

Winter Weather and Interstates: Coordination, Communication and Challenges

Virginia and the 2022 I-95 Shutdown

Presentation:

In January 2022, Virginia ended up with a back-up on I-95 that led to many travelers being stuck in their cars in the snow for over 20 hours. With 14 inches of snow in a very short amount of time, below freezing temperatures and wind gusts to 50mph; how did Virginia manage the incident and what have we learned? What started with a challenging weather forecast, led to primary and secondary roads becoming almost impossible to traverse in a very short amount of time and in an area of I-95 that is known to back up on a sunny day. Representatives from VDOT and VDEM will discuss the January 3rd I-95 event and the challenges with conveying the message to the public, contributing factors that led state agencies and motorists to be ill prepared, and communicating across local, state and federal assets. Most jurisdictions across the country have interstates and severe weather that have caused small to large incidents over the years and Virginia is no different, but we had 4 more snow storms in January that required us to learn from our mistakes fast, make changes and implement in days.