



**Polk County
Traffic Incident Management Team**

*Call to Action Meeting
April 22, 2008
Meeting Minutes*

Attendees:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Agency</u>
Carlos Bonilla	FDOT	Mark Barnes	FDOT
Robert W. Pitman Jr.	Polk Co. Fire	Chris Birosak	FDOT
Gary Zipprer	Division of Forestry	Jim Hills	Lakeland Fire
Gary Weiss	A.C.T. Environmental	Chris Kaelin	City of Lakeland
Dr. Stephen Nelson	Polk Co. Medical Examiner	Ted Smith	Delcan Corp
Kristina Quennerille	Florida Highway Patrol	John O'Laughlin	Delcan Corp
James Olds	City of Lakeland	John Sparks	Delcan Corp
Tony R. Lewis	Lakeland Police	Don Olson	FDOT
Andy Ray	Polk Co. Sheriff's Office	Stan Cann	FDOT
Todd Stepp	Stepps Towing	Melvia Rogers	VANUS
Mike McArthur	Stepps Towing	Megh Govindu	VANUS

Call to Order: The Polk County TIM Team Call To Action meeting was held on Tuesday, April 22, 2008 at 1:30 PM at the Florida Department of Transportation District One Office, 801 N Broadway Avenue, Auditorium One, Bartow, FL 33831. Ted Smith, John O'Laughlin, and Don Olson facilitated the meeting.

Introductions: Ted Smith, John O'Laughlin, and Don Olson introduced themselves and Don introduced District One Secretary Stan Cann. Secretary Cann welcomed the attendees to the District One Headquarters. Secretary Cann identified safety and mobility as the top priorities to be addressed by TIM Team members. He communicated that secondary crashes may be avoided in connection with the initial incident with effective traffic incident management practices. He then requested Ted Smith and John O'Laughlin to continue the meeting.

Main Topics Discussed/Presented During the Meeting:

- I-95 Corridor Coalition: Four southeastern states (Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina) have joined the coalition recently. Florida is becoming an active player in the coalition now.
- During incidents, towing personnel are also at risk. Based on the statistics, there are more tow operators injured while responding to traffic incidents than any other emergency responders. TIM team can work together with emergency response agencies to mitigate the tow truck operators exposure to risk through collaborative advantage and team support.

- The federal Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) added a section (Chapter 6I) on incident management (temporary traffic control) in the 2001 edition and revised some content in 2003. The upcoming 2009 edition will have more specific details about incident management responsibility.
- Effective November 24, 2008, all personnel working at an incident on an interstate must wear a Type II safety vest. There are limited exceptions to this rule for law enforcement personnel.
- To clear congestion and improve mobility, Atlanta, GA has introduced “Fast Forward” program to clear incident scenes faster.
- Texas has a similar “Expedited Tow” program.
- Washington has “Instant-Tow” program, which dispatches tow trucks immediately after detecting an incident.
- Issues involved in instituting a similar program here include tow company rotations and the charge for tow companies waiting time until the police investigation is completed.
- Typical time lag between officer arrival at the scene and tow companies arrival is 40 minutes.
- **Florida Open Roads Agreement**
 - An agreement between FDOT and FHP to share responsibility for responding to and clearing incidents quickly and safely.
 - Florida is one of only two states in the country to implement an open roads program with a performance goal.
 - Florida’s bench mark to clear an incident is 90 minutes.
 - Approximately 97% of incidents are cleared within 90 minutes.
- Arizona, Utah, Oregon, Georgia and New Hampshire have programs to reduce the impact of incident scene investigations.
- FHWA’s Traffic Incident Management Handbook is currently being revised.
- Utilizing the Unified Command System is the key to manage and clear an incident scene efficiently.
- Transportation Research Board conducts research on incident management/mobility and conducts annual workshops for information sharing in January in Washington, D.C.
- Georgia DOT’s Towing Recovery Incentive Program (TRIP) provides \$2500 bonus to clear major incidents in Atlanta within 90 minutes.
- **Florida’s Rapid Incident Scene Clearance (RISC)**
 - An incentive quick clearance program for major wrecks.
 - Fully funded program for implementation this year.
 - The goal is for each agency to have a contract with towing agencies by July 1, 2008.
 - Challenge: Finding enough towing agencies that have equipment to clear the scene.
- **Florida’s State Law Enforcement Radio System (SLERS) program**
 - Long term plan to have efficient communications at the incident scene.
 - Funding issues because radios are expensive.
- Incident response agencies in major cities across the nation began to apply sound management principles to traffic incident management 20 years ago. The TIM program in Florida encompasses not only interstates but also major highways. In addition, the TIM teams in Florida also concentrate on major construction sites and special events that come to the area like Super Bowl events.

