

## RELATED TERMS

- Contraflow
- Interstate Highway System
- Lane Reversal



## Lessons Learned Information Sharing

www.LLIS.gov

## PRIMARY DISCIPLINES

- Emergency Management

# PRACTICE NOTE

## Mass Evacuation: Virginia Department of Transportation's Use of a Collector/Distributor Road as a Service Area Location

### PRACTICE

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), the Virginia State Police, and the Virginia National Guard will manage an emergency service area at a collector/distributor road along Interstate 64 (I-64) during a contraflow evacuation of the Hampton Roads area. This service area will allow motorists on the contraflow side of I-64 to access emergency restrooms, fuel, and water and then to reenter the contraflow lanes.

### DESCRIPTION

If a major emergency threatened the Hampton Roads region of southeast Virginia, the governor of Virginia could order VDOT to reverse (i.e. contraflow) I-64's eastbound lanes so motorists could use all lanes to evacuate westward. VDOT's evacuation plan allows drivers in the contraflow lanes to exit the freeway at only two locations before the termination of contraflow near Richmond. These motorists would have to travel nearly 40 miles from the start of contraflow to reach the first open exit ramp. This operation would limit motorists' ability to access restrooms, gas stations, and other service facilities from the contraflow lanes. Although drivers are urged to fill their gas tanks and to bring extra water for an evacuation, some people may need assistance prior to arriving at the first open exit.

VDOT, the Virginia State Police, and the Virginia National Guard now plan to manage an emergency service area along I-64's eastbound collector/distributor road during a contraflow evacuation. This emergency service area will be located at I-64's intersection with Jefferson Avenue in Newport News, Virginia. This intersection lies roughly halfway between the start of contraflow and the first open exit ramp. Motorists will have access to emergency water, fuel, and portable toilets at the service area. VDOT planners do not anticipate any back-ups because traffic would be dispersed along the length of the collector/distributor road—over three-fourths of a mile.

### Collector/Distributor Roads

A collector/distributor road is a one-way road that runs alongside a freeway and provides access to that freeway's entrance and exit ramps. Some collector/distributor roads begin and end with slip ramps to the adjoining highway.

The new emergency service area at Jefferson Avenue will also allow motorists to access services and to reenter I-64 without leaving the contraflow lanes. Due to safety concerns, motorists who exit I-64's contraflow lanes at the two open exit ramps would need to reenter I-64 using a standard entry ramp to the non-contraflow lanes.



The Jefferson Avenue Intersection in Newport News, Virginia

**CITATION**

Hanshaw, Stephany. Facility Manager, Hampton Roads Smart Traffic Center, Virginia Department of Transportation. Interview with *Lessons Learned Information Sharing*. 27 Sep 2006.

**DISCLAIMER**

*Lessons Learned Information Sharing (LLIS.gov)* is the US Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency's national online network of lessons learned, best practices, and innovative ideas for the emergency response and homeland security communities. The Web site and its contents are provided for informational purposes only, without warranty or guarantee of any kind, and do not represent the official positions of the US Department of Homeland Security. For more information on *LLIS.gov*, please email [Feedback@llis.dhs.gov](mailto:Feedback@llis.dhs.gov) or visit [www.llis.gov](http://www.llis.gov).