WASHINGTON – As part of his continuing effort to improve safety on the nation’s roads and bridges, U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood today released a comprehensive update to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). The manual, which has been administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) since 1971, sets the standards for road safety throughout the country.

“Safety is this Department’s top priority,” said Secretary LaHood. “These new and updated standards will help make our nation’s roads and bridges safer for drivers, construction workers and pedestrians alike.”

The MUTCD is the national standard for all traffic control devices, including traffic signs, pavement markings, signals and any other devices used to regulate, warn or guide traffic. Ensuring uniformity of traffic control devices across the nation – from their messages and placement to their sizes, shapes and colors – helps to reduce crashes and traffic congestion. This is the first comprehensive update to the manual since 2003.

The MUTCD’s 2009 edition features many new and updated requirements, ranging from changes in highway signs and bike lanes to the color of high-visibility garments worn by road workers. Most changes are a result of extensive research; however, seven changes stem from recommendations from the National Transportation Safety Board. This is the largest number of NTSB recommendations adopted by the MUTCD at one time.

“Adopting the lessons learned in recent years will help make roads safer for everyone,” said Federal Highway Administrator Victor Mendez.

By requiring better pavement markings which can increase bike lane safety, and extending walk times for pedestrians at crosswalks, the updated MUTCD furthers the “complete streets” concept – an effort long championed by the FHWA to ensure roads accommodate all types of travel, not just automobiles.

Among the other new provisions in the MUTCD:

• Replacing highway signs with brighter, larger and more legible ones that are easier to understand at freeway speeds. States will begin using the newer signs as existing ones wear out.

• Adding different lane markings for lanes that do not continue beyond an intersection or interchange to give drivers more warning that they need to move out of the lane if they don’t intend to turn.

• Expanding the use of flashing yellow arrow signals at some intersections to give a clearer indication that drivers can turn left after yielding to any opposing traffic.

• Changing the formula used to calculate crosswalk times to give pedestrians more time.

• Identifying electronic toll collection lanes with purple signs – the first time purple has been sanctioned for use on highway signs.

• Adding overhead lane-use control signs to reduce confusion among drivers in unfamiliar multi-lane roadways

Regarding Traffic Incident Management and of interests to the TIM Teams, the MUTCD in Chapter 6-1 expands the concept and requires multi-agency training, including both Public Safety and private sector TIM responders. There is also emphasis on emergency vehicle positioning that allows for a safe incident scene but assures that traffic flow through the incident scene is optimized.

The manual expands on the 2003 addition by stating that all incident responders arriving at a traffic incident should estimate the magnitude of the incident, the expected duration of the event, and expected queue length, and set up the appropriate temporary traffic control for these estimates.

An effort to increase an awareness for potential secondary crashes will be the topic of discussion following a presentation by Ted Smith at the next TIM Team meetings.

At this time, the Florida Department of Transportation has not yet adopted this version of the manual for use in Florida. It is expected to be adopted for use later this year.


Reminder: Added Features to the Statewide 511 Website!

As discussed during the latest TIM Team meetings, please check out the new features available on the 511 website.


Mr. Jim Hilbert (FDOT) has graciously provided the TIM Teams with a step-by-step pictorial guide to setting up 511 Alerts. This guide has been uploaded to the TIM Team website and is also attached to this newsletter.

Road Rangers Survey for Incident Responders

FDOT Central Office wants your feedback! They have provided a survey for those who are interested in offering their input. This survey has been distributed to first responders via email, and is also available on the TIM website and as an attachment to this newsletter.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- FHWA Revises MUTCD
- New 511 Features
- Road Rangers Survey
- Secondary Crash Awareness

Upcoming Events:

- TIM Team Meeting:
  - Tuesday, February 16th, 2009
  - 1:30 pm
  - Sarasota County Public Works Office
  - 1001 Sarasota Center Blvd.
  - Sarasota, FL

TIM Team Meeting Website!
SECONDARY CRASH AWARENESS

The sensational headlines and human interest stories often accompanying media coverage of multiple-vehicle crashes or “pile-ups” are our constant reminders of how important our work is and why, as first responders, the public and our safety must always be our number one priority.

Research by FDOT in 2002\(^1\) revealed that approximately 54% of congestion is caused by incidents and that 13 to 33% of crashes are secondary to earlier incidents. Most sobering, it was also reported that incident responder injuries are also significant: approximately 60% of the law enforcement officers that die while in the line of duty are responding to a traffic incident.

Secondary crashes, due to many environmental, vehicle and driver factors will occur. However, in Florida, we have been very proactive and aggressive in formulating and deploying various initiatives to reduce the incidence or ameliorate the impact of secondary crashes. Some of these initiatives include the enactment of the “Move Over Law”, the “Move It, Yes You Can!” Program, the Open Roads Policy, and the establishment of the Traffic Incident Management Teams and Road Rangers programs. These programs have reduced many secondary crashes and the associated losses in property damage as well as injuries and deaths.

