

# Re-opening the Road After a Truck Overturns

Crews may need three to four hours or more to re-open a road after a truck overturns. Complications include fire, injuries, extractions, hazardous materials, fuel leaks, spilled cargo, weather, availability of equipment and crews, cleanup and difficulties in removing the truck.



## 1 Notification

Information can come from road cameras, witnesses, 911 calls and police.

### Timeframe

Typically a minute or two but up to 30.

### Variables

Proximity of witnesses, cameras and police.

**TIME ELAPSED: Two to 30 minutes**

## 2 Response

Arrival of police, fire or emergency services.

### Timeframe

Typically about eight minutes but up to 15.

### Variables

Distance of first responders; can take longer in remote areas.

**TIME ELAPSED: Three to 45 minutes**

## 3 Assessment

Evaluating needs, establishing traffic control and detours, requesting tows, issuing traffic advisories, neutralizing fire hazards, changing highway variable message signs, contacting vehicle owners.

### Timeframe

Two to 15 minutes but more in complex circumstances.

### Variables

Injuries, fatalities, fuel spills, road blockage, wrecked vehicles, hazardous materials and evaluation of public safety.

**TIME ELAPSED: Five minutes to an hour**

## 4 Services

Arranging for medical help, traffic control, tow trucks, investigators, hazmat teams, clean-up crews and other needs.

### Timeframe

Ten to 45 minutes typically, but up to three hours or more.

### Variables

Availability of equipment and staff, travel time, time of day, road access and the complexity of necessary emergency services.

**TIME ELAPSED: 15 minutes to 4.5 hours**

## 5 Truck Removal

Gathering the equipment and staff needed to safely do the job.

### Timeframe

45 minutes to three hours.

### Variables

Truck and trailer condition and location, geography, prep time, weather, safety concerns, status of the cargo.

**TIME ELAPSED: One hour to 7.5 hours**

## 6 Clean-up & Repairs

Clearing debris, patching concrete, installing temporary barriers and traffic control devices and opening lanes one by one as soon as safely possible.

### Timeframe

One to 2.5 hours but sometimes days or weeks, depending on infrastructure damage.

### Variables

Emergency medical care, road repairs, cleanup complexity, summoning extra equipment, hazmat needs, fuel or cargo cleanup, crash reconstruction and police investigations.

**TIME ELAPSED: Two to 10 hours**

## 7 Re-opening the Road

Getting traffic moving again after making the road clean and safe.

### Timeframe

Typically one to two hours but often longer. Some crash scenes can be safely re-opened only after weeks of comprehensive repairs.

### Variables

Removing traffic control devices and clearing the traffic backlog. Every minute of blockage creates an average of five minutes of backup.

**TIME ELAPSED: Three to 12 hours**

**TOTAL TIME ELAPSED: Three to 12 hours but two to three hours more if an investigation into a fatality is needed.**