



Freeway Accident Investigation

Dallas Police Department
Dallas County Sheriff's Office
October 15, 2007



Freeway Accidents

- Freeway accidents represent a significant hazard to both citizens and public safety responders (DPD has had 36 officers injured or killed in the past five years on freeways).
- These dangers are magnified by:
 - Traffic volume
 - Speed
 - Debris
 - Potential for subsequent accidents due to on-lookers
- They are a primary cause of traffic congestion, negatively impacting area quality of life and the environment.

Freeway Accidents

- In 2006, DPD responded to over 20,600 accidents on Dallas freeways. Approximately 43% of these accidents occurred on I-30 and the freeways south (8,840).
- Average duration of a major freeway accident is 1.5 hours with residual effects commonly lasting 3 hours.
- Over 56,000 hours of officer time was expended working all freeway wrecks – equivalent to 43 officers. Southern freeways accounted for approximately 18 officers.
- As of July 9, 2007 DPD dispatches freeway accidents as Priority 1 calls. Previous response time as a Priority 2 call was approximately 25-30 minutes. Current response time as a Priority 1 Call is approximately 12 minutes.

Proposal

- Establish an Interlocal Agreement (ILA) between DPD and Dallas County for the Dallas Sheriff's Office (DSO) to assume responsibility for accident investigations on designated freeways.
- Adopt an amendment to Section 15D-14 of the Dallas City Code – which governs emergency wrecker service - to ensure consistency in application.

Responsibilities

- DSO deputies will investigate accidents on designated freeways and service roads:
 - Will respond to fatality, major, and minor accidents
 - Will investigate and file criminal cases arising from accidents and transport prisoners
 - Will use only wrecker companies that are licensed by the City to clear the roadways
- Effective January, 2008, DSO will assign 94 deputies (including 34 with advanced training in accident investigation) exclusively to freeways. DPD currently has 32 accident investigators available citywide.

Accident Scene Management

- DSO uses a team effort to work accident scenes, using multiple accident investigators to clear scenes more quickly.
 - Each accident investigator is assigned a specific task to speed the process and clear the roadway
 - DPD uses one accident investigator per accident (depending on availability)
- DSO anticipates clearing freeway accidents, on average, 15-30 minutes faster than DPD.

911 Response

- Accident Call Received by Dallas 911
 - If injuries are present, Dallas Fire Rescue dispatched
 - All medical responses will continue to be handled by Dallas Fire Rescue
- Accident occurring on freeway or service road is sent to DSO via radio, phone or CAD link.
- Accident not occurring on designated freeway or service road will be dispatched to DPD for investigation.

Fiscal Impact

- \$1,400,000 efficiency gain from officer time savings (approximately 18 officers).
- Reduced officer injuries, worker compensation claims and equipment damage is anticipated as a result of this proposal.
- Estimated \$600,000 loss of auto pound storage, impound, notification fees, and auction revenue (approx. 2,000 fewer vehicles towed).

Prior Action Issues

- Proposal was presented to the Public Safety Committee in November 2006.
- Several concerns were expressed at that time:
 - Consistency of wrecker service fees
 - Qualifications of participating wrecker companies such as licensing and insurance
 - Wrecker response times
 - Customer services
 - Storage locations of wrecked vehicles

Ordinance Amendment

- To address issues from the prior PSC briefing, an amendment to Dallas City Code 15D-14 has been drafted to allow the County to dispatch emergency wreckers to an accident or police scene when authorized by an ILA with the City.
- The proposed amendment requires that wrecker companies used by the County for emergency wrecker service adhere to the following:
 - They may not charge fees that exceed amounts set by ordinance for emergency wreckers
 - They must be licensed as emergency wreckers by the City
 - They must comply with insurance requirements set by ordinance for emergency wreckers
 - They must comply with vehicle and equipment specifications and hours of operation set by City ordinance

Additional Concerns

- Wrecker response time - DSO currently mandates a 15 minute response time for wrecker service.
- Customer Service - DSO has designated a supervisor to oversee and liaison with wrecker companies to address performance issues and citizen complaints.

DSO Impound Locations

- DSO will utilize four storage facilities to provide more convenient access to citizens involved in accidents, resulting in improved customer service.