Virtually across all roadways, thousands of what would otherwise be minor crashes lead to secondary crashes. Sadly, in many cases, the secondary crash turns out to be more hazardous than the initial crash and may occur even when everything is staged properly due to rubbernecking, reckless driving, DUI, or simply a weather event. A second incident might even make it more difficult for responders to reach a second rescue/evacuation scene. How can we ever forget the 2008 pile-up on Interstate 4 near Polk City? The chain-reaction crashes were the result of extremely limited visibility due to smoke from a brush fire which started as a controlled burn, and fog in the area\(^2\). Four people perished and approximately 40 were injured as the result of 10 different crashes involving 70 vehicles. At least 20 of these vehicles were semi tractor trailers and some almost completely burned to the ground. Our jobs can be very demanding physically and emotionally at times.

Often, the initiating event is not even a crash but a simple flat tire or some other vehicle malfunction. Regardless, in Florida, it is the responsibility of the driver to vacate the flow of traffic. The “Move It, Yes You Can” public information campaign was launched in 2007\(^3\). Still many drivers involved in a minor crash with no injuries do not know that they can and should move their vehicles out of the way. We would do all a favor to take our time and always remind drivers of such as we assist them.

There are many programs and tools for maintaining the safety of the traveling public and our own when responding to an incident. The “Move Over Law”\(^4\) provides additional safeguards but acute situational awareness and strict adherence to our training in the appropriate protocols and strategies for site management, traffic management and clearance, including field adjustments as conditions change, will always be the key to the successful management of all traffic incidents.

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1. Florida’s Safety Management System Steering Committee Report. April 26, 2002
2. WTSP News Report, January 9, 2008
4. Section 316.126(1)(b), Florida Statutes

- Contributed by Andy Núñez, PE (Metric Engineering, Inc.)
STEP 1

CLICK HERE

TAKES YOU TO...
STEP 2

FILL IN ALL BOXES AND THEN...
STEP 3

CLICK HERE AFTER FILLING IN ALL BOXES

THE NEXT PAGE YOU SEE WILL BE...
STEP 4

CLICK HERE TO SET UP YOUR ROUTE (TURNPIKE/HIGHWAY) INFORMATION

TAKES YOU TO...
STEP 5

Enter Roadway Information in boxes (above is example for US 27 to I 4) and then click here to save your segment and then...

AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE...
STEP 6

Click here to enter your route into the 511 database.

NEXT YOU’LL SEE...
STEP 7

Click on OK

You will then see...
Click on User Home Page

AND YOU WILL GO BACK TO...
STEP 9

CLICK HERE TO SET UP WHEN/HOW YOU WILL RECEIVE YOUR ROUTE ALERTS WHICH CAN BE SENT BY EMAIL, TEXT MESSAGE AND/OR PHONE CALLS.

This will take you to...
STEP 10

Step 1: Click on Route Alert
Step 2: Open drop-down box and pick your route for alerts
Step 3: Open drop-down box and pick severity
Step 4: Click on event types
Step 5: Click on days of week
Step 6: Open drop-down box for begin time
Step 7: Open drop-down box for end time
Step 8: Click on how you want alerts delivered
Step 9: Click on Create Alert

AND YOU WILL SEE...
STEP 11

Saved route(s) and alert(s) will be listed here.

You can create new route(s) and/or alert(s)

You can edit/delete saved routes/alerts

AND YOU ARE DONE!
Date: January 5, 2010

To: Road Ranger Survey for Incident Responders Participant

From: Paul Clark, Incident Management/Commercial Vehicle Program Manager

Subject: Statewide Road Ranger Survey for Incident Responders

It is my pleasure to provide you with a copy of the “Statewide Road Ranger Survey for Incident Responders.” The goal of this survey is to get input on the Road Ranger Program from the perspective of the Incident Responder. We hope to use this data to improve the program and determine where enhancements are needed.

After you have completed the survey please send it to one of the following locations:

Physical mail: Florida Department of Transportation
605 Suwannee Street, MS 90
Attn: Patrick Odom
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0450

E-mail: patrick.odom@dot.state.fl.us

Fax: 850-410-5501

I would like to thank you in advance for your assistance in filling out this survey. The survey period will end on March 1, 2010 so please try to have it to us before then. If you have any comments or questions please feel free to contact me at (850)410-5607 or at paul.clark@dot.state.fl.us.
1. Which response agency do you represent?

- FHP
- Other Law Enforcement
- Fire Rescue/EMS
- Other: __________________________

2. County where you worked with the Road Ranger: __________________________

3. When was your last experience working with a Road Ranger?

- Less than 1 week
- 1 week to 30 days
- 30 to 60 days
- 60 to 120 days
- More than 120 days

4. If you requested a Road Ranger(s), how long did it take them to arrive?

- 0 - 15 mins.
- 15 - 30 mins.
- Over 30 mins.
- Unknown
- N/A

5. Road Ranger response times are acceptable.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

6. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the Road Ranger service patrol operators in the following categories:

- Professionalism
- Respectfulness
- Helpfulness
- Competency

7. Road Ranger vehicles are adequately equipped.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

8. Road Ranger operators are thoroughly trained for their job.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

9. Services provided by Road Rangers are helpful in resolving incidents.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

10. The Road Ranger Program has made it easier for me to perform my duties.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

11. How can on-scene communications be improved?

- __________________________

12. What additional roadway segments would you like to see Road Ranger Patrols expanded to?

- __________________________

13. If you have any additional comments regarding Road Rangers please provide them on another sheet of paper.

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