** memo for protocols provided to all staff.

2. Designate a Response Team and Act:

In accordance with Incident Command System (ICS) principles, designate a response team to manage the incident or event. This team should include key roles such as Incident Commander, Operations Section Chief, and other essential positions based on the size and scope of the situation. A Digital Imaging Technician (DIT) or designated third-party media team should also be included to ensure timely collection, livestream management, transfer, and submission of media assets.

For declared disasters, the Commissioner will designate an Incident Commander and incident response team responsible for maintaining communication protocols with the Statewide Emergency Operations Center. While coordination among the team may occur through various methods, the DOT&PF Incident Commander is responsible for ensuring that all critical communications are shared via the DOT&PF Emergency Events chat for effective distribution to the Commissioner's Office, the larger DOT&PF team, and resources across the State.

3. Integrate GIS and Remote Sensing Products:

In addition to photo and video documentation, Geographic Information System (GIS) products, including maps, layers, geotagged imagery, Esri Dashboards, and Site Scan drone imagery, are considered critical media assets during incident and disaster response. These products should be treated with the same urgency as photo/video materials to maximize their value for both situational awareness and public communications.

Submission Requirement: GIS products must be transmitted to the Communications team and/or DMIO for internal situational awareness and, when appropriate, external release.

Timeliness: At least one branded media or GIS product (e.g., Esri Dashboard snapshot, Site Scan imagery set, or map layer) should be prepared for external release within the first operational period to reinforce DOT&PF's role as a responsive, visible leader.

Data Governance: All imagery and GIS submissions must include minimum metadata standards (e.g., location, time, asset type) to ensure products are discoverable, reusable, and properly archived.

System Integration: Whenever possible, GIS media products should be connected to enterprise systems such as ArcGIS Online, Esri Dashboards, DOT&PF image and video servers, the Alaska 511 platform, or other approved public dashboards.

Livestreaming: Real-time visibility should be managed through systems such as LiveU packs and Skydio Cloud, ensuring high-quality video is available to decision-makers and stakeholders.

Large Data Transfers: For datasets or media exceeding 200GB, approved platforms such as Dropbox or designated state servers must be used for fast, secure transfer without delaying operational workflows.

4. Request Emergency Authorization:

To authorize emergency expenditures, a written determination of the emergency must be submitted to the Commissioner as soon as possible. This memo should follow the guidance provided in the January 24, 2024, Contingency, Non-Par & Emergency Requests Memo. This authorization serves as documentation for subsequent emergency procurement justification.

5. Request Emergency Alternative Procurement:

Before issuing emergency construction procurements (either verbally or via informal written methods), efforts should be made to obtain authorization via email from the Commissioner for sole source procurements. Please provide the following information in the email request: Event description; proposed contractor scope of work; statement regarding practicality of contractor selection; and overall justification for the work. Proper documentation will help ensure transparency and compliance throughout the procurement process.

When an event happens, DOT&PF has a responsibility to the public to respond quickly and effectively. Following these guidelines will ensure a fast response by our team, supported by systems aligned with our policies, regulations, and statutes.

Authority:

AS 36.30.310 Emergency Procurements

2AAC 12.440 through 12.460 Emergency Procurements

AAM 81.510 Emergency Procurements

AS 26.23.010 through 26.23.240 Alaska Disasters Act

P&P 07.05.070 State Highway System Closure Reporting

P&P 07.05.110 Alaska 511 Information Reporting