



Charlotte - Sarasota - Manatee Traffic Incident Management Team

August 14, 2007

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Gene Detoma	AAA	Anuraq Agrawal	SC – DOT
Gabriela Harrison	SC – Traffic Engineering Ops	John F. Baumann	FHP
Keith Drake	MPO	George A. Alec	FHP
Gil Fernandez	City of Sarasota	Juan G. Cuevas	FHP
Jason Lyle	PBS&J – GEC	Herbert R. Head	FHP
Kent Dauderman	FDOT	Ted Smith	Delcan Corp
Dave Reichel	Jorgensen C S	Don Olson	FDOT
Carlos Cabrera	FDOT	Scott Melton	FDOT
Mark Jones	Manatee EMS	Dave Krauss	VANUS
BJ Kirby	Coastland Auto Road Rangers	Christina Florez	VANUS

Call to Order: The Charlotte-Sarasota-Manatee TIM Team meeting was held on Tuesday, August 14, 2007 at Sarasota County Public Works Office, 1001 Sarasota Center Blvd., Sarasota. Ted Smith and Don Olson facilitated the meeting.

Introductions: Team members introduced themselves and the agencies they represent.

Update on TIM Initiatives:

SLERS

Don Olson attended the Statewide Road Ranger Meeting held on August 13, 2007. At the meeting, the initiative to integrate the Road Ranger Service Patrol on the Statewide Law Enforcement Radio System (SLERS) was discussed. A pilot study was successfully performed in District 5, in the Orlando/Deland area. By using performance measures, it was determined that the incident response time was reduced by approximately 10 minutes because the Road Rangers are immediately notified of an incident. A concern of Major Steve Williams was the impact of having the Road Rangers on the system; this study has shown that the Road Rangers would have only a minimal impact on the load capacity of the SLERS system. Should law enforcement approve the implementation of Road Rangers on the SLERS statewide, the two issues remaining are funding and schedule. If FDOT approves the initial funding for the equipment, Major Williams indicated that there would be no recurring fees for FDOT. In the interim, FDOT has spare radios for the District One Road Rangers on the State Maintenance Radio system that will be provided to the Road Rangers. The recent RFP to provide Road Ranger Service Patrol did not require the contractor to provide radios with the anticipation of FDOT providing 800MHz radios for the SLERS.

Security Clearance

By law, all Road Ranger personnel must be fingerprinted and provided clearance from Law Enforcement to operate under the SLERS procedure. FDOT would like to have all potential Road Ranger personnel fingerprints scanned; unfortunately, FHP indicated they have approximately three fingerprint scanners in the state of Florida. These scanners are moved around as necessary. If the fingerprints are scanned, the security clearance typically takes one day; if the fingerprints are mailed in, clearance can take up to six months. Don Olson of the FDOT is tasked with exploring the idea of finding FDOT funding for one scanner to be placed in a central location for the use of scanning Road Ranger personnel. The RTMC is a functional location for FHP, RTMC personnel and Road Rangers.

Traffic Cones

Don Olson stated that he has been promised 500 used cones for use in promoting TIM initiatives. Don Olson plans on delivering cones throughout the tri-county region. Fire Rescue personnel have indicated that they will find a way to place the cones on the trucks should they receive any. The cones will be provided at no cost.

RISC

The Rapid Incident Scene Clearance (RISC) Program has been approved and funded for \$2 million statewide. From the \$2 million, a \$100,000 will be provided to each District, with the remaining funds to go to a bonus pool. This pool will be split between the members that meet the pre-established clearance time. The plans call for implementation of the RISC program to begin in July 2008. A detailed plan is being developed that will clearly defined the processes, roles, milestones, incentives, and implementation. After a year of implementation, the TIM Executive Board will review the program and determine if funding should continue. Similar programs are in effect on the Turnpike, which has recovered approximately 80 percent of the costs.

Move - Over Law

Don Olson applauded FHP for enforcing the Move - Over Law. FHP Troopers periodically station themselves downstream from an incident in order to capture motorists who do not move over when able to do so. At this time the Troopers have not issued citations for not adhering to the Move - Over Law, but for other infractions (i.e., seat belt, speeding, etc.). The local news media has reported on the campaign.

Vehicle Positioning and Scene Safety

Ted Smith provided attendees with two handouts, the Temporary Traffic Control Checklist and Typical Scenarios. The handouts are attached. The Task Group developed these recommended scene safety and vehicle position scenarios for use as guidelines for traffic control procedures during incidents.

The Checklist allows the responders to use the equipment that is available at the incident; as more equipment arrives, the layout can be expanded. These are standard guidelines that are not dependent on who is the first to arrive; all responders should be using the same guidelines, thereby increasing the safety of the responders. The Checklist should be used for training and orientation purposes. The Checklist concisely covers many aspects of Temporary Traffic Control, including:

- The Checklist emphasizes queue protection including advanced warning signs instead of just emergency lights. The Task Group recommends a minimum of two signs. These signs should be placed in as many vehicles as possible.

