

Contract No. C-8334

# Florida's Turnpike Safety Patrol Program

## *Standard Operating Guidelines*



Prepared for:  
Florida Department of Transportation  
Florida's Turnpike Enterprise



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## 1 Background

Florida's Turnpike Enterprise (FTE) is committed to improving the management and safety of traffic on the Turnpike system. The Turnpike continues to demonstrate this commitment by deploying programs and technology to stay in the forefront of traffic incident management (TIM).

In October of **1999** the Enterprise established the Road Ranger program to address two primary needs: motorist assistance and quick removal of dangerous debris. The early program consisted of three pick-up trucks roving a portion of the system, clearing debris and offering assistance to motorists with disabled vehicles they encountered. The daily hours of coverage were from 6:00 AM to 10:00 AM and 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM. The program has since expanded to 14 units working seven days per week and has gradually begun to provide assistance to Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) with initial emergency traffic control at traffic incidents.

Additional Safety Patrol staffing is provided when greater traffic demand is experienced or anticipated. This enhanced service is provided for emergencies, holidays, special events, contra-flow support and other similar instances.

In **2003**, the Turnpike Enterprise developed a set of Traffic Incident Management initiatives termed **Traffic Incident Management Enhancements** (TIME). A major component of the TIME program was the expansion and transition of the Safety Patrol program from a motorist assistance provider to a more effective, multi-functional "Service Patrol" and ultimately to an Incident Response Team (IRT).

All over the country, freeway or expressway service patrols and IRTs have been cited as the most effective elements of traffic management programs. IRT programs utilize roving vehicles to patrol high speed, multi-lane roadways or other facilities experiencing congestion and/or frequent traffic incidents. Response vehicles in patrol mode look for disruptive incidents, stop and assist motorists, and can be dispatched or directed to locations where incidents are detected or reported by others. IRT operators on patrol can immediately respond to and clear debris from the roadway before it contributes to other incidents.

In **2004**, the **Road Ranger Vision** outlined the process and a schedule to transition the Road Rangers from a Motorist Assistance patrol to an Incident Response program. As stated by the Florida's Turnpike Enterprise leadership, the goal is to have the Turnpike Safety Patrol become a model program, steadily and continually evolving, staying on the cutting edge of Traffic Incident Management.

The Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG) have been prepared for use by the Safety Patrol operators in their daily field operations. These are guidelines and are not intended to be absolute in all situations as it is recognized that these activities occur in a dynamic environment.

## **2 Objectives, Role and Function**

### **2.1 Transition to an Incident Response Team (IRT)**

The second generation Turnpike Safety Patrol is continuing the transition from pure motorist assistance to full incident response as the highest priority, while still providing the customary motorist assistance functions.

The objectives of a modern, fully functional incident response program include prompt detection of incidents or disruptions in the traffic stream; minimizing incident duration; clearing obstructions; restoring full capacity to the facility; and scene safety activities to reduce the risk of secondary incidents. With a direct two-way radio link the Safety Patrol units become an integral component of the **Traffic Management** process managed by the Traffic Management Center.

Another critical objective of an IRT is the prevention of injury to other responders and highway users. The Turnpike Safety Patrol operators, properly trained and with fully equipped trucks, are capable of clearing the majority of damaged or disabled vehicles from travel lanes without having to wait for a wrecker. This “quick clearance” activity substantially reduces the duration of vehicle crashes and abandoned vehicles left in hazardous locations. IRT operators can relocate a disabled or wrecked vehicle to the closest safe location for pick up and towing by a wrecker. With a Safety Patrol tow vehicle, the wreckage can be relocated to an exit, accident investigation site (AIS), or other safe haven to reduce and dissipate the traffic queue. These coordinated, more aggressive actions benefit both the FHP, by allowing troopers to finish their work in a safe location, and the Turnpike’s customers, by minimizing the lingering impact to the traffic stream.

### **2.2 Role of the Florida’s Turnpike Safety Patrols**

The role or job description of a Safety Patrol operator is to:

- Operate an incident management vehicle, either an Incident Response Truck or a tow rig, in a patrol mode and detect, respond to, and manage congestion and hazards causing traffic incidents on Florida’s Turnpike system.
- Assist Florida Highway Patrol with initial traffic control at a major incident scene and warn approaching motorists of backed-up traffic (queue protection) at major blocking incidents.
- Aggressively, yet safely, clear congestion-causing incidents and/or hazards from the roadway.
- Provide limited assistance to motorists with vehicle disabilities while patrolling an assigned zone, and provide details of such assistance to the TMC.
- Stay in constant communication with the Traffic Management Center advising of traffic flow or congestion problems and providing frequent detailed updates from incident scenes.

## 2.3 Training

Performance at the IRT level can only be accomplished with skilled personnel. In order to reach that skill level, and to develop trust and overall coordination with other responders, both current and newly hired Safety Patrol operators need to complete appropriate training. All training needs to be documented, with the training records kept with the Employee's personnel records.

While the actual training requirements have not yet been determined, the following training is suggested. Operators with these skills can handle all aspects of a truly effective traffic incident management team.

Recommended training:

- Safety Patrol Standard Operating Guidelines
- Light Duty Tow Operator Training and Certification (TRAA or PWOFF)
- Uprighting Cars
- Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) and Flagger Certification
- First Aid, Intermediate or First Responder Level
- CPR and External Defibrillator Training.
- Fire Extinguisher Use for Vehicle Fires
- Tank Truck Emergencies: MC 406, MC 407, MC 331 tanks
- Hazardous Materials, Awareness Level
- Truck Air Brake Systems (Override Techniques)
- Traffic Management Center (TMC) familiarization
- Inter-Personal Skills (Dealing with Motorists)
- Participation in a multi-agency Traffic Incident Management Workshop that includes the following:
  - Quick Clearance / Move-It Laws and Assuring Compliance
  - Safe Operator and Driving Practices
  - MUTCD Requirements for Incident Scenes
  - Vehicle Parking at Incident Scenes
  - Multi-agency Coordination
  - Turnpike TMC Function and FHP Coordination
  - Incident Command System (ICS) and Unified Command Process
  - Florida's "Open Roads" Policy
  - Mitigation of Motor Vehicle Fluid Spills
  - Florida's Turnpike Emergency Spill Guidelines

### **3 Contract Provisions**

#### **3.1 Valid Drivers License**

The Safety Patrol operator shall be licensed in accordance with the Florida Motor Vehicle Code, be 18 years of age, have a safe driving record and no felony record. The contract calls for a criminal history records check when Safety Patrol operators are hired. The records check is conducted by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

The Safety Patrol contractor will conduct routine driver license checks at least every six months. It is important to immediately notify the supervisor of any license suspension.

The Safety Patrol contractor is also required by Florida law to show proof by a licensed medical practitioner or testing facility that all operators are drug free when hired and at random times during employment.

#### **3.2 Pre-trip Inspection**

It is the responsibility of each Safety Patrol operator to perform a daily inspection of their assigned vehicle prior to beginning their daily tour of duty and again at the close of their tour. All reports concerning missing, stolen or damaged tools and equipment must be completed on the date of occurrence and submitted immediately to the supervisor. Missing items shall be indicated on the Pre-Trip Inspection Form. Supervisors will determine if any losses or damage are beyond the control of the operator.

#### **Guidance:**

- Prior to beginning your shift, inspect your vehicle and complete the Pre-Trip Vehicle Inspection Form, which includes a checklist of all vehicle safety items and devices including, but not limited to, brakes, horn, headlights, taillights, turn signals, backup warning device, PA/Siren System, strobe light assembly, arrow board, traffic cones, etc. Notify the Supervisor immediately of any deficiencies. Safety items must be operational. Do not drive a vehicle that is in an unsafe condition.
- Indicate that all tools and equipment are in place, or note any missing items, on the Pre-Trip Vehicle Inspection Form. It is your responsibility to notify the Supervisor of any missing items prior to beginning your shift.
- Check all supplies and materials prior to beginning your shift, and restock as needed.
- Check that all communications devices are operational before beginning your shift, and notify the Supervisor of any problems. Communications devices must be operational prior to and during your shift.
- Also indicate in the remarks section of the Daily Log that all tools and equipment are in place. Initial the statement again at the end of the shift. Notify the Supervisor of any discrepancies before securing for the day.
- The Safety Patrol operator is responsible for the maintenance of tools and equipment on the truck. Examples: checking oil and hydraulic fluids, bleeding air tanks, etc.

- The Company will replace any tools or equipment rendered unusable through normal use or as the result of accidents or other circumstances beyond your control.
- Report any badly worn or broken equipment to the Supervisor so that it may be repaired or replaced.
- At the end of your shift, re-check the vehicle, ensure that all tools and equipment are in place, and refill or restock supplies or materials used.

### 3.3 Personal Safety

The safety and welfare of Safety Patrol personnel is of primary concern. Due to the very nature and hazardous exposure of the job, Safety Patrol operators face a working environment full of potential hazards. Safety Patrol operators need to familiarize themselves with the vehicle they drive every day and applicable Turnpike and Company standards and comply with those policies for their own welfare and safety.

