



TIM TEAM



115th Edition

Polk County Traffic Incident Management Team

September 2024



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Upcoming Events:

Next TIM Team Meeting
Thursday, **October 10, 2024**
10:00 am

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



Shining a Spotlight on Our First Responders: Celebrating Service and Safety 2024 National First Responders Day



National First Responders Day, celebrated on October 28th, recognizes the courage, resilience, and dedication of all first responders, especially our District One First Responders. It is a day to honor their critical role in our communities and advocate for their safety and well-being, including better mental health support and safety measures.

Our first responders manage traffic incidents, clear hazards, and assist motorists under dangerous conditions, such as high-speed traffic and severe weather. Their quick actions

help prevent further accidents and maintain road safety. This day also pays tribute to those who have lost their lives while serving on the roadways and emergency situations.

Organizations like Thank You First Responder (TYFRO) lead efforts to promote a "Culture of Thank You," raising awareness and fostering support for first responders. By highlighting their sacrifices and the challenges they face, TYFRO encourages communities to show appreciation and support. To learn more, visit: <https://thankyoufirstresponder.org/>

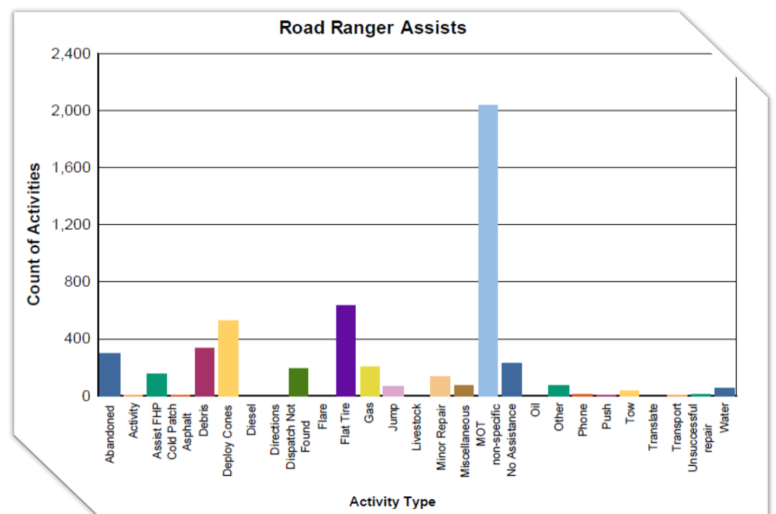
October 28th is more than a day of gratitude; it is a commitment to ensuring that first responders receive the support they deserve as they continue to serve and protect us all.

2024 Crash Responder Safety Week

Crash Responder Safety Week (CRSW) 2024 will be observed from November 11-17, 2024, recognizing Traffic Incident Management (TIM) professionals nationwide. This week emphasizes the "Reduce Your Speed as You Proceed" campaign, urging drivers to slow down and move over near traffic incidents to protect responders and prevent secondary crashes. TIM communities will conduct training, public awareness, and inter-agency efforts to promote safe, quick roadway clearance. CRSW highlights the essential role responders play and encourages public responsibility for roadway safety. To learn more about CRSW 2024 and how to participate, visit ResponderSafety.com.

**CRASH RESPONDER
SAFETY WEEK**

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 the Florida's roadways. **The Road Rangers assisted in more than 5,117 events during the month of August 2024.**



