



47th Edition

Polk County Traffic Incident Management Team

November 2012



Florida's Department of Transportation and Local County Traffic Incident Management Programs Continue to Fight Rising Cost of Traffic Incidents – More than three times the cost of congestion

Florida Department of Transportation District-One's Traffic Incident Management (TIM) programs fight rising cost of traffic incidents by helping to clear roadways faster and protect responders and drivers. The annual societal cost of traffic crashes is \$299.5 billion, more than three times the \$97.7 billion cost of congestion, according to AAA's "Crashes vs. Congestion – What's the Cost to Society?" This report highlights the overwhelming and far-reaching economic impacts traffic safety crashes have on our nation and encourages policymakers at all levels of government to ensure safety is a top priority.



According to the study conducted for AAA by Cambridge Systematics, the overall cost of crashes (\$299.5 billion) equates to an annual per person cost of \$1,522, compared to \$590 per person annually for congestion (\$97.7 billion overall). The cost of crashes are based on the Federal Highway Administration's comprehensive costs for traffic fatalities and injuries that assign a dollar value to a variety of components, including medical and emergency services, lost earnings and household production, property damage, and lost quality of life, among other things.



The Cambridge Systematics study reveals incidents bring other costs to regions as well: traffic incidents are the leading cause of death for EMS responders and law enforcement officers. As the largest cause of unexpected jams, traffic incidents account for up to one fourth of all congestion on roadways due to rubbernecking and blocked lanes. Americans burn more than 2.8 billion gallons of fuel every year stuck in incident-related traffic—that's nearly 24 gallons of fuel per driver, reduced idling means reduced emissions for cleaner air.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Florida's Department of Transportation and local County Traffic Incident Management Programs Continue to Fight Rising Cost of Traffic Incidents 1

Transpo 2012 2

As part of the national effort to lessen economic impacts crashes, and to promote safe incident management, the Florida Highway Patrol, with the Department of Transportation and TIM team member agencies have partnered to establish an incident scene clearance goal of ninety (90) minutes. The "Open Roads" initiative is a policy designed to clear a scene by putting safety first, and with a sense of urgency; using nationally known best practices.

More than ever, our citizens expect public agencies to find new ways to create more value from every tax dollar. As we all work hard to build back our nation's economy, and spend cherished time with family and friends, time matters more than ever it seems. What if I told you that working together, we could protect and save lives, while also saving time and money?

We can. **Traffic Incident Management**, or "TIM" programs and responders are doing this every day on roadways and communities across the country. Regularly scheduled TIM Team meetings offer a venue for First Responders to discuss No-Fault obstacles to Rapid Incident Response, National Uniform Goals, Best Practices and to receive nationally accredited Responder Training. TIM Responders include firefighters, EMS, Law Enforcement, Towing and Recovery, Road Ranger or safety service patrols, and Transportation professionals. Together through **Memorandums of Understanding**, these responders use well-rehearsed procedures to get the right equipment to the right location faster, protect motorists' lives, and restore the affected traffic lanes more quickly.

Often Road Rangers are the first to arrive at an incident and must relay vital information back to a Regional Traffic Management Center and deploy safety measures for temporary traffic control. Road Ranger Supervisor Mr. Harry Whitney, a member of the Polk County TIM Team, agrees that TIM programs save lives and money because they help speed clearance of the incident while protecting *everyone's* safety as the top priority. "Many people think of the Road Ranger motorist assistance patrol as helping stranded motorists fix a flat tire or help with fuel to make it to the next gas station, but our Road Rangers are so much more than that. They help make sure First Responders arrive at the right location of a crash to help keep people safe and traffic moving freely," said Mr. Whitney.



But it's not just these "heroes of the highway" who keep motorists safe and our roads operating smoothly—everyone has a role in making TIM work. **Move your car** to a shoulder or safe nearby road, out of the lanes of traffic, if you are in an incident. If your car is drivable and there are no injuries, **slow down and move over** a lane when passing by an incident scene to provide a protective buffer for responders, and the motorists behind you (you can get a ticket if you don't).

Support TIM programs, including District-One's **Memorandum of Understandings** and Florida's **Road Ranger service patrols** in Collier, Lee, Charlotte, Sarasota, Manatee, and Polk Counties, by having your agency participate in TIM meetings.