- A taper length of 300 feet can be achieved with 12 cones with 25 feet between cones. As more cones arrive, the taper should be extended, thereby moving the turmoil and hazards away from the incident and displacing the danger zone.
- The placement of responding vehicles plays a critical part. The squad car should be on the shoulder, not in the travel lanes. The Fire Rescue truck should be used to help protect the scene by parking at an angle across the affected lane(s). The Fire Rescue truck should only block the lanes that are absolutely necessary and should be repositioned to a single lane once the scene is cleared. The EMS trucks are the most vulnerable at the incident and should be parked downstream from the crash for protection with nothing obstructing its path for a easy exit. The Tow Vehicle should be parked downstream from the EMS truck. Once the EMS truck leaves the scene, the Tow Truck can back up to clear the vehicles.
- The fifteen minute rule applies at every incident. Traffic control and scene safety should be reevaluated every 15 minutes and upgraded as required by Federal Standards.

The Scenarios that were provided show specific incidents. These should be used for training and orientation for all responders. In the future, FDOT would like to evolve these guidelines and develop Standard Operating Guidelines that would be implemented statewide.

RED Tags on Abandoned Vehicles

Don Olson displayed the interim High Visibility (orange) Tags printed by FDOT Central Office. The concept has been approved by FHP Col. Knight, with regional procedures to be developed with Troop Commanders guidelines. A pilot study was conducted in District 2 and the FHP Troopers responded favorably. These tags will not replace the legal removal process, but will start the abandoned vehicle time limit clock. The RED tags will allow the Road Rangers to assist the Troopers by checking the abandoned vehicles for people in distress or any crime records associated with the VIN. The Road Ranger Service Patrol sub-contractor expressed his concern about negative publicity; as motorists may accuse the Road Rangers of having their vehicle impounded. Don stated that tags could have verbiage requesting motorists to stay with their vehicles in order to receive assistance, to call *FHP, and to reference the FL Statute. Ideally, the RED Tag procedure will be implemented statewide to support the FHP Troopers and add to the existing safety initiative on the highway. A request was made to ensure that there was a clear and separate data field that documents if the FHP Case Number is initiated by a Trooper or the Road Rangers. Additionally, to put their ID number on the tags so details can be traced back to who placed the tag and started the clock. Don Olson stated that the RED Tag procedure and approval rests with FHP Troopers, and the Road Rangers will be ready to provide RED Tag support for FHP Troopers.

Additional Topics

Participants asked the status of the funding for a Severe Incident Response Vehicle (SIRV) unit for the District. Don stated that the Executive Board did not approve the designated funding specifically for SIRV, but did leave this decision up to each District level leadership. They did elect to fund the RISC program for one year and will review results for future funding. Secretary Cann, based on our analysis and recommendation, supports the recognition that a designated SIRV Program is, in effect, already in place through our District Asset Maintenance Contractor. The Asset Maintenance Contractor is fortified and prepared to respond to major incidents on our highways. The only difference is the authorization to activate Red/White Emergency lights.

Cable Median Barrier Presentation:

Jason Lyle and Kent Dauderman did a presentation on the Cable Median Barrier Project along I-75 within Charlotte, Sarasota, and Manatee Counties. The presentation is attached. The cable median barriers are located approximately one mile on either side of the selected

interchanges. This was determined by reviewing crash data. Most crashes occurred due to lane changes approaching or leaving the interchanges. This was a Design/Build project with a six month time frame. Approximately 33 miles of cable barrier was installed at a cost of approximately \$5.3 million. The cost for cable barriers is approximately half the cost of typical metal guardrail. This is the first cable median barrier project within the District. There are five cable systems approved for use; the Nucor 3-strand system was chosen. The barrier is a high tension cable system that “catches” a vehicle and slows it down to a stop, instead of bouncing the vehicle back into the travel lanes. Cable poles can be removed from the anchor sleeve to relax tension on the cable and allow it to lie on the ground, usually for emergency extrication of accident victims or tow truck operations to remove damaged vehicles. Cutting a cable is a last resort, and according to Jason, the cables can be cut without worries of recoil; the cable just hangs. With the cable barrier system, it does not matter from which direction it is hit. The ones installed along I-75 are placed approximately 17 feet from the travel lanes due to geometry and environmental constraints. The posts are spaced approximately 16 feet apart and have Mile Post and FDOT Section numbers every 10th of a mile. The cable system was chosen because:

- It offers a range of deflection options from 5 feet to 9 feet.
- If a post is knocked down, the system will still function, such as multiple vehicle strikes.
- It is an attractive alternative.
- It is approximately half the cost of standard metal guardrail.
- It is easier to repair and maintain than guardrail solutions.
- It is NHCRP-350 approved.
- First responders should NOT cut the median cable barrier unless absolutely necessary
- By removing 8-10 line posts, the cable will lay on the ground. This should provide enough capacity for emergency personnel to perform their duties. The same goes for the wrecker crew. This should only be done at a crash scene when necessary and should never be done to just cross the road.
- If the first responders find it necessary to cut the cable, they should cut the cable in the center between line posts. Do not cut the cable near the entangled vehicle; move down the longitudinal barrier away from the impacted vehicle and bystanders since the cable is under high tension – thousands of pounds. The cable should be cut perpendicular to the cable. Making sure no bystanders are near the cable section being cut.
- When the cable is cut the system is compromised and will not perform as designed. A cable splice fitting will have to be installed at the cut and the system placed back under tension.
- Once again, we do not recommend cutting the cable but to remove line posts as needed. This is a safer than cutting a cable under high tension plus the repair is much simpler and cost effective.