#### Guidance:

- Seat Belts
  - In compliance with State and Federal laws, seat belts must be worn by all occupants of the Safety Patrol vehicle.
- Safety Vests
  - Safety Patrol operators are required to wear an approved high visibility safety vest / garment while working outside the vehicle.
  - It is your responsibility to ensure that your safety vest / garment is kept clean / laundered to maintain the reflectivity and visibility the garment is designed to provide. The safety vest / garment shall be replaced when worn, badly soiled or faded. The safety vest / garment is to be worn on top of all other clothing, jackets, or garments.
- Personal Safety Items
  - Inventory your first-aid kit prior to beginning your shift to ensure that it is properly equipped.
  - Ensure that both leather and latex gloves are available in the vehicle.
- General Driving
  - Adhere to all traffic laws, policies, and safe-driving principles and practices of the State of Florida and Florida's Turnpike Enterprise.
  - Always use parking brakes, emergency lights, arrow boards, etc. in accordance with the Safety Patrol Standard Operating Guidelines. Parking brakes shall be set whenever you exit your vehicle.
  - Use caution when exiting your vehicle. When stopped adjacent to a travel lane, always look before opening the door into traffic.
  - Before backing your vehicle, always check your surroundings to ensure clearance. When available, use a spotter to guide you. **LOOK BEFORE YOU BACK UP.**

➤ Vehicle Accidents

- All vehicle accidents / incidents resulting in any damage to the Safety Patrol vehicle, other vehicles, or property shall be reported to the FHP for investigation. The Supervisor shall be notified of all such incidents, including those deemed non-reportable by FHP.

Supervisors will review all vehicle accidents / incidents. If you are found negligent, disciplinary action may be taken. The severity of the disciplinary action will depend on the accident severity, past history, and review of all circumstances leading up to and surrounding the incident occurrence.

### 3.4 Actions Taken in the Interest of Safety

“Actions taken in the interest of safety” is the phrase that needs to be the motivation behind all the incident management activities on the highway, and specifically behind the decisions made by Safety Patrol operators every day. In each of the following examples, the operator must apply policy and training as well as common sense to make the right decision. In any incident where, based on operator training and experience, the Safety Patrol operator believes a motorist or the other responder is taking an unsafe course of action, and the Safety Patrol operator is unable to resolve the problem, the supervisor and the TMC should be advised of the situation.

Here are some examples where the phrase would apply:

- Two motorists in a fender bender near a Toll Plaza say, “We’re waiting for a trooper.”
- A motorist sitting in a car partially blocking a ramp says, “I already called AAA.”
- An abandoned car sits at the end of a gore with a note, “Went for gas - be right back.”
- At a crash scene with no injury but two mangled cars in the road, a new trooper says, “Leave them here, I called for tows.”
- While making an assist, a Safety Patrol operator says to himself, “Why set out cones - I’ll only be here for a short time.”
- A man trying to put a jack under a car on a narrow 4’ left shoulder asks a Safety Patrol operator to “Just block half the lane.”
- A tow truck driver tells a Safety Patrol operator that if he moves a car, “You are liable for any and all damage.”
- The Safety Patrol operator on the previous shift says, “Don’t worry about checking the lights - everything works.”

#### Guidance:

- Ask yourself the question, “**What should I do in the interest of safety?**”

### **3.5 Working Outside the Safety Patrol Scope**

Safety Patrol operators are not to perform work outside the scope of the Safety Patrol program contract with the Turnpike while on duty. Safety Patrol operators cannot act as an agent or perform any services such as road service, mechanical repairs, or towing for AAA or the Company.

### **3.6 Service is Free**

It is the responsibility of each Safety Patrol operator, as a professional, to maintain a high degree of integrity and to refuse any offer of payment, tips or gratuities for services rendered. Comment cards explaining the Safety Patrol program and stating that the service is free are provided to each motorist by the Safety Patrol operator.

Salaries for the Safety Patrol operators are paid by the toll revenue received from the motorists using the Florida's Turnpike. The services we provide to the traveling public are already paid for by the motorists we assist.

Safety Patrol personnel are not allowed to accept tips or gratuities from a motorist or any other person. Safety Patrol personnel cannot accept any form of "kickback" from tow operators, lawyers, doctors, insurance adjusters, or repair shops, or direct business to a specific service station or tow company.

Disciplinary action will be taken against any personnel engaging in any of the above prohibited activities.

### **3.7 Representing Florida's Turnpike Enterprise and the Florida Department of Transportation**

Motorists using the Turnpike want to know that someone is out there focused on their safety and on reducing their frustration with congestion caused by incidents. Safety Patrol operators need to be that advocate.

Safety Patrol operators are the skilled, professionals who are the highly visible part of the team of dedicated Turnpike staff working to make their trip safe and their travel time predictable.

This program generates a great deal of positive feedback and compliments. It is essential that the Safety Patrol operators are courteous and maintain the highest standards of integrity while representing the Turnpike Enterprise and the State of Florida.

The Safety Patrol operator provides a comment card to each motorist assisted. The returned comment cards are used to monitor the program and also the performance of individual operators in the eyes of the motorists assisted.

### **3.8 Measuring Safety Patrol Performance**

The mission of the Safety Patrol program, as stated in Section 2, is to improve the safe and efficient flow of traffic on Florida's Turnpike. This is accomplished by the prompt detection of incidents or disruptions to traffic; minimizing incident duration; clearing obstructions; improving scene safety and preventing secondary incidents.

Data is collected daily by the Company and the Turnpike to measure productivity of individual Safety Patrol operators and the entire Safety Patrol program. This data is analyzed periodically for performance measures such as the number of motorist assists or incidents handled during a work shift, the number of miles driven on patrol, average response time to incidents, and percentage of incidents detected by Safety Patrol operators.

However, **the true performance measure of a Safety Patrol operator is how effective you are in locating and safely clearing disruptions and restoring traffic flow.**

Your effectiveness is determined by how well you:

- Establish and maintain a close working relationship with the TMC staff, FHP troopers, and other Turnpike TIM partners
- Detect incidents by continuously scanning both directions of travel while patrolling
- Accurately communicate incident details and traffic conditions to the TMC
- Assist motorists with relocation of their vehicles out of hazardous locations
- Shorten the duration of incidents and prevent secondary crashes
- Set up cones and MUTCD traffic controls, and improve scene safety
- Work with Fire-Rescue and other responders to maintain as many open lanes as possible
- Clear and re-open travel lanes - **“find a way to make it happen”**

### **3.9 Traffic Laws, Driving and Operator Safety**

**The operating guidelines and safety procedures contained in this manual are not intended to cover every circumstance that a Safety Patrol operator may encounter. Nor are they intended to limit the use of good judgment and initiative to make field adjustments in handling a wide variety of situations and emergencies.**

Operators of a Safety Patrol vehicle shall obey all traffic and motor vehicle laws. Safety Patrol vehicles are not ‘Emergency Vehicles’ but when on patrol are an ‘Official Vehicle’ and are permitted to drive on paved shoulders or on grass areas to respond to an emergency or lane blocking incident.

Safety Patrol operators have restrictions on the routine use of median openings. Guidelines for the use of Turnpike median crossovers are covered in **Section 4.4.**

Safety Patrol operators represent the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and must always set an example as courteous, considerate, professional drivers.

Seatbelt use is mandatory for the operator and any passengers in a Safety Patrol vehicle. Infants and small children shall be transported in properly installed safety seats removed from the disabled vehicle.

When warranted by traffic conditions, Safety Patrol operators are allowed to drive on roadway shoulders or grass areas when responding to an emergency/lane blocking event or at Turnpike Incident Managers' requests. Shoulder or grass area use is not permitted when responding to non-emergency events.

### **Guidance:**

- When driving on shoulders or grass areas, use extreme caution and travel at a slow, safe speed. Watch for other vehicles entering the shoulder from the travel lane. You may use the vehicle's emergency warning lights and horn. Do not use shoulders to respond to non-emergency incidents like a disabled vehicle out of traffic or other unconfirmed incident.
- When on patrol maintain a safe, steady speed consistent with traffic around you. Do not exceed the posted speed limit, even when on a direct response to an emergency.
- Reduce speed during wet weather or poor visibility.
- Maintain a proper interval; avoid following a truck or high cube vehicle restricting your view ahead.
- Check mirrors frequently and watch for vehicles in the blind spots.
- Drive in the right travel lane whenever possible; 80% of your stops will be on the right.
- Signal your intentions and give plenty of notice before pulling on or off a shoulder.
- Use the shoulder to gain speed to safely re-enter the traffic stream.
- If a stalled vehicle is discovered at the last minute, do not risk creating a hazardous situation by making an erratic maneuver. Stop in front of the vehicle if necessary or proceed to the next exit and circle around to get into a safe position.
- Double check behind your vehicle before backing, especially at an incident scene

Working on a highway or near moving traffic can be very hazardous. Safety Patrol operators must be extremely alert and use sound judgment to protect themselves and other responders and motorists. Always try to think ahead, be aware of your surroundings and have an 'escape path'.

Some specific safety guidelines are listed below, but Operator Safety is paramount and must always be part of the Safety Patrol operator's daily operating routine:

- **Evaluate the situation encountered, determine the needs and take appropriate action with your safety in mind.**
- **All incidents should be handled only when it is safe to do so.**
- **Call the TMC with your location and the vehicle information prior to exiting the truck.**
- **Check traffic before exiting the truck and approach on the shoulder side, in most cases this will be on the passenger side away from traffic. If the vehicle is on the median side of the highway, approach on the driver side.**
- **NEVER TURN YOUR BACK TO TRAFFIC!**

- **Do not stand between vehicles. Walk through the danger zone between vehicles as quickly as possible. Scan the interior of the vehicle you are approaching and walk past the passenger door and turn to face traffic. Clearly identify yourself and ask “are you okay” and “how may I help you”. Do not open the door; ask them to lower the window.**

**Guidance:**

- Always wear a clean reflectorized safety vest; follow instructions about number of washings. Always wear gloves when changing tires or removing debris.
- Do not park too close to the travel lane. Remember ‘space safety’ (three to four car lengths minimum between vehicles). Exceptions should be limited; for example, jump starts.
- Avoid stopping on the outside of a curve; you are in a glide path.
- Use cones and flares for your safety as well as traffic control.
- Do not use flares for illumination; never kick a flare.
- Avoid loose or hanging clothing or personal items that may become snagged when working on disabled vehicles.
- Use extreme caution when jump starting. Follow proper cable placement.
- Never remove a radiator cap from a hot or overheated engine
- When an incident is clear, remove all flares and other materials
- Always communicate with the TMC. It is for your safety.

