

## The Golden Hour

(NAPSA)—Some highway interchanges loop around so much that it is hard to pinpoint your exact location if your vehicle breaks down or you are involved in an accident. Other roadways simply appear identical mile after mile. But emergency responders need to know where you are right away when an accident occurs, and time is of the essence. Medical personnel refer to the best opportunity for beginning to treat victims as the “golden hour.”

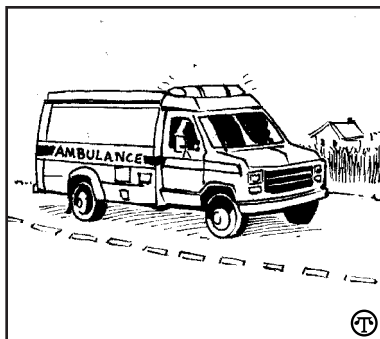
When those first 60 minutes pass and help has not arrived, a victim’s chance for survival is much less, according to the Intelligent Transportation Society of America (ITS America).

In the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky metropolitan region, transportation officials working through the Advanced Regional Traffic Interactive Management and Information System (ARTIMIS) have developed a common-sense information system to help travelers know exactly where they are.

The system uses reference signs and ramp markers every 1/10 of a mile. The signs stationed along the median provide the direction of travel, the roadway you are on, and a specific mile location.

“When an accident occurs, emergency dispatchers say they receive many cell calls. It is often difficult to pinpoint an incident location, however, since the callers may provide different directions, different locations, and even different roadways,” says Henry Hungerbeeler, director of the Missouri Department of Transportation and a member of the ITS America Board of Directors. “In some cases, multiple dispatches go in different directions.”

The ARTIMIS reference signs and ramp markers use standard colors and letter sizes, and are sized and spaced so that a person with normal vision could read the next marker without turning around.



The largest emergency dispatch center in Ohio’s Hamilton County reported a 30-percent reduction in response time after installation of the markers.

Officials also note that the reduction in response time translates to a reduction in traffic backups due to the incidents, which leads to fewer secondary accidents and fewer injuries.

One survey found a 3.2-percent reduction in fatalities in the morning peak period alone.

The ARTIMIS reference signs and ramp markers won ITS America’s “Best of Intelligent Transportation Systems Award for 2000” in the category of applications that save lives.

Additional cities and states are now installing the same reference system, including: Chattanooga, Tenn., Indianapolis, Knoxville, Tenn., Nashville, Tenn., Memphis, Tenn., St. Louis and Kansas City, Mo., and parts of Wisconsin. The federal government is considering making the signs a national standard.

ITS America is an educational and scientific public-private partnership of 600 member organizations promoting the use of advanced technologies in surface transportation. For additional information on intelligent transportation systems, contact: ITS America, Suite 800, 400 Virginia Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20024-2730, call (202) 484-4138, or visit the ITS America Web site at <http://www.itsa.org>.