Wrong Way Driving Systems: Enhancing Road Safety in Florida



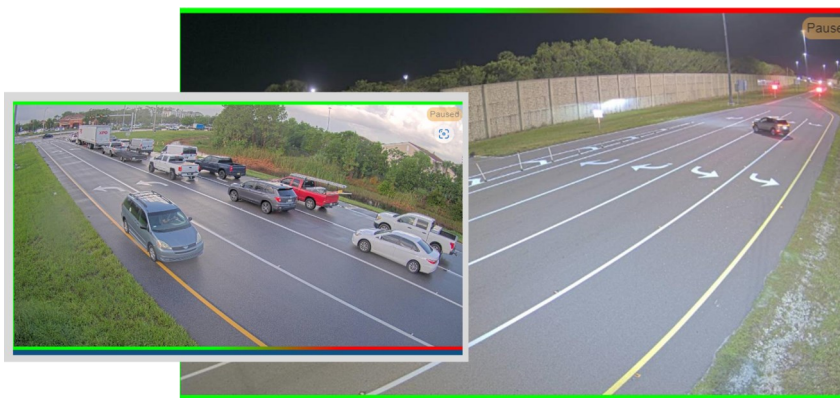
Wrong-Way Driving (WWD) incidents are among the most dangerous on the road, often leading to severe and fatal collisions. Recognizing this critical issue, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District One has been implementing advanced Wrong Way Vehicle Detection Systems (WWVDS) to enhance safety on Florida's roadways. This topic was a focus at the recent District One Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Team meetings, where David Burnside, Senior Project Manager with TransCore; Subin Idikula, ITS Maintenance Project Manager for FDOT District One; and Ray Mikol, RTMC Assistant Manager for HNTB, presented the latest advancements and highlighted the importance of these systems for first responders and the public.

Nationwide, approximately 500 people die each year due to wrong-way crashes, highlighting the ongoing concern for road safety.¹ WWVDS offers a critical layer of protection, enabling quicker response times and coordinated efforts to prevent accidents. The speakers at the TIM meeting emphasized the significant impact these systems have in reducing WWD incidents, reinforcing FDOT's commitment to safer roads across Florida.

The WWVDS detects vehicles entering exit ramps in the wrong direction using radar, video, and thermal cameras. These systems trigger flashing "WRONG WAY" signs to alert drivers, giving them a chance to self-correct. If the driver does not turn around, the system alerts the Regional Transportation Management Center (RTMC), which then notifies law enforcement and activates Dynamic Message Signs (DMS) to warn other motorists. "As technology grew, they went to video, thermal cameras, and they're coming out with LIDAR," said Burnside, noting the improvements in detection accuracy.

FDOT District One has been installing WWVDS at key locations, with 30 ramps on I-75 and other roadways already equipped. The network is expanding to close safety gaps in areas prone to WWD incidents. New systems are expected to be operational by the end of the fiscal year at locations like US 301, Clark Road, Collier Boulevard, and SR 29. This rollout shows FDOT's commitment to reducing WWD incidents.

In addition to WWVDS, FDOT District One is also using TrafficVision, a system that leverages existing infrastructure to monitor wrong-way drivers. While it doesn't provide immediate alerts via flashing signs, it is effective for monitoring and recording incidents, offering broader coverage without extensive new investments.



A key advantage of WWVDS is the coordinated response it enables. When an alert is triggered, Traffic Management Center (TMC) operators quickly manage the situation, activating response plans that include warnings on DMS boards and coordinating with the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP). "The operators would be able to search the screenshots... to determine if it's a true wrong-way driver that requires activation," explained Mikol. This quick decision-making is essential in preventing collisions.

FDOT District One also conducts internal reviews of these types of incidents at their Major Incident Evaluation (MIE) meetings. These evaluations focus on analyzing the incidents to find ways to improve specific areas and prevent future occurrences at the same locations. This continuous process of evaluation and enhancement is critical to FDOT's overall strategy for maintaining safer roads.

Looking ahead, FDOT's proactive approach with WWVDS and similar technologies provides a safety net that can save lives. With advanced detection, real-time monitoring, and swift responses, Florida is setting a standard for road safety, aiming to reduce WWD incidents and ensure safer roads for all.

(1) Fatal Wrong-Way Crashes on Divided Highways. AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. Web 9.12.2024. <https://aaaafoundation.org/fatal-wrong-way-crashes-on-divided-highways/>.

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

T I M TEAM WEBSITE!

www.swfltim.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 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