## **4 Operational Procedures**

### **4.1 Response Priorities**

The following is a guide to help prioritize multiple concurrent requests for Safety Patrol response based on sound Traffic Incident Management principles, with the highest priority listed first.

1. Injury crash **blocking** the travel portion of the highway
2. Non-Injury crash **blocking** the travel portion of the highway
3. Disabled vehicle **blocking** the travel portion of the highway
4. Abandoned vehicle **blocking** the travel portion of the highway
5. Emergency traffic control operations
6. Debris **blocking** one or more travel lanes (follow safety guidelines)
7. Crashes not blocking any travel lanes
8. Disabled vehicle not blocking a travel lane
9. Abandoned vehicle not blocking a travel lane but in a questionable location

### **4.2 Communications, Dispatching, and Automatic Vehicle Location**

Three major contributing items to Safety Patrol effectiveness are communications, dispatching and automatic vehicle location (AVL). All three work hand in hand and are vital to Safety Patrol operations. Concise communications regarding incident location and details improves incident clearance and response time. Transportation Management Center (TMC) dispatchers look for the “What” and “Where” portion of traffic incidents and respond by knowing “Who” to send. The dispatcher’s ability to find the nearest Safety Patrol operator using AVL helps answer the “Who” portion.

#### ***4.2.1 Communications and Dispatching***

The Turnpike Safety Patrols currently use the 450 MHz two-way radio system. It is important to keep communication clear and concise. Excessive, unnecessary conversation can saturate the radio system and increase the communication queue for other Safety Patrol operators and dispatchers. Dialogue between TMC dispatchers and Safety Patrol operators must be kept strictly incident related. Dispatchers and Safety Patrol operators should limit their dialogue to incident related information and use concise language. Avoid unnecessary conversation such as, “Good morning”, “Thank you”, “It is nice talking to you”, etc. The use of “10-Codes” or “Signal Calls” is not required. If not certain of the code number or definition, don’t use the code. Instead, use plain language to communicate your message. Speak clearly using a moderate voice volume when transmitting information such street names, vehicle make, color, model, tag numbers and vehicle identification numbers (VIN). Use the phonetic alphabet to transmit information such as license tags. Refer to the Florida’s Turnpike Radio Communication Guidelines for additional communications guidelines, phonetic alphabet and list of 10-Codes.

Safety Patrols also use Nextel phones for motorist calls and as a backup to the 450 MHz radio system, which is the primary means of communication.

Communication during incident management between Safety Patrol operators and TMC dispatchers is critical to motorist safety. Dispatchers need to know information regarding travel lanes being blocked by disabled or crash involved vehicles. This information is then used for advance warning messages to motorist upstream via Dynamic Message Signs (DMS) allowing additional scene protection for incident responders and at the same time helping reduce secondary incidents.

**Guidance:**

- Establishing communications standards between Safety Patrols, TMC dispatchers, Florida Highway Patrol and other incident responders will improve incident response effectiveness. Safety Patrol operators play a significant role in this process and must always remember that an important part of their responsibilities is to communicate concise information to TMC dispatchers or other incident responders. This can be achieved by adhering to standard radio conventions as shown in the following examples:

**Example 1 – TMC to Safety Patrol Dialogue**

(TMC) "Pompano TMC to Romeo 6, report of a crash at mile 15 northbound"  
(R 6) "Romeo 6 en route from northbound Sawgrass at Sample"

**Example 2 – Safety Patrol to TMC Dialogue**

(R 12) "Romeo 12 to Turkey Lake TMC, I'm on duty"  
(TMC) "Received, Romeo 12 on duty"

**Example 3 – Safety Patrol to TMC Dialogue (Abandoned Vehicle)**

(R 10) "Romeo 10 to Pompano TMC, abandoned vehicle, southbound at Lake Worth Road, right shoulder, red Toyota, tag number Victor-Tango-one, seven-five-four, Florida"  
(TMC) "Received, abandoned vehicle, southbound at Lake Worth Road, right shoulder"

Always state your call name, status or incident description and location. This will provide TMC dispatchers with sufficient information to contact the appropriate response agencies. In addition, the TMC dispatcher becomes aware of any possible danger you and motorist(s) being assisted may be exposed to and can help look after your safety.

**4.2.2 Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL)**

The AVL system informs dispatchers of vehicle location, status and speed. Using the AVL system, TMC dispatchers can identify the nearest Safety Patrol unit within the zone to an incident location.

Safety Patrol driver tampering with the AVL system is strictly prohibited.

### 4.3 Activity Documentation

In addition to contacting the TMC with assist information, Safety Patrol operators are also required to document all work activity through the course of the shift. All activity must be recorded, including break times. This information is important and is used for performance measures, quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) process and post-incident reviews. Safety Patrol operators encounter or find themselves assisting in all types of incidents. Some can be as simple as providing fuel to a disabled vehicle or as complex as assisting motorists or Florida Highway Patrol on a crash scene involving fatalities. The Safety Patrol operator must be aware of all surroundings and document all information pertaining to the incident.

General information that must be documented includes:

- dispatch time
- arrival time
- departure time
- incident type or nature
- location (indicate mile marker if nearest intersection is not known)
- motorist(s) name(s) (optional)
- vehicle make
- vehicle model
- vehicle year
- vehicle color
- license plate number including state, i.e. FL V12ATL
- services rendered

Activity logs must be kept neat and have all required information completed. Information to be documented that is not a check list item should be recorded in “Other” section of the activity log. Do not assume any information; log only what you see. For instance, information about vehicles involved in a crash should be limited to vehicle description and not how severely the vehicles were damaged. Proper and clear incident documentation will help Safety Patrol project managers and/or supervisors find information easily when a request or inquiry is made.

#### **Guidance:**

- Safety Patrol operators need to be aware of their surroundings at all times and document all significant incident scene information at time of arrival, during and at departure from incident. When pushing or towing vehicles, look for and document any damages prior to engaging to relocate the vehicle. Information on the activity report shows whether or not a mistake or wrong action was committed while providing services. It also gauges a Safety Patrol operator’s job performance.

Although activity documentation is important and required, Safety Patrol operators must prioritize and keep in mind that their responsibility during the incident is to help clear the travel

lanes quickly and safely. Initial activity documentation can be done once the Safety Patrol operator arrives and has secured the scene. Subsequently, once the incident has been cleared, additional information can be documented.

#### **4.3.1 Supplemental Incident Information**

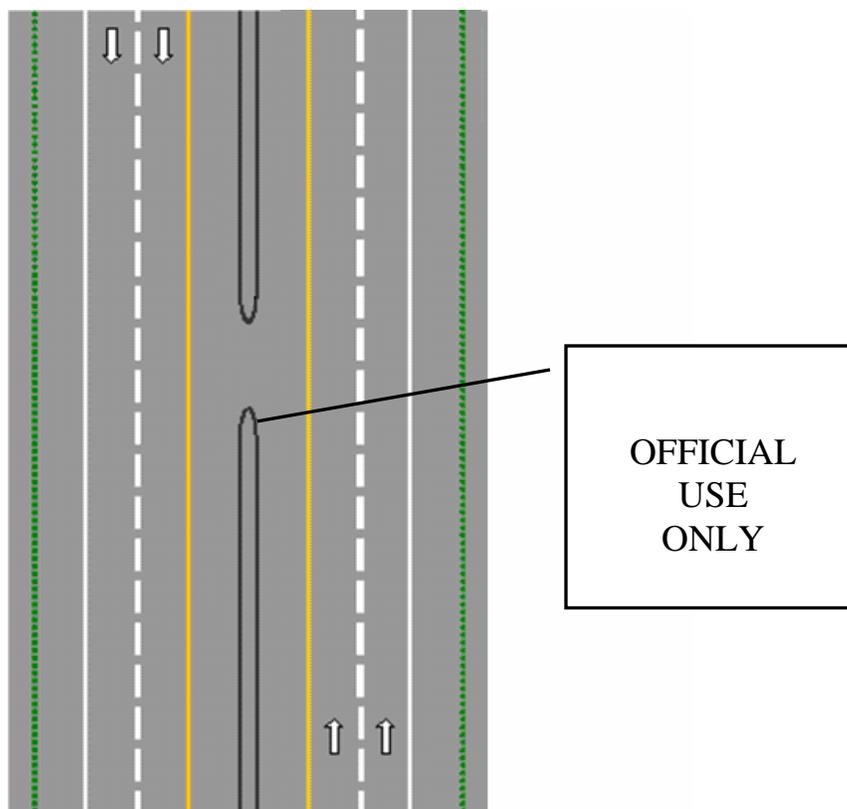
Safety Patrol operators may be requested to capture additional information at major incidents to track performance measures and determine the impact and costs of lane-blocking incidents. This information could include such items as responder information, which lanes were blocked, and lane opening times.

#### 4.4 Use of Median Crossovers

Median crossovers provide turn around points for law enforcement and emergency response vehicles on Florida's Turnpike. Safety Patrol operators under normal patrol reverse direction at interchanges or service plazas, not at median crossovers. Florida's Turnpike Enterprise has developed the following policies for Safety Patrol use of median crossovers:

- South of Milepost 152 (Fort Pierce) – Safety Patrols are not permitted to use median crossovers in this area, except when directly instructed to do so by an FHP trooper or told to follow the trooper. If so instructed, the Safety Patrol operator should obtain the trooper's name and badge number if possible.
- Milepost 152 (Fort Pierce) to Milepost 309 (Wildwood / I-75) – Safety Patrols are permitted to use only those predetermined "Official Use Only" median crossovers that have been reviewed and approved by the Turnpike Highway Operations Director (or his/her delegate).

