



122nd Edition

Polk County Traffic Incident Management Team

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Upcoming Events:

Next TIM Team Meeting
Thursday, January 8, 2026
10:00 am

Polk County Sheriff's Office
1895 Jim Keene Boulevard
Winter Haven, FL 33880



Stronger Together: Preparing for 2026 Through Training and Teamwork

As we look ahead to the new year, our focus remains centered on strengthening the partnerships that keep our responders safe. Every Traffic Incident Management (TIM) meeting creates an opportunity to learn, share, and build relationships that directly support safer roadway operations. With 2026 approaching, we encourage each agency to help expand our TIM community. If every member invited just one additional responder to attend a meeting in the coming year, we could grow awareness, reinforce best practices, and continue improving safety for everyone working along our roadways.

Recognition for Our FDOT District One Road Ranger

Our District One TIM responders face daily risks and rely on teamwork to keep our roads safe. At times, an individual's actions stand out as going "above the call of duty," and we are proud to recognize those moments.

Jim Marlin is a Road Ranger Supervisor in the North area of FDOT District One. As a result of the new Road Ranger contract, several new Road Rangers have recently been hired. These new team members must complete multiple certificates that are taught and guided by the Road Ranger Supervisor.

Before a new Road Ranger ever responds to a call, Jim ensures they receive proper training on setting up Temporary Traffic Control at crash scenes and assisting disabled vehicles. He then takes each rookie out on the road for live, on scene training, ensuring they understand real world response environments.

This training is crucial for protecting the safety of the Road Ranger and the motorists they serve, helping ensure every responder returns home safely. Jim's support, leadership, and commitment to safety are essential to the success of the Road Ranger program.

Thank you, Jim. We appreciate your dedication and the time you invest in preparing the next generation of Road Rangers. If you or your agency would like to recognize a responder for going above the call of duty, please contact Brandy Boccuti, TIM Coordinator, at bboccuti@metriceng.com.



Holiday Enforcement Campaign: Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over

With the holiday season approaching, Florida agencies are once again participating in the Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over campaign. This statewide effort focuses on preventing impaired driving through education, visibility, and coordinated enforcement. During a time of year when celebrations increase roadway volumes and crash risks, this campaign serves as a critical reminder that impaired driving threatens everyone including our first responders working on the roadside.

Local law enforcement agencies will be increasing patrols and DUI enforcement zones throughout December. We encourage all TIM partners to help spread the message: plan ahead, choose a sober ride, and look out for one another. More information is available through the Florida Law Enforcement Liaison [Program](#).

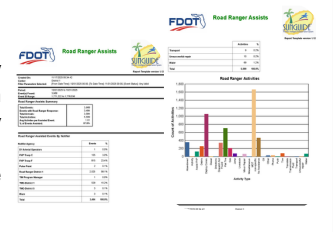
Crash Responder Safety Week 2025: A Reminder for All Responders

The Crash Responder Safety Week campaign is currently underway, honoring the men and women who work every day on our roadways to protect the traveling public. This national effort reinforces the importance of drivers slowing down and moving over when approaching responders at a scene. For our District One TIM partners, the campaign serves as a timely reminder that visibility, communication, and teamwork remain essential to preventing struck-by incidents. As we prepare for the year ahead, we encourage all agencies to use this time to refresh safety practices, support training efforts, and help spread roadway safety awareness. To learn more, please visit Respondersafety.com.



FDOT District One Road Ranger Assists

The Road Rangers play a vital role in assisting first responders on the roadways. They collaborate closely with emergency personnel, providing a valuable support system during incidents. Their tireless efforts and unwavering dedication have undoubtedly made a significant impact on improving the safety and efficiency of Florida's roadways. To view and download the 2025 October Road Ranger Assist report, please click on the following link: [Report](#)



The Road Is Changing: What Responders Should Know About Automation



The rapid growth of autonomous and connected vehicle technology is reshaping how traffic moves on Florida's highways, and these changes have direct implications for first responders. From advanced driver assistance systems to automated semi trucks and coordinated truck platoons, automation is no longer a distant concept. It is now an active part of the transportation network our responders interact with every day.

Florida plays a central role in this evolution. Facilities such as SunTrax, a Florida Department of Transportation managed testing site in Polk County, allow engineers and researchers to evaluate how automated vehicles respond to real-world roadway conditions. This includes lane closures, work zone patterns, adverse weather, and passenger vehicle interactions. These scenarios closely mirror the environments our responders operate in. Insights gained from these tests help improve the reliability of autonomous systems and inform future responder protocols.

Automation is increasingly influencing enforcement and incident detection. A recent example is an AI powered patrol vehicle demonstrated in Florida. This vehicle is capable of recognizing roadway hazards, lane changes, and stopped vehicles while transmitting alerts directly to dispatch. Although still in a pilot stage, tools like this can improve situational awareness for TIM partners by shortening the time between an incident occurring and the first unit being notified. The [video demonstration](#) is available for responders who would like to see how the system operates.

Connected vehicle communication is also expanding through systems often referred to as Vehicle-to-Everything communication, known as V2X. These systems allow vehicles to exchange data with each other through Vehicle-to-Vehicle communication, known as V2V, and with roadway infrastructure through Vehicle-to-Infrastructure communication, known as V2I. For first responders, one of the most promising benefits is the ability to automatically broadcast "Responder

Ahead" or "Lane Closed" alerts to approaching vehicles long before drivers see flashing lights. As more vehicles become connected, these digital warnings can reduce struck by incidents and improve scene safety.

Automated freight movement is another area of rapid development. Semi trucks equipped with advanced automation can maintain consistent speeds, respond to surrounding vehicles, and coordinate movements in planned formations known as platoons. This technology can improve fuel efficiency and reduce braking conflicts, but it also creates new considerations for responders. Approaching a platoon or an automated truck requires awareness of sensors, active systems, and reduced driver involvement. As freight companies adopt these technologies, responders will increasingly encounter trucks that rely on automated controls during normal operation.

Work zones are seeing similar advancements. Autonomous Truck Mounted Attenuators and robotic cone deployment systems reduce human exposure to high speed traffic by using automated platforms to perform the riskiest tasks. As these systems become more common, responders will encounter more equipment operating independently along the roadside.

Staying prepared for automated technology will require continued training and coordination among all TIM partners. Responders benefit from reviewing how autonomous systems operate and from participating in joint exercises with FDOT, fleet operators, and local agencies. Adding automation awareness to TIM training helps responders recognize automated systems and understand how to manage them safely. As these technologies become more common, regular practice and shared procedures will play an important role in maintaining safety at both work zones and incident scenes.

As we move into 2026 and beyond, first responders will continue to play a crucial role in shaping how autonomous technology integrates with real world operations. Ongoing training, awareness, and collaboration between agencies will ensure that our teams remain prepared. Although automation changes the tools on the roadway, the commitment and expertise of our responders remain the foundation of safe and effective incident response.



Article submitted by Brandy Boccuti, TIM Coordinator, Metric Engineering, Inc.

TIM TEAM WEBSITE!

www.swfltim.org

The Polk County TIM Team is committed to implementing the Quick Clearance principles of the Open Roads Policy of Florida 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 of 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.

