

A Message from the Commissioner

Hello Team!

Last month, an incident occurred in the LaPorte District that serves to remind us of the importance of what we do – even when it ends in tragedy – and the value of being prepared.

On Aug. 15, two Hoosier Helpers were dispatched to eastbound I-80/94 in response to a report of a vehicle that may have been struck by a semitrailer tire. When Hoosier Helper Stephen Pavlinac arrived, an unconscious male victim was lying on the ground, visibly injured, and not breathing. Stephen checked his pulse then started CPR. Hoosier Helper Scott Brown soon arrived and retrieved the Automated External Defibrillator (AED) from his vehicle and cut away the victim's shirt. Together, they attached the AED pads, followed the device instructions, and Stephen continued CPR until Hammond Fire and Paramedics arrived.

Unfortunately, the victim of the accident later died. However, the actions of Stephen and Scott gave the motorist several more days of life and enabled his relatives time to gather and say their final farewells.

Steven Johnson, Incident Response Manager at the Borman TMC, called out the actions of his Hoosier Helpers: "Stephen and Scott have my gratitude in doing what they do, with no glitz or glamour."

"Hoosier Helpers may have to render first aid to a gunshot victim and, five minutes later, check on a motorist and change a tire, but they show up every day, wearing a smile and a willingness to put it on the line for the customers and INDOT," Johnson said. "It is for these reasons and many others that we should take each opportunity to show our gratitude to those who risk their lives to save lives daily."

I can't tell you the number of times that our Hoosier Helpers or truck drivers have been hailed for responding to a roadway emergency – whether it's to corral a wayward animal, respond to a vehicle crash or emergency bridge strike, or assist a stranded motorist. Everything they do matters.

It's vitally important that all of us – whether we work on the road or in the office – are prepared for every type of emergency. As public employees, being prepared is part of all our jobs.

We can't all be Hoosier Helper roadway heroes, but we all can prepare to be prepared. Take the time to learn CPR, basic first aid, and how to use an AED and to recognize the symptoms of a stroke or heart attack.

Each district and Central Office regularly offer CPR/first aid/AED courses, which often involve a mix of online and hands-on instruction. This training increases our agency's emergency preparedness. For example, all Seymour District and approximately 400 Greenfield District employees have taken these life-saving classes. If you haven't taken this training, I urge you to contact your office or district safety administrator.

At INDOT, we like to say that safety is our highest priority. This is true whether you're working on a jobsite, driving a truck, or meeting in a conference room. You can improve safety, on or off the job, by being prepared and ready for the unexpected.

We expect this every day from our Hoosier Helpers, and each of us should expect it from ourselves. Stay safe.

Mike