Figure 1 shows a typical urban area median opening reserved for official use only.



**Figure 1 – Urban Area - Median Opening (Jersey Barrier)**

In rural areas, Safety Patrol use of median crossovers is permitted only in approved locations as described above and when responding to a dispatch event. Extreme caution must be taken when using median crossovers to avoid causing a crash or interrupting normal traffic flow. Safety Patrol operators should become familiar with crossover locations and structural characteristics when working in a new zone. Allow sufficient time to decelerate when approaching a crossover. Upon turning around, gradually accelerate to ease into flowing traffic

without causing any traffic disruptions. The use of overhead lights and proper turn signal lights is also recommended for vehicle visibility.

The physical structure of crossovers along the Turnpike varies. Crossovers located in grass medians can be paved, shell rock surface or grass-dirt surface. Caution should be taken when crossing a grass-dirt surface as it may be wet during rainy season and may cause your vehicle to get stuck, resulting in additional response delays or equipment damage. Often times, the paved area underneath highway overpasses is used as a median crossover but is limited to official use. **Crossing at non-designated locations is not allowed.** Figure 2 shows the proper approach when using a rural area median crossover.

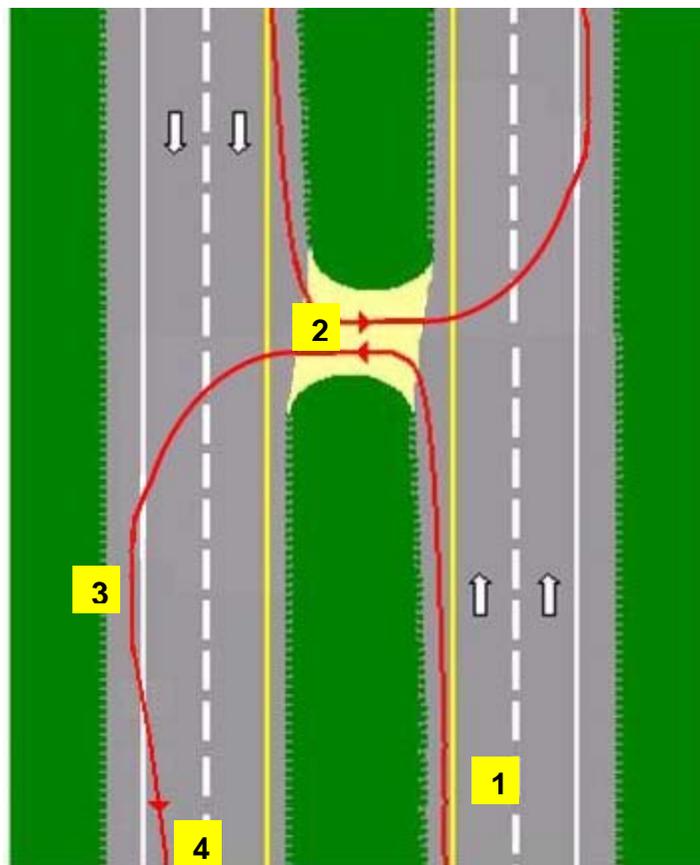


Figure 2 – Safety Patrol Use of Median Crossover (Rural Area)

**Guidance:**

- Be aware of your surroundings when using crossovers. Every attempt to make the Safety Patrol vehicle visible must be made. Do not assume other motorists will see you. Do not slow down or merge abruptly hoping that other motorists will swerve or stop. Safety Patrol operator safety and incident response time can be improved by complying with the following best practice rules when using crossovers.
  - Allow enough time and distance for acceleration and deceleration
  - Follow the path shown in Figure 2 as illustrated by positions 1 through 4
  - Become familiar with crossover locations and physical structure in your zone

- Stop in the median, drive across the travel lanes to the shoulder, and safely merge with traffic.
- Make your vehicle visible by using lights and turn signals
- Do not drive aggressively
- Do not cross at unsafe locations

Safety Patrol operators should always be aware of and practice safe driving techniques. As responders, the Safety Patrol operator's goal is to respond effectively and safely. Getting to the incident scenes in a quick safe manner allows the driver to secure and clear the area much faster thereby reducing the possibility of secondary incidents.

## **4.5 Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) and Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) Requirements**

### **4.5.1 Emergency Light Use**

The appropriate use of emergency lights (high-intensity rotating, flashing, or strobe lights) is essential, especially in the initial stages of a traffic incident, for the safety of emergency responders and persons involved in the traffic incident, as well as road users approaching the traffic incident.

Emergency lights provide warning only. They do not provide traffic control. Emergency lights are often confusing to road users, especially at night. Road users approaching the incident from the opposite direction are often distracted by emergency lights and slow their vehicles to look at the traffic incident, posing a hazard to themselves and others traveling in their direction.

The use of emergency lights can be reduced if good traffic control has been established at the incident scene. This is especially true for major traffic incidents that might involve a number of emergency vehicles. If good traffic control is established through placement of advanced warning signs and traffic control devices, then responders can perform their tasks on scene with minimal emergency lights.<sup>1</sup> **Safety Patrol operators should utilize arrow boards instead of flashing lights whenever possible.**

Use emergency lights:

- When en route to a confirmed incident with injuries or blocking a travel lane
- When assisting a stranded motorist, law enforcement, and/or other emergency services in an extremely hazardous location.
- When stopped in a travel lane or any portion of a lane for an incident and the arrow board is not effective.
- When re-entering the travel lanes of the Turnpike from a parked position on the shoulder. Use four-way flashers and rear-facing emergency lights until reaching the posted speed limit or a speed equivalent to the flow of traffic, whichever is lower.

Do NOT use emergency lights:

- When en route to a non-emergency type incident, such as a stalled vehicle on the shoulder or an unconfirmed incident.
- When parked on a shoulder behind a disabled vehicle. Use four ways and arrow board in caution mode.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from MUTCD Section 6I.05

**Guidance:**

- Do not use emergency flashing lights when using the arrow board; they divert the motorist's attention from the arrow board.
- Reduce the use of emergency lighting at an incident scene while not endangering those at the scene. Where possible, turn off forward-facing emergency lights once on scene.
- Vehicle headlights not needed for illumination, or to provide notice to other road users of the incident response vehicle being in an unexpected location, should be turned to parking lights at night or during inclement weather.<sup>2</sup>

**4.5.2 Arrow Board Use**

The proper use of the vehicle-mounted Arrow Board, or Dynamic Message Sign (DMS), if so equipped, is essential for emergency short-term traffic control at an incident scene.

While emergency lights provide warning only and provide no effective traffic control, the Arrow Board, used in conjunction with traffic cones and other traffic control devices, provides positive guidance to direct approaching traffic away from a blocked travel lane at an incident scene.

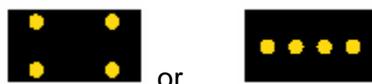
**Guidance:**

- Use the Arrow Board in **Arrow** mode only to indicate a blocked travel lane.



**Figure 3 - Use of Arrow Board – Blocked Lane**

- Use the Arrow Board in **Caution** mode when on or near the shoulder of the roadway.



**Figure 4 – Use of Arrow Board on Shoulder**

- Do not exceed 40 mph, or the manufacturer's suggested speed, with the Arrow Board in the upright position. Wind damage to the board, mounts and/or vehicle may result.

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<sup>2</sup> MUTCD Section 6I.05

### 4.5.3 Traffic Cone Placement

Safety Patrol operators need to be experts in setting up short term traffic controls to make incident scenes safer. Traffic cones are an excellent tool and serve as a safety device as well as an effective traffic control device. Without traffic cones, approaching vehicle traffic is still merging and changing lanes until they are only a few feet from parked emergency equipment. Cone closures can displace this turmoil several hundred feet upstream and allow traffic to pass the scene in the lanes chosen to remain open.

All responders, and especially Fire-Rescue, are concerned for their safety and may close more travel lanes than actually needed, sometimes by parking apparatus across all lanes. Safety Patrol operators who are skilled in setting up proper cone closures and using advanced signing to make incident scenes safer send a positive message to other responders. As the effectiveness of proper traffic control becomes evident, other responders will tend to be more receptive to keeping more lanes open and opening closed lanes sooner.

**All Safety Patrol operators should be trained in Maintenance of Traffic (M.O.T.) and flagging as well as short term traffic control for incident scenes.**

#### Guidance:

##### ➤ Shoulder Incidents

- If you are stopped on the shoulder of the road and you expect to be there more than 5 minutes, you should set out a minimum of four (4) cones. The cones should start at the outside rear corner of the truck and be spaced about 35 feet apart along the edge line extending a minimum distance of 100 feet as shown in Figure 5. Traffic cones are very visible and offer some additional warning if a motorist drifts toward the shoulder while approaching. **This safety practice must be a routine procedure for all Safety Patrol operators.**

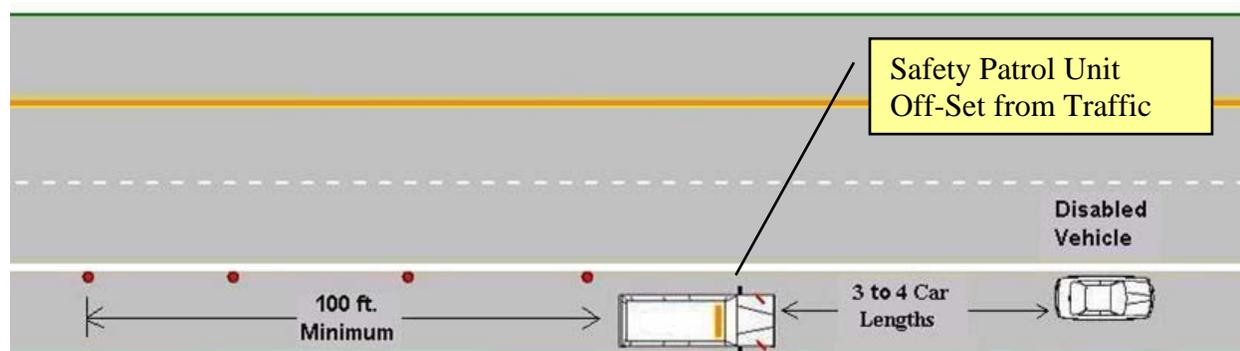


Figure 5 – Disabled Vehicle Scene Cone Setup

➤ Lane-Blocking Incidents

- If you are the first responder to a crash scene or other road-blocking incident, quick, skilled action in traffic control must be taken to reduce the risk to victims, responders and other highway users. The first step in traffic control is to use your truck's arrow board to warn and direct traffic around the scene. The next step is the proper placement of cones to delineate the incident scene and lead traffic into available lanes to safely pass the incident.
- There should be at least sixteen cones on the truck. Take a stack of cones and begin to close off the lanes that are blocked. Continue to lengthen the cone taper by placing additional cones. Remember to always face traffic while placing or removing cones.

