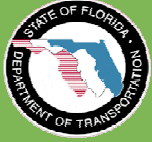




27<sup>th</sup> Edition

Polk County Traffic Incident Management Team

July 2009



Inside this issue:

- STOP Aggressive Driving 1
- Firefighters Get Crash Course on Dealing with Hybrid Cars 2
- Happy Birthday 511...a Decade of Development 2

Upcoming Events:

TIM Team Meeting – TBD



According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, aggressive driving has become a serious problem on our roadways. What is aggressive driving? Most of us know it when we see it, but NHTSA, after discussions with law enforcement and the judiciary, defines aggressive driving as occurring when "an individual commits a combination of moving traffic offenses so as to endanger other persons or property."

The Motor Carrier Compliance Office (MCCO) of the Florida Department of Transportation identifies "speeding trucks" and "following too closely" as major contributing factors in truck crashes. To help both truck drivers and passenger car drivers understand and deal with the hazards of aggressive driving, the **Better Driver Campaign** has been launched by the Florida Department of Transportation District 7 and the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) at the University of South Florida. <http://www.betterdriver.org/>

The Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) of the Florida Department of Highway Safety & Motor Vehicles continues to be on the lookout for aggressive drivers and actively works to enforce Florida's laws and reduce aggressive driving through education and awareness campaigns. This effort is part of a long-term traffic safety campaign that focuses on varying traffic themes considered high-priority in the quest to help reduce deaths and injuries on Florida's roadways. Col. John Czernis, director of the Florida Highway Patrol, announced the results of **Operation Safe Ride**, an aggressive driving crackdown that FHP conducted this past Spring. "During Operation Safe Ride our troopers focused on driving practices that put motorists at higher risk for a crash," said Czernis. "Aggressive driving has become all too common. These drivers not only put themselves in harm's way, but they also increase risk for everyone around them." The FHP identified 344 aggressive drivers during the operation.



Mission

*The TIM Team Program brings together all agencies involved in clearing the roadway crashes with the objective of improving detection, verification, response, and clearance times to expeditiously remove a motor vehicle crash or incident from the roadway while providing the best real-time information to motorists, resulting in a safer highway environment for both incident responders and motorists.*

These statewide, unannounced aggressive driving crackdowns will continue throughout the year to make sure that motorists understand the importance of driving safely and the consequences of poor driving behavior.

Florida has two applicable statutes with aggressive driving legislation, according to which, Aggressive careless driving is defined as committing two or more of the following acts simultaneously or in succession: (1) Exceeding the posted speed, (2) unsafely or improperly changing lanes, (3) following another vehicle too closely, (4) failing to yield the right-of-way, (5) improperly passing, (6) violating traffic control and signal devices. (Article submitted by Don Olson, FDOT)





## Firefighters Get Crash Course on Dealing with Hybrid Cars

By Angel Streeeter South Florida Sun Sentinel June 18, 2009

"First responders need to be trained on what's new or different," said Judy Moore, assistant communications director for the National Alternative Fuels Training Consortium, which trains first responders throughout the country on how to safely handle hybrids. "They need to be aware or someone could get hurt." While hybrids are no more dangerous than other vehicles, they can present different challenges when extricating accident victims from them. The main concern is their high-voltage systems. "The hybrids are very different from the cars we're used to," said Capt. Joe Nelson, a trainer with Palm Beach County Fire Rescue. "They have large batteries and high-voltage cables. Those are hazards our guys aren't used to dealing with." Cables running through hybrid cars can carry from 200 to 600 volts of electricity. They are cables firefighters want to avoid if they have to cut through a car to reach passengers. Those cables are often bright orange or yellow, but not in all hybrids. Plus, the vehicles have different seat belts and airbags that firefighters aren't accustomed to seeing, Nelson said. The Palm Tran bus has cables with 900 volts running through it, Nelson said. Plus, it has a large battery with 20 gallons of liquid potassium hydroxide. If it comes in contact with skin, it can cause severe burns. But vinegar and water can quickly neutralize the danger, Nelson said. "There used to be only a couple of hybrids," Nelson said. "Now we're seeing different designs. We're seeing them in commercial vehicles. We'll adjust like everything else. But it's better to have the knowledge ahead of time." (Article submitted by Christina Florez)

## Happy Birthday 511 ... a Decade of Development



In 1999, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) designated 511 as the nationwide three-digit telephone number for traveler information. Information provided by 511 services varies widely both by provider and by information provided. According to the 511 deployment coalition, more than 112 million calls have been made to 511 nationwide since its inception. 511 provides motorists with the traffic information they need to make informed decisions about their optimal routes to get to their destinations.

The State of Florida has one of the most advanced 511 systems in the nation. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) recently published its second generation 511 telephone and Internet system. The new Florida 511 system is designed to address both public demand for more timely information and increased accuracy of that information by making effective use of more advanced Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technology. To increase timeliness and accuracy, the department focused the new 511 system on roadways that are instrumented with ITS, such as roadway sensors, traffic cameras and data collection programs. Additionally, in Southwest Florida, over 98% of the public requests for traffic information were for Interstate traffic conditions. Florida's new 511 system is statewide, and covers the major roadways in Florida. Examples of traffic condition reporting are travel times along selected commuter segments, crash locations, congestion, construction, and weather events. Additionally, users can view traffic cameras and overhead message boards on [www.FL511.com](http://www.FL511.com). One of the most significant changes to the 511 system in Florida is the many personalized services now available. A user can sign up for "My Florida 511" and select custom routes which will streamline their navigation of the system. The personalization also includes receiving alerts for traffic conditions along those routes. Another significant upgrade to the Florida 511 system is the ability to communicate in Spanish, both on the phone and on the Web. The new Florida 511 system is a valuable resource for Florida's motorists because of the ease of use, the increased accuracy, the personalization and numerous available traffic features. (Article submitted by Don Olson, FDOT)

### T I M TEAM NEW WEBSITE!

[www.swfltim.org](http://www.swfltim.org)

### Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this newsletter, or would like to submit an article, please contact Don Olson at [don.olson@dot.state.fl.us](mailto:don.olson@dot.state.fl.us).

The Polk County TIM Team is committed to implementing the Quick Clearance principles of Florida's Open Roads Policy through the "3 Cs" of TIM: Communication, Cooperation and Coordination, and providing the public with the best real-time Motorist Information available. Team membership draws from state, regional, and local transportation agencies, public safety providers, and other organizations and companies that service the traveling public. The Teams, sponsored by the FDOT, meet bi-monthly.

