

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.