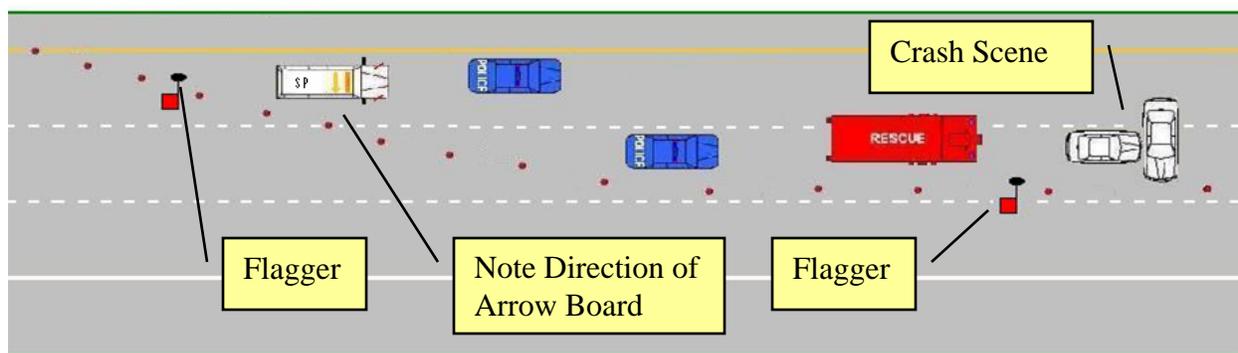


Figure 6 – Crash Scene (Lane Blocking) Cone Setup

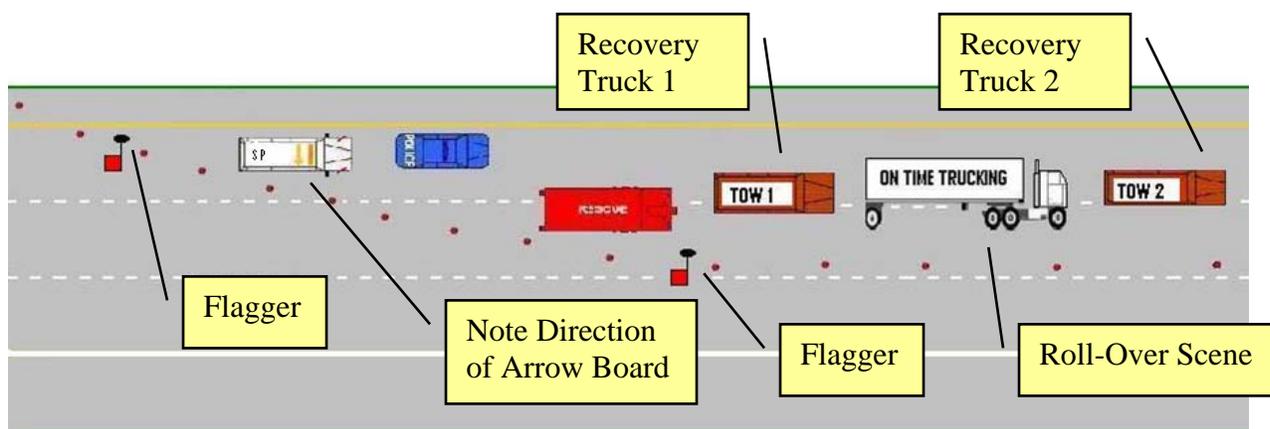


Figure 7 – Rollover Scene (Lane Blocking) Cone Setup

- Cones should be equally spaced and at least twenty five (25) feet apart. By using 12 cones for the lane closure (about 300'), and 4 for the crash scene, you can quickly make the scene safer. Remember to place cones around the response vehicles and at least one downstream past the crash to allow a parking spot for the ambulance or EMS vehicle (Figure 6). For major incidents allow additional space for multiple responder vehicles (Figure 7).

- If it is dark, flares may be chosen to initially outline the lane closure. The flares should be supplemented as soon as practical with cones with reflectorized material.
- If more cones are needed, get them from other responding units or request some from another Safety Patrol unit through the TMC.

These suggestions for cone usage for emergency traffic control have proven effective in many programs, but are certainly not the only layout that can be used if more cones are available. The Manual of Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) Chapter 6 and FDOT MOT trainers are excellent sources for more detailed instruction for cone placement.

#### **4.5.4 Positive Traffic Control**

Providing positive manual traffic control at an incident scene reduces rubbernecking and helps keep traffic moving smoothly past the scene.

Manual traffic control should be provided by qualified flaggers or uniformed law enforcement officers, but may be provided by any response personnel.

Appropriate readily available traffic control devices may be used to provide traffic control.

All Safety Patrol operators should be trained in basic Maintenance of Traffic (MOT), flagging, and short term traffic control for incident scenes.

#### **Guidance:**

- The responder providing the positive traffic control should be at a safe location adjacent to the wrecked vehicles. Make eye contact with the drivers of approaching vehicles to ensure they are paying attention to their driving and not the incident. This will help them safely transit the incident scene.

#### **4.5.5 Advanced Warning and Queue Protection**

The safety of all motorists traveling on the Turnpike is a primary objective of the Traffic Incident Management (TIM) program. Safety Patrols are a key component of motorist safety and are also the “street level” representative of the TIM program.

When an incident occurs, there is a very real probability of a secondary crash. Many times this secondary incident is more serious than the initial event. Safety Patrol operators can play a significant role in reducing secondary incidents.

The prompt and proper placement of the Safety Patrol truck with the arrow board and setting up a cone closure at the scene will help move drivers safely past the scene safely and in an orderly fashion. However, a crash can quickly cause traffic to back up due to the reduction in the roadway capacity. This backup, or traffic “queue”, grows quickly as more high speed traffic vehicles approach.

Since high speed traffic is not expecting stopped traffic at the end of a developing queue and may not see the arrow board or emergency lights from other responders, they should be warned. While the first responding units are not expected to stop and set up warning signs before securing the scene and protecting the victims of a crash, subsequent units should take

steps to advise highway users of the incident ahead. The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) specifies: “Responders arriving at a traffic incident should, within 15 minutes of arrival on-scene, estimate the magnitude of the traffic incident, the expected time duration of the traffic incident, and the expected vehicle queue length, and then should set up the appropriate temporary traffic controls for these estimates.”

The placement of incident advance warning signs is an important function. Generally, a second or follow-up responder takes this responsibility. As an example, this could be handled by the second Safety Patrol responding to the incident. If a backup unit is not available, the initial responding unit can double back and place the signs once the immediate scene is secure. It is important that the signs be placed far enough back and / or moved as needed to remain well in advance of the queue.

**Guidance:**

- In addition to placing the portable warning signs, make the TMC aware of traffic conditions so they can activate available Dynamic Message Signs upstream of the queue, broadcast Highway Advisory Radio (HAR) messages, and take other steps to provide information to motorists.
- Safety Patrol trucks should each have at least two fabric signs and sign stands. The signs are a special fluorescent pink color with legends including “INCIDENT AHEAD”, and “BE PREPARED TO STOP.”
- Remember to keep looking for ways to improve safety. Obtaining additional signs from other response units and place them on both sides of the roadway well in advance of the scene. If the incident becomes long term, signs and cones need to be upgraded or replaced by a MOT contractor or RISC tow company.

#### **4.5.6 Safe Vehicle Placement**

In previous sections, guidance was given on proven traffic control measures to make incident scenes safer. A vehicle with emergency lights is not a traffic control device, although it is commonly considered as such. A Safety Patrol truck with an arrow board, however, is probably the most effective temporary traffic control device.