After a short recess, the attendees were asked to provide input on how the TIM program can help their agencies manage and clear incident scenes efficiently. Following are the comments/input provided by the attendees:

1. Fast track Opticom Devices. Specifically on I-4 interchanges and US-27.

2. Initiative to shut-off flashing lights on emergency vehicles after they arrive at the scene. This will help avoid secondary crashes by reducing motorist distraction. County fire engines are now being equipped with a feature that will automatically shut-off forward-facing lights when the gears are shifted into Park.
3. Concerned about safety of personnel during the final haz-mat clean-up stage. Sometimes final haz-mat clean-up takes place two or three days after the incident occurred. No law enforcement officials or DOT crews are present at the clean-up scene. Have good relations with all jurisdictions.
4. Identified fog and smoke issues. Indicated to tie things with recent I-4 incident.
5. Agency coordination with other agencies is important. Need signs, ITS devices, and CCTVs to disseminate information.
6. Need to consider US 60 and US 27 also as part of this program.
7. Traffic management for the recent I-4 incident was provided by the District 7 traffic operations center (Tampa). Lessons were learned from I-4 incident. Need coordination between District 1 and District 7.
8. Requested to combine different District TIM meetings once in a while to share ideas and discuss mutual interests.
9. Need an agency resource guide.
10. City of Lakeland staff has been given traffic control and flagger training.
11. Indicated the need to have better incident location details to respond quickly.
12. Members discussed "Enhanced 911". Enhanced 911 systems can triangulate where the caller is located based on the cell towers in the area. However, it is difficult to locate if the caller is moving.
13. Expressed concern about using only one towing company to clear the recent I-4 incident.
14. Requested if law enforcement can work with towing and recovery agencies for mutual aid type system.
15. Members discussed vehicle parking set-up at incident scene so that more lanes can be opened. TIM team can work on the set-up.
16. Towing operators concerned with application of Move Over Law. "Tow Times" magazine posts fatality statistics each year.
17. Members discussed the Move Over Law.
 - a. Florida's law has some issues with interpretation and enforcement.
 - b. The Move Over Law started in Indiana, where seven officers lost their lives in a two year span.
 - c. Need more public education regarding the Move Over Law.
 - d. Each state has different variations of the Move Over Law (some less than 20 mph and some 25 mph). There is a need to incorporate one uniform law.
18. Don Olson mentioned that in previous TIM meetings towing companies expressed concern that sometimes law enforcement officers leave the incident scene after the investigation is completed and towing personnel are left by themselves to clear the scene. Don forwarded the TIM Team concern to the Tallahassee Executive TIM Team and received a reply that law enforcement officers should not leave traffic incident scene until after it is cleared completely.
19. Some incidents are not reported to FDOT or to city or County agencies. Need common source of statewide and countywide communications so incidents can be handled properly and efficiently.
20. Need open communications between county, city, and state entities. TIM teams can work together to improve communications between the agencies.
21. Members discussed the 511 motorist information system.
 - a. 511 is designed to lessen the burden on the 911 system.
 - b. New statewide 511 system will be in one central location by the end of the year.

- c. Callers can assist the 511 system, by calling and leaving a tip if stuck in traffic jams.
 - d. Public education regarding the 511 system is essential.
 - e. The Florida Supreme Court has ruled that law enforcement agencies have the responsibility to enforce laws on highways and the DOT has the responsibility of traffic operations on highways.
22. Emergency Management in Polk County is a great resource for information and can add to the TIM team development.
23. Need to keep roadways clear. There have been problems in the past with local city agencies in smaller towns on how the road should be temporarily closed due to traffic control issues. Doing ok with the County agencies.
24. Need an agency resource guide with contact names and phone numbers. Communication is the key.

Ted Smith suggested that some city agencies are not following good site management and quick clearance procedures. He also suggested that there is a need for traffic control training for fire personnel.

Ted concluded the meeting asking the attendees if this TIM initiative is needed in Polk County. The team responded unanimously, "yes!" Ted proposed Polk County TIM Team quarterly meetings, and requested commitment to support the TIM initiatives from the attendees. Polk County Traffic Operations has volunteered their new facility meeting room.

Scheduled 2008 Meeting Dates:

Thursday, June 12, 2008
Thursday, September 11, 2008
Thursday, December 11, 2008

Attachments:

- Observations in Partnerships Presentation
- National Unified Goal (NUG) for Traffic Incident Management "Working Together for Improved Safety, Clearance and Communications"
- National Unified goal for Traffic Incident Management "Frequently Asked Questions"
- Florida Traffic Incident Management Program Strategic Plan, Executive Summary, February 2006
- State of Florida "Open Roads Policy"
- Polk County TIM Contacts
- Temporary Traffic Control (TTC) Zone / Emergency Responder Checklist
- Florida Highway Patrol "Troop F" wrecker dispatch Operational Memorandum
- Emergency Vehicle Lighting Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
- Florida TIM Vehicle Spill Quick Action Guide

Meeting Notes by Megh Govindu and Melvia Rogers, VANUS, Inc. (305) 823-5662