TIM Team – Quality Management/Future Direction:

Don Olson opened the floor to the participants to discuss the direction the members would like to take the Team in the future. Don also indicated that the TIM Executive Board was going to be driven by the regional TIM Teams and that involvement was very important.

Information Distribution

Ted Smith asked the members if and how they were distributing the information discussed in the TIM meeting. Some members indicated that they pass out the handouts and minutes. Ted asked that members become Group champions that will take responsibility to pass the information on. Don Olson and Ted are willing to go to the agencies, office, and headquarters to make presentations. FHP indicated that they would be willing to have a 15 to 20 minute presentation in Manatee County. Don indicated that he would be supportive of funding approval for Ted Smith to present a short TIM presentation, and will recommend to his supervisor.

Attendance

Concern was raised that only four of the 12 Fire Rescue departments were in attendance. One participant asked why there was not more media involvement or public information dissemination. Don Olson stated the FDOT PIO was not comfortable with having media participation; but Don would address it with the PIO again. Ted has called North Port Police and Fire Rescue with invitations to attend the meetings with no success.

Newsletter

A request was made to have other agencies submit articles for the newsletter (i.e. Traffic Management from FHP perspective). FHP indicated that they were already low on personnel and did not have the time to write an article. The TIM Team members are encouraged to submit ideas and topics for inclusion in future Newsletters.

Additional Topics

Don indicated that participants can provide agenda items. To please email or call to make sure that all items are included for discussion.

Action Item: Don to contact FDOT PIO to discuss the issue of media participation and additional public involvement. Don and Ted are looking for input for the newsletter and agenda.

Construction/Maintenance Update:

The bridge deck widening project from SR 191 to Jacaranda is on-going. The northbound loop will be closed next week; they are changing the ramp configuration.

The SR 64 Southbound Ramp project is wrapping up. This project is providing 4 additional lanes. The walkthrough is planned for Friday.

The Palmer Bridge Deck Replacement Project is beginning; the plans have just been approved. The anticipated end date is in December. This is not a widening job.

Review and Discussion of Recent Major Incidents:

An incident occurred on I-75 within the City of North Port boundaries. Don requested information from local police but they were unable to provide any information. Some participants in attendance were at the incident.

The incident involved a rollover with three ejections and one person trapped. Three helicopters were on the scene, one landed and took off; then two arrived and were on the ground at the same time. While the interstate was closed, North Port Police would not let motorists off the highway (near MM 182). On scene personnel reported that the ranking North Port Police Department officer said that “we don’t want that traffic going into our town”. The North Port PD advised the Asset Maintenance Contractor not to put up advance warning signs. The North Port Police without discussion with FHP or other responders blocked the road and made the motorists turn around to go south along the Northbound emergency lane. FHP was not aware that this decision had been made until after the incident had been cleared from the highway.

Concerns were raised regarding the lack of communication between North Port personnel and all other responding agencies. Asset Management was not given clear direction by the North Port Officers. There seems to be a communication disconnect with the City of North Port. The City of North Port has approximately 16 miles of I-75 in their jurisdiction. The TIM Team members would like to see a unified command and unified traffic incident management approach.

Action Item: Don to contact Chief Terry Lewis of North Port Police. Don will talk to the City of North Port to see if they may be willing to host a TIM Meeting

Asset Management brought up a concern regarding the Sarasota County Sheriff's Department. Jorgenson was pulled over along the highway by a County Sheriff. The Sheriff stated that no vehicles have the right to be in an emergency lane even with their lights on; only emergency vehicles are allowed. The Sheriff did not give a citation, but warned that he may be arrested if seen driving on the emergency lanes again. Don stated that the FL Statutes supports the authorization of Asset Maintenance activities. The interstate operations and maintenance are FDOT responsibilities and that the contractor is an authorized contractor performing those responsibilities. Asset Management stated that this was not the first time and that they always have their lights on.

Action Item: Don will contact the County Sheriff's Department.

New TIM Team member Scott Melton was introduced as the new District Emergency Coordination Officer. Don requested that Scott give a presentation at the next TIM Meeting about the FDOT role during emergencies.

Scheduled 2007 Meeting Dates: Tuesday October 9, 2007
 Tuesday December 11, 2007

Attachments: Temporary Traffic Control Checklist
 Typical Scenarios
 Cable Median Barrier Presentation

Meeting Notes by Christina Florez, Dave Krauss, VANUS, Inc. (305) 823-5662