##### **Guidance:**

- When making a **motorist assist**, vehicle placement is critical. While outside your truck you are a pedestrian, so make the assist as quickly as possible and get the motorist and their vehicle back on the road or off to the shoulder and you back in your truck.
- Park your truck back and well off the edge of the roadway. This does two things: It separates your truck from the area you are working in, and it gives you better sight distance and a view of oncoming traffic and more time to react. Avoid parking your truck closer to the edge of roadway than the vehicle you are assisting. In some situations you may need to offset your truck further away from traffic to allow you to open the door and exit safely. Do not park in a position that increases the potential for you or your truck being struck.
- Park close enough to read the license plate, but not too close; consider a space of about three to four car lengths. The practice of parking too close is common; don't slip into this habit. Turn your wheels away from traffic when stopped, assisting at a crash scene or disabled vehicle.
- Your truck, when struck at highway speed, will move forward a considerable distance; remember the term "space safety." If the vehicle is in a hazardous location, consider relocating it before you provide assistance. Sometimes moving the vehicle a short distance and further off the road is the prudent thing to do. You make the call. Refer to Section 5.3 for proper relocation methods.
- When at a **crash scene**, place your truck in a position to best utilize the arrow board. As every incident is different, there is no set location; use your skills and training to determine the best location. Remember that you are the one responder who is expected to be expert in setting up traffic control. You set the scene early on for safety and limiting the impact to traffic.
- If you are a first responder, attempt to stop behind the crash in the same lane, leaving plenty of space - three to four car lengths. Your arrow board should be directing traffic around the crash. If other emergency vehicles are responding, only close lanes that are necessary so you do not create more traffic back-up and delay their arrival.
- As additional resources and vehicles arrive, consider repositioning your truck to allow more room for emergency vehicles and putting the arrow board in the most effective location as you set up your traffic cone lane closure taper. Continue to suggest to other responders that they reposition some of their units as you get your closure in place to allow better flow of traffic past the scene.
- Always look for opportunities improve traffic flow and scene safety.

#### **4.6 Cell Phone Call for Motorists**

Motorists are permitted to make up to three local or credit card calls of up to three minutes each using the Safety Patrol cellular telephone to make arrangements for further service, towing, or transportation.

- Log all outgoing calls with date, time, and number called, including calls made by a motorist.
- Call home only for emergencies or to advise about overtime. Keep calls brief.
- Keep incoming calls to a minimum.
- Calls to other Safety Patrol operators should be made by two-way radio, not by cellular phone.
- Cellular phone numbers are restricted and are not to be given out.

#### **Guidance:**

- When a motorist needs to use the Safety Patrol cellular phone for a “courtesy call”, the Safety Patrol operator should:
  - Dial the number for the motorist
  - Insure the call is not lengthy and that the conversation is related to the problem at hand.

#### **4.7 Multilingual Assistance**

Motorists traveling on Florida’s Turnpike come from many countries and often speak other languages. To assist the Safety Patrol operator’s ability to communicate with the motorists, a multilingual assistance sheet has been developed (Table 1).

## 4.8 Transporting Motorists or Pedestrians

Pedestrians on any access controlled highway are at extreme risk. If a pedestrian is encountered, stop and ask if you can be of assistance. When assisting motorists with a disabled vehicle when the vehicle will not start or cannot be driven, assist the motorist to obtain help using your cell phone (section 4.6). If towing service or other help is not available in a reasonable time, offer to transport the motorist to the Service Plaza or nearest exit within your patrol sector with a payphone.

If the motorist refuses your offer to be transported, caution them to remain in or near the vehicle in the grass well off the travel lanes. Notify the TMC of their decision and indicate that you will check on them on your next pass of your assignment. If there are circumstances that make you feel that the individuals are at risk or in danger (such as female, young children, elderly, poor health, etc.) ask the TMC to contact FHP for assistance.

- When transporting a motorist or pedestrian, advise the TMC of your intentions, destination, number of people, gender and current odometer reading. Call the TMC immediately upon arrival at the drop off point and report your ending mileage.
- If there are more passengers than seatbelts in the Safety Patrol vehicle, contact the TMC and request assistance from another Safety Patrol unit, a supervisor or a Trooper.
- Remember to call in the vehicle description and tag number before you leave your vehicle (section 4)
- Use extreme caution when you encounter or transport individuals at night when there is no disabled vehicle in sight or if the individual appears under the influence. In these cases ask the TMC to request a trooper.

### Guidance:

- All passengers must wear seat belts.
- Infants and small children must be in a car seat.
- Know where all the pay phones are located in your patrol sector.
- Safety Patrol operators cannot wait for motorists; drive motorists to or from repair shops or parts stores, provide cab service; or drive motorists back to the disabled vehicle.
- Remember that you are not to leave the Turnpike Patrol area to go to parts stores or repair centers to have flats fixed or secure repair parts and drive back to the disabled vehicle.

#### **4.9 Dealing with Motor Clubs and Towing Companies**

Remember that you are a Florida Department of Transportation Safety Patrol operator. Your job is to help keep the Turnpike operating as efficiently and as safely as possible. Be courteous and professional, offer your assistance to other service providers, and follow the operating guidelines for scene safety. If you suspect some improper activity or conduct, notify the TMC and your supervisor.

#### **4.10 Relationship with Other Turnpike Staff**

The Safety Patrol program is a highly visible part of the Turnpike Team and the Safety Patrol operator is expected to set a high example of skill and professionalism.

**Guidance:**

- Offer your assistance whenever you can without waiting to be asked.
- Stop well behind a Trooper or Turnpike vehicle to give them some added protection.
- If in a dangerous location consider setting out cones and use your arrow board when appropriate to make the scene safe.

## 5 Safety Patrol Response to Traffic Incidents

There is a generally accepted expectation that the Turnpike's Safety Patrol program will make every reasonable attempt to respond quickly to any motorist in need of assistance or any report of a motorist in need within the patrol area.

To provide better service to the Turnpike's customers, Safety Patrol operators may be dispatched out of their assigned zones by TMC or FHP.

### 5.1 Disabled Vehicles

There is a substantial risk to the personal well being of the driver or occupants of a motor vehicle that breaks down on a high-speed access-controlled roadway such as the Turnpike. Every attempt should be made to respond promptly to this type of incident. Quick response is a basic operating procedure that will help safeguard the vehicle occupants who might be tempted to accept a ride or walk alongside the roadway to seek assistance.

A **special relationship** is established when a Safety patrol operator observes a motorist in need or assistance with a disabled vehicle. Within reason, the Safety patrol operator must adjust his direction of travel to respond to the identified hazardous incident with due caution but without delay. The operator may turn around at the next interchange, plaza or authorized median opening.

There is a real potential liability risk to the agency and the contractor if the Safety Patrol operator does not adjust his travel to respond to an incident. Delayed response by the Safety patrol operator could expose the agency and the contractor to potential tort liability risks.

When a Safety Patrol operator on patrol encounters, observes or is dispatched to a motorist with a disabled vehicle the Safety Patrol operator will stop to offer assistance, unless en route to a higher priority call.

If the Safety Patrol operator must bypass a motorist, the TMC shall be advised of the location and basic description of the vehicle for follow-up later or by another Safety Patrol or other responder.

The Safety Patrol's primary responsibility is safety. If a disabled vehicle is located in a hazardous location, as determined and defined by the Turnpike Highway Operations Director, or in a travel-lane blocking location, every effort should be made to relocate the vehicle prior to making the assist. Follow the guidelines in Section 5.1.2 to relocate a vehicle in a hazardous location.

If a Safety Patrol operator is dispatched to a disabled vehicle and encounters another along the way, the Safety Patrol operator may stop for a short time and check the problem. If immediate repairs cannot be made, the motorist should be advised that you will return after the other call is cleared.

If the disabled vehicle is in the other direction of travel, call the TMC and indicate your intention to turn around and offer assistance. The TMC can verify that there is no higher priority incident ahead and acknowledge that you are responding.

### **5.1.1 Stalled Vehicle on the Shoulder (Driver Present)**

Safety Patrol operators stopping to assist a motorist should stop well behind the vehicle, close enough to read the license tag number but no closer than three to four car lengths. The Safety Patrol operator should park well off the edge line where possible and **approach on the passenger or non-traffic side of the vehicle.**

Before exiting the truck, the Safety Patrol operator shall call the TMC with the location, tag and vehicle description. The Safety Patrol operator shall identify himself to the motorist before offering assistance and inform him/her that services are being provided **free of charge** courtesy of the Turnpike Enterprise. It should be explained that their assistance is limited to 15 minutes if immediate repairs are not possible.

If the Safety Patrol operator is going to attempt repairs the Safety Patrol operator is to return to the truck and place a minimum of four (4) traffic cones behind the truck along the edge line approximately 35 feet apart. This will increase the visibility of the Safety Patrol truck and offer some warning to a motorist who may have drifted off the travel lane. Under no circumstances will a lane be partially blocked to make repairs.

The basic assistance offered by the Safety Patrol includes assistance with flat tires, jump starts, providing a small quantity of fuel to reach the next fuel station and some minor emergency repairs. If attempted repairs are unsuccessful the Safety Patrol operator shall offer the motorist the opportunity to make up to three local cell phone calls. If the motorist requests a tow truck the Safety Patrol operator will call the TMC and the TMC will contact FHP to dispatch a plaza wrecker. If the motorist requests AAA or other road service provider, the Safety Patrol operator will call the TMC and the TMC will notify the appropriate service plaza.

Safety Patrol operators are prohibited from referring motorists to tow companies or repair shops.

#### **Guidance:**

- Always notify the TMC, prior to leaving the truck and provide the following:
  - Exact location (milepost or cross street and direction)
  - Color of vehicle
  - Make of vehicle
  - License plate number
  - Description of problem - disabled or abandoned, etc.
- Remember that assistance or repairs shall not be performed on vehicles blocking a travel lane or in a hazardous location like a narrow shoulder or end of a gore area.
- Relocate the vehicle under its own power or by pushing it to a safe location when possible. Follow guidelines for proper use of push bumpers. (Section 5.3.1)
- If safe relocation is not possible, contact the TMC and set up traffic controls.
- When attempting to determine what is wrong mechanically with a stalled vehicle, get as much information as you can from the driver, including:
  - Has this ever happened before?
  - How did the vehicle act prior to stalling?

- Do you know of any specific problems with the vehicle?

### **5.1.2 Stalled Vehicle Blocking a Travel Lane (Driver Present)**

When responding to a vehicle that is disabled in a travel lane contact the TMC and give the required vehicle information, including which lane is blocked. A disabled vehicle obstructing traffic or in a dangerous location must be relocated to a safe location before assistance or repairs are attempted.