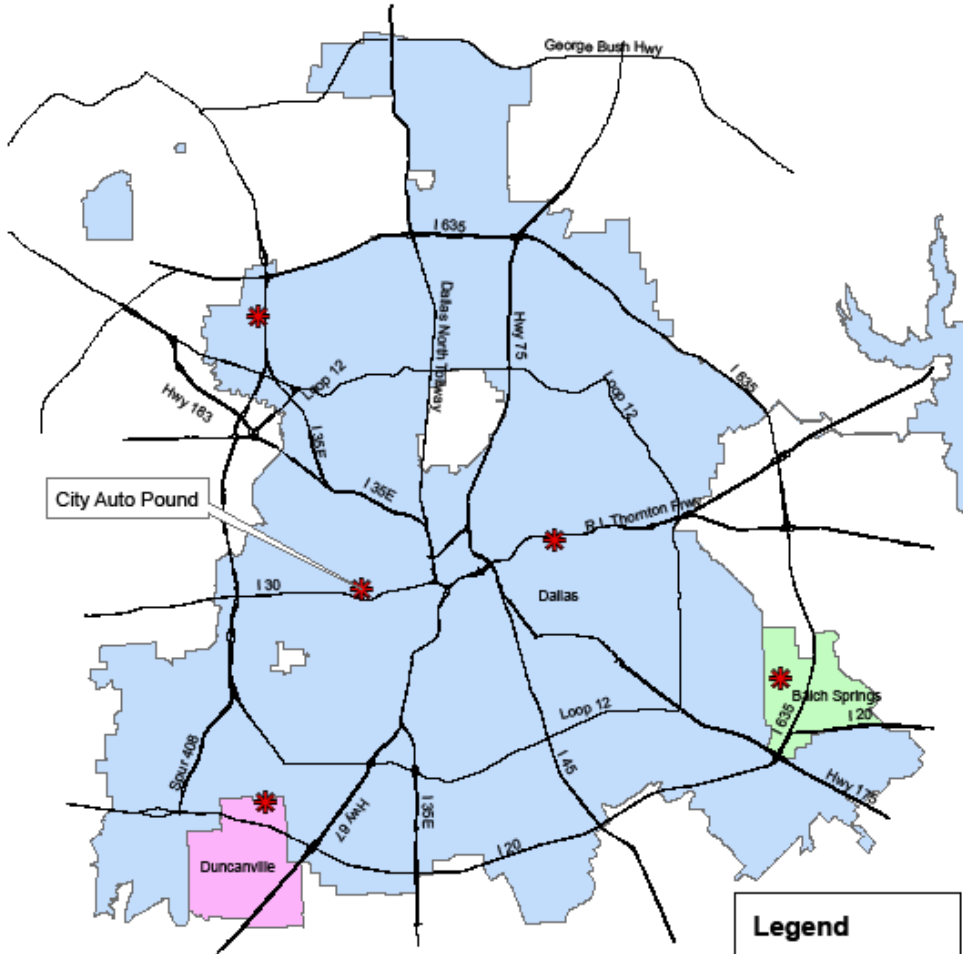
Apollo Impound (Central)
1434 S. Henderson Ave.
Dallas, TX

J & S Impound (South)
223 Woodhaven Blvd.
Duncanville, TX

Tyler Boy Impound (East)
2923 Peachtree Rd.
Balch Springs, TX

Walnut Hill Impound (North)
11239 Goodnight Ln.
Dallas, TX

DSO Impound Locations



Legend

City Limits

- Dallas
- Balch Springs
- Duncanville
- Highways

Designated Freeways

- I-20
- I-30
- I-35 (South of Woodall Rodgers)
- I-45
- Highway 67
- Highway 175
- Loop 12 (South of I-30)
- Spur 408 to I-20
- Woodall Rodgers Freeway

Advantages to Proposal

- DSO will provide constant freeway patrol
- DSO estimates a 6 minute response time
- Faster wrecker response
- DSO anticipates clearing freeway accidents up to 30 minutes faster than DPD
- Normal traffic flow reestablished more quickly
 - Freeway congestion costs the Dallas area economy more than 2.5 billion dollars per year
- Positive affect on air quality
- Allows DPD to more efficiently allocate staffing for crime suppression functions and provide increased presence on surface streets and in neighborhoods, supporting the beat management model.

Recommendations

- Schedule for November 12, 2007 Council consideration for:
 - Approval of amendment to City Ordinance 15D-14
 - Approval of Interlocal Agreement with Dallas County



Questions?