Article submitted by **William Fuller, District One Traffic Incident Management Project Manager**. This article was redacted in part with permission from the FHWA Outreach toolkit which can be found at; http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/eto_tim_pse/timtoolbox/. Saving lives, time and money, is a priority of communities across the country, and of the FHWA and FDOT. To learn about TIM and information to support and to promote safe, quick clearance of traffic incidents in your area please call or contact Mr. William Fuller, District One Traffic Incident Management Project Manager at (239) 225-9815 or william.fuller@dot.state.fl.us

To learn more about TIM and the Florida's TIM initiatives please visit the following sites:

- 1) http://www.dot.state.fl.us/trafficoperations/Traf_Incident/Traf_Incident.shtm
- 2) www.swftim.org/
- 3) <http://newsroom.aaa.com/>
- 4) <http://newsroom.aaa.com/2011/11/aaa-study-finds-costs-associated-with-traffic-crashes-are-more-than-three-times->



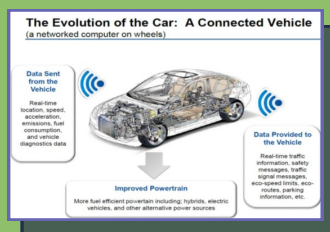
Transpo 2012



Transpo 2012 was held October 28th - 31st. Transpo 2012 is a Traffic Engineering Convention for Transportation Professionals. The conference partners with ITS Florida, the Florida Institute of Transportation Engineers, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to provide information on the world of ITS and Traffic Incident Management (TIM). This year's theme was "ITS: It's Not That Scary". The main focus (held during the 20th year of ITS Florida) was the ability to bring together transportation experts from around the country to discuss Transportation System Management and Operations, new ITS technologies, and Emergency Management.

There were a few key topics discussed within the technology conference. The topics included Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSM&O), Connected Vehicles, and the future of Traffic Incident Management. The Federal Highway Administration defines Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSM&O) as "an integrated program to optimize the performance of existing multi-modal infrastructure through implementation of systems, services, and projects to preserve capacity and improve the security, safety, and reliability of our transportation system." With fewer funds available to build our way out of congestion, improving our current roadways has become critical. TSM&O improves mobility for all roadway users through an emphasis on real-time active management and operation of the existing arterial roadways. TSM&O partners are comprised of public and private agencies throughout transportation, partnered together as one cohesive entity to make cost-effective investment decisions. This cohesiveness serves to improve communications, coordination, and collaboration amongst transportation partners leading to more effective leveraging of existing infrastructure.⁽¹⁾

The next key topic to be discussed was distracted drivers. Many American automobile manufacturers are investing resources in voice-activated, hands-free in-vehicle communication systems. These systems are under development to increase communication capabilities and to enhance safe vehicle operation without compromising driver control. The hands-free communication is geared to reduce driver distraction but doesn't eliminate the need of the driver to remain focused on the road while driving. Part of this system will allow the automobile to automatically mute the radio before sending or receiving calls.



The final key topic discussed was the future of infrastructure regarding the technology of connected vehicles. Vehicle-to-infrastructure communications for safety is the wireless exchange of critical safety and operational data between vehicles and highway infrastructure, intended primarily to avoid or mitigate motor vehicle crashes but also to enable a wide range of other safety, mobility, and environmental benefits. V2I communications apply to all vehicle types and all roads, and transform infrastructure equipment into "smart infrastructure" through the incorporation of algorithms that use data exchanged between vehicles and infrastructure



elements to perform calculations that recognize high-risk situations in advance, resulting in driver alerts and warnings through specific countermeasures. One particularly important advance is the ability for traffic signal systems to communicate the signal phase and timing (SPAT) information to the vehicle in support of delivering active safety advisories and warnings to drivers. Early implementation of the SPAT application can enable near-term benefits from V2I communications in the form of reduced crashes, which in turn demonstrate benefits that can help accelerate deployment. Because of the great variety of vehicle and infrastructure safety systems now installed and planned for the future, the focus on consistent, widely applicable standards and protocols is critical. Additionally, the research will concentrate on the key FHWA and FMCSA application areas of interest, including intersection safety, run-off-road prevention, speed management, and commercial vehicle enforcement and operations⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ Florida Department of Transportation. Transportation System Management and Operations, <http://www.dot.state.fl.us/trafficoperations/TSMO/TSMO-home.shtm>

⁽²⁾ US Department of Transportation Research and Innovative Technology Administration. Vehicle-to-Infrastructure (V2I) Communications for Safety, <http://www.its.dot.gov/research/v2i.htm>

Article by Scott Agans, Metric Engineering, Inc.

T I M TEAM WEBSITE!

www.swfitim.org

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.



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.