Safety Patrol operators need to become very persuasive and convincing while advising motorists about FLORIDA LAW that requires the removal of disabled vehicles from travel lanes. Provide the motorist with a copy of the Move-it law (**Florida Statute 316.071**), explain that you will provide free assistance to help them relocate the vehicle and with the disablement after it is in a safe location.

In some cases the prudent action is to move the vehicle completely onto the grass, off a ramp or if available into a designated drop off area or accident investigation site (AIS) location. Refer to guidelines for the safe use of push bumpers in Section 5.3.1 for more safety tips.

Many times motorists will stop in a lane of traffic or on a narrow shoulder to change a tire. This is extremely dangerous and requires quick thinking and persuasive actions by the Safety Patrol operator. Convincing motorists to drive off the road with a flat tire is an important skill all Safety Patrol operators need to master.

Because of the hazard, flat tires should not be changed immediately next to open lanes on the traffic side of vehicles. Relocate the vehicle to a safer location.

However, do not attempt to relocate a vehicle without the driver's agreement and cooperation. In some cases repeating the request to relocate again after a few minutes gives the motorist time to re-think the situation. Stay calm yet firm and convincing. If the driver still refuses, call the TMC and request a Trooper. Your job now is to warn other motorists about the hazard. Use your arrow board and set out cones when safe to do so, being sure to allow a safe distance between vehicles.

#### **Guidance:**

- Using your push bumper to relocate a disabled vehicle can be done safely and without any damage. Section 5.3.1 offers tips for using push bumpers.
- Your ability to quickly and safely clear lane blocking incidents is a measure of your performance and the effectiveness of the Safety Patrol Program.

### **5.1.3 Assistance with Vehicles in Parking Areas of the Service or Toll Plazas**

Safety Patrols are restricted from making assists to motorist's vehicles in the parking areas of Toll Plazas and Service Plazas. Disabled vehicles located in a plaza parking lot are considered to be out of harm's way, allowing motorists to make their own arrangements. Any request for assistance to a motorist in a non-blocking position in a Service Plaza or Toll Plaza will require authorization of a TMC Supervisor and be documented by the TMC.

## 5.2 Abandoned Vehicles

### 5.2.1 Abandoned Vehicle on the Shoulder or Grass

The Safety Patrol operator should check and 'tag' any unattended or abandoned vehicles on shoulders or grassy areas. The Safety Patrol operator should pull over safely and position the vehicle so there is a safe zone between the truck and vehicle. After checking the vehicle the rear window should be tagged or marked with a grease marker and a **Sorry We Missed You** card should be left under the windshield wiper on the passenger (away from traffic) side.

In many instances motorists in distress will leave their vehicle on the shoulder of the roadway when in need of fuel or mechanical assistance because they are unaware of the Safety Patrol free service program. Tagging the vehicle and leaving a **Sorry We Missed You** card will make the driver aware of the service. In the future, the motorist will be more likely to stay with the vehicle and not become a pedestrian and try to walk for help, which is very dangerous.

Abandoned vehicles on high speed, access controlled roadways are a safety hazard and can restrict responses of emergency vehicles. Marking the rear window will let other Safety Patrol units know that this particular vehicle has been checked and reported, and will also let Troopers know the date and time the vehicle was first found by the Safety Patrol. While only a trooper can order the impoundment of an abandoned vehicle, tagging will speed the process. If, after an extended period of time, a previously tagged vehicle remains unmoved, it should again be reported to FHP through the TMC.

The TMC should be advised if the vehicle is in a hazardous location. The TMC will advise FHP of the need for expedited removal of the vehicle.

#### Guidance:

- Only tag vehicles if they are not an immediate hazard (See Section 5.2.2)
- When tagging a vehicle, always check the vehicle for:
  - Injured, sick or incapacitated individuals
  - Anything suspicious in nature like a punched ignition or damaged door lock
  - Broken window with glass debris still in vehicle, etc.
- If anything unusual is found, notify the TMC and have the dispatcher forward the information to FHP.
- The Safety Patrol operator does not have to stop for an abandoned vehicle that has already been tagged by law enforcement or other Safety Patrol operator.
- The tagging operator should write date, time, and the operator ID number with an approved grease marker on the right side of the rear window. The writing on the rear window needs to be visible to passing traffic.

Example of tagged abandoned vehicle:

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**Figure 8 – Abandoned Vehicle Notification Tag**

Example of card placed on disabled vehicle (driver not present):



**Figure 9 – Sorry We Missed You Notice**

### **5.2.2 Abandoned Vehicle Blocking a Lane or Presenting a Hazard**

When a Safety Patrol operator is on patrol and encounters an abandoned vehicle blocking or partially obstructing a lane or in a hazardous location he/she is committed to taking action to reduce the hazard. The Safety Patrol operator should initially activate the arrow board directing traffic around the hazard and notify the TMC giving complete details and requesting a Trooper. Quickly removing an abandoned vehicle blocking a lane greatly reduces the chances of a secondary crash and lessens the impact to the traffic stream.

If the Safety Patrol operator is driving a **tow-rig equipped truck** and traffic is heavy or slow moving, the Safety Patrol operator, **having been fully trained in this procedure**, should pull in front of the abandoned vehicle, use the wheel lift and move the vehicle out of the travel lane to a safe location.

**This procedure for expedited relocation should not be attempted if the operator feels it would be unsafe.** In this case, or if driving a truck with **no tow rig**, the Safety Patrol operator should remain in place behind the vehicle and call the TMC and request assistance from another Safety Patrol unit or a FHP Trooper. Create a safe zone behind the Safety Patrol vehicle using traffic cones (and flares at night).

If the Safety Patrol operator is not going to attempt a relocation the TMC will call FHP for a Trooper and a tow truck to be dispatched from the Service Plaza. Alternatively, a tow-rig equipped Safety Patrol unit nearby may be summoned if available. Everyone involved in the mitigation of this type of incident needs to act with a sense of urgency.

#### **Guidance:**

- When requesting a tow truck, provide the TMC with the following information and provide any additional information needed to ensure that the appropriate equipment will be dispatched to recover the vehicle:
  - Exact location and direction of travel
  - Which lane is blocked or why it is a hazard
  - Make of vehicle
  - Color of vehicle
  - License plate tag number
  - Location where vehicle will be relocated
- Do not move a vehicle from a shoulder into a travel lane; move only out of travel lanes.
- Your safety and the safety of others should be the determining factor.

### 5.3 Relocating Vehicles Out of Hazardous Locations

While all vehicle assists have some element of risk, the Safety Patrol operator must evaluate each situation encountered and determine if the vehicle should be relocated to a safer location prior to rendering assistance.

#### Guidance:

- Be cautious on curves. Motorists tend to hug the inside of a curve. Make sure there is sufficient sight distance for traffic to see you around the curve.
- Vehicles on the left shoulder, in many cases, should be considered to be in a hazardous location. The median barrier on the main line south of Fort Pierce, and the guardrail north of Fort Pierce adjacent to the shoulder, leave little room to work safely.

#### 5.3.1 Using Push Bumpers

Using your truck push bumper to relocate a disabled vehicle can be done safely and without any damage by following some basic guidelines. Consider the location, weather and traffic conditions. If you are concerned about the environment, your safety or the competence of the motorist contact the TMC and request assistance from another Safety Patrol unit or from FHP. Do not relocate a vehicle if you suspect the driver is substance impaired

Pushing a vehicle is only for limited distances to reduce the safety hazard. Be prepared to explain to the motorist that you cannot push them down the Turnpike to an exit or into the Service Plaza. You may even be asked to push them to their home. Be polite but stay in control and remember that your role is to reduce the potential of a secondary crash.

#### Guidance:

- Before you start the relocation check for: bumper alignment, previous damage, trailer hitches, tire carriers and ladders, etc.
- Approach disabled vehicle to be pushed **SLOWLY**.
- Do not push a vehicle you cannot see ahead of.
- Carefully instruct the driver before you start (Figure 10):
  - What you want them to do, and do they understand you
  - Advise exactly where you want them to go
  - Make sure ignition key is in the 'on' position
  - Transmission is in 'neutral'
  - Parking brake 'off'
  - Remind them that steering and braking will be hard, but will work
  - Leave their drivers window down, listen to instructions on the P-A
  - Advise driver not to hit brakes hard or abruptly



**Figure 10 – Push Bumper – Driver Instruction**

➤ Safety Patrol operators should remember the following:

- Always make gentle contact
- Check traffic carefully
- Advise them that you will start pushing
- Push slowly
- Maintain shallow angle
- Back-off before they brake or go over a curb
- Advise them to stop
- Instruct the motorist(s) to set the parking brake, etc.



**Figure 11 – Push Bumper Relocation**

### **5.3.2 Using a Tow Strap or Tow Rig**

There are plans to replace the current pick-up trucks used by the Safety Patrol to tows in the future. Specific guidelines will be prepared for the use of these tow rig equipped units. In the mean time the Safety Patrol operators will continue to relocate vehicles with push bumpers or by pulling them a short distance with a tow strap. In some cases, using a tow strap allows the Safety Patrol operator to move a truck or vehicle that can not be pushed.

Pulling a vehicle out of a travel lane with a tow strap can greatly reduce the exposure to a secondary crash and the detrimental impact on traffic using the roadway. Follow the same notification procedures outlined earlier and request the TMC send a back-up Safety Patrol unit or a Trooper if they are not on the scene. Do not attempt to pull a vehicle across any travel lane without another responder assisting with the control of traffic.

#### **Guidance:**

- If the driver is present and the vehicle will roll, attach the strap to a secure part of the vehicle to be relocated. Avoid attaching to body parts, bumpers, tie rods or steering components. Watch out for interference with tires, spoilers, hoses or radiators. Make sure the driver understands what you want him/her to do and follow the procedures outlined in the previous section.
- Pulling a vehicle should only be considered if a tow truck is not on scene and pushing is an unsafe option.
- Pulling should only be considered for very short distances.
- Do not pull a vehicle downhill.
- Do not pull a vehicle into traffic, only out of a traffic lane.
- If the vehicle is an air-brake equipped truck, ask the driver if he has air pressure; usually anything over 60 lbs. will release the air brakes. Tell the driver to use his transmission to stop, not his air brakes.
- If the vehicle is a car which was wrecked in a crash suggest to law enforcement that he give you the okay to move the vehicles out of the travel lanes while waiting for the tow truck. See Section 5.4.5 for more on clearing traffic crashes.
- Watch for spilled gasoline. Do not drag a vehicle or pull a vehicle with a leaking fuel tank.

## 5.4 Traffic Crashes

### 5.4.1 Traffic Crash with Property Damage (No Apparent Injuries)

The Safety Patrol operator is frequently the first to arrive at a vehicle crash. **The ability to quickly analyze the situation and take appropriate action to get the road open is an important part of a Safety Patrol operator's job.**

Safety Patrol operators need to be fully aware of the Florida Statute FS 316.061. It is the law that requires motorists involved in crashes without serious injury to move their vehicle out of traffic or seek assistance to move it.

The ability to convince motorists to cooperate and then to personally facilitate the relocation of the vehicle out of traffic is a good measure of the Safety Patrol operator's skill. To help make drivers aware of the law, hand them a copy of the 'Move-it' law. (Keep plenty in your pocket or on your clip board.) Let the driver read the card, and in a couple minutes again offer to help them move out of traffic "to avoid a citation" when FHP arrives.

#### Guidance:

- Upon arrival, park your truck in the lane blocked by the vehicles and notify the TMC of:
  - Your exact location
  - Lanes that are blocked
  - Number of vehicles and general vehicle description
  - Tag number of closest vehicle
  - Approach the drivers to determine if they are capable of driving out of traffic
- If, by looking at the condition of the vehicles it appears to be a minor incident, ask each driver, **"Do you want me to call an ambulance to take you to the hospital?"** That question is better than the standard "Are you hurt?" If no one says they need an ambulance, indicate that you will help them safely move their vehicles out of the road.
- If you see any apparent injuries or if a motorist or passenger indicates that they are badly injured, return to your truck and call the TMC for a Trooper and EMS.

There are cases when, even after repeated attempts by the Safety Patrol operator to move the crash vehicles out of traffic, someone refuses to cooperate. You must now ask the TMC to call FHP indicating that the motorist refuses to relocate. **Do not leave the scene unprotected.**

In those cases where the crash cannot be relocated, begin to set up cones and facilitate the flow of traffic past the crash scene to assist in the arrival of other response vehicles. The Safety Patrol operator's role at this point is to upgrade traffic controls and help other highway users safely pass the incident scene.

In some cases, motorists are cooperative but don't feel they can drive their car out of the road. Simply offer to drive the car for them. You may be surprised how many wrecked cars can be started and driven. If the vehicle is not drivable, follow your training and use your skills to clear them from the travel lanes with your truck. Refer to Section 5.3 for more on relocating.

**Don't forget to clean up any debris and fluid spills before opening the lane.**

## 5.4.2 Traffic Crash with Injured Persons

When responding to a serious crash with injured persons, follow the previously described steps to position your truck behind the crash and make notifications to the TMC. **You have three major safety concerns: the victims, yourself and other responders, and the highway users approaching the crash scene.** But the primary objective of the Safety Patrol program is restoring traffic flow and reducing the duration of the incident. Your goal is to balance these responsibilities.

### Guidance:

- When you first approach the vehicles, look for any fire or spilled fuel that could ignite.
- If you see serious injuries or if the condition of the vehicles indicates the probability of serious injury immediately notify the TMC requesting FHP and EMS. Return to the vehicles and calmly assure the victims that help is on the way and that you will help them by making the scene safe.
- Before you begin to set up the cone lane closure, look for fire and any life threatening conditions.

You should have had enough training to recognize the potential to save a life. This could include massive arterial bleeding, not breathing or no heart beat. Remember that if injuries are not life-threatening, waiting for EMS is the prudent choice.

**However, if you do take action to save a life, you are protected by Florida's Good Samaritan law and you should not worry about liability.**

A crash with injuries will most likely bring several response vehicles, so set up your cones and move your truck back to allow them to park near the victims. Once other responders arrive, modify your closure to enclose the entire scene, try to have them position within your cones, but do not ignore an uncooperative emergency responder. **Work to gain the trust of other responders for future incidents; eventually they will recognize your expertise and concern for their well being.** In some cases, after a few minutes you may again suggest the response vehicle be repositioned to facilitate traffic flow. **Be persuasive but not confrontational.**

Be sensitive to the FHP Trooper's job to investigate serious crashes, especially if there is a potential for a fatality. Protect and preserve the scene as best you can to allow them to do a complete investigation.

**"The 15-Minute Rule."** Once traffic controls are in place, notify the TMC and provide a complete update of the situation and include specifics on which lanes are blocked. This information should be repeated every 15 minutes or sooner if there is a change in the status of traffic conditions at the scene.

This 15 minute interval gives the Safety Patrol operator time to speak with the FHP or other responders about repositioning equipment and attempting to gradually reduce the impact on traffic as the situation stabilizes.

Once injured persons are extricated from vehicles and loaded in the ambulance, the Safety Patrol operator should confer with the Trooper and begin to move the wrecked vehicles off the travel lanes. Drive them, pull them with a chain or tow strap, or push them with your push bumper. This aggressive, persistent clearance objective is what separates a traffic incident management professional from a motorist assistance provider.

### **5.4.3 Traffic Crash with Fire-Rescue (No Trooper)**

If a Safety Patrol operator responds to a crash scene where Fire-Rescue is already on scene the initial task is to quickly position the truck with the arrow board and set up cones to help improve scene safety.

**Guidance:**

- Speak to the Fire Chief or incident commander (generally wearing a white helmet) and advise him that you are there to assist them with traffic control and to make the scene safer for his crew.
- Before you leave your truck call the TMC with the incident details; don't assume that they have already been called by Fire-Rescue. It is likely that the TMC has not been given any specific details about lane blockage.
- Remember that you are the professional with skills in scene traffic control. Enclose all the emergency vehicles and the crash vehicles by setting out all your cones with about a 25' spacing to establish about a 300' lane closure. This will keep approaching vehicles from merging too close to the response vehicles.
- When you have your cones in place discuss with incident commander the status of the rescue activities and the possibility of moving or repositioning some of the apparatus to improve traffic flow.
- Remember to **give the TMC an update every 15 minutes or any time additional lanes are open or closed.**
- If the injured are cared for and the Trooper is delayed, look for opportunities to expedite the clearance of the wrecked vehicles. Check with the TMC and ask if a tow has been requested by FHP. If not, ask for authorization to begin clearing the vehicles off the travel lanes. This does not apply to very serious crashes with multiple injured or any possibility of a fatality where FHP will need to investigate the crash with vehicles in place.
- If tows are on scene at any crash the Safety Patrol operator should work with the tow operators to expedite the clearance of the vehicles, fluids and debris from the crash. The tow operators are part of the team. We need to assist each other to expedite the clearance of the roadway.

#### **5.4.4 Working with a Trooper to Manage Crash Scenes**

FHP Troopers have been trained to take charge at an incident scene and have a multitude of activities to accomplish. FDOT Safety Patrol operators are there to assist them with making the scene safe and to clear the crash scene as well as providing manual traffic control. Since Safety Patrol operators will be working with Troopers from Troop K, who are assigned only on the Turnpike, the Safety Patrol operator will have the opportunity to form a close professional relationship. This partnership will assure the effective and safe management of traffic incidents on the Turnpike.

##### **Guidance:**

- When you first arrive at a crash, call the TMC with the incident details, and then check in with the Trooper and begin to set up a cone closure and position your truck to help move traffic safely past the scene. Once the injured are cared for or removed allow the Trooper time to document the scene and begin the crash report. You should offer your assistance and, when given the approval, begin to sweep up debris and absorb spilled fluids.
- If the wrecker is on scene assist them with the hook up or with the relocation of the vehicles off the roadway. If a wrecker is not yet on scene suggest to the Trooper that you will move the wreckage off the travel lanes. **This resourcefulness is another measure of your effective performance. Drive them off, push them off, or pull them with a tow strap, but get the lanes open!**
- Sitting in your truck at a crash scene should always be avoided unless you are using the communications equipment.

### **5.4.5 Relocating Wrecked Vehicles at Crash Scenes**

The Safety Patrol operator needs to be aggressive in moving or clearing wrecked vehicles from travel lanes at crash scenes. Troopers will be impressed with your skills and determination and appreciate your efforts to open the roadway.

Explain that you intend to relocate the vehicles. Only if the Trooper specifically tells you not to move the vehicles should you leave them in the road waiting for a wrecker to tow them.

#### **Guidance:**

- Wrecked vehicles should normally be relocated to the right and well off the roadway.
- If there is an exit ramp or a safe area out of sight of traffic, consider relocating the vehicles there.
- Many cars can be started; drive them off of the road.
- Use your training and expertise to relocate crashed vehicles with your push bumper. Get some assistance with traffic and push the wreckage out of the road unless it not safe to do so.
- If you do not have a tow truck you can still use a tow strap to relocate wrecked cars off travel lanes.

#### **5.4.6 Truck Crashes and Spilled Cargo and Vehicle Fluids**

Major truck crashes are incidents that can have a serious impact to turnpike traffic. A Safety Patrol operator can assist in many ways to manage the scene and remove the wreckage and spilled loads from the roadway.

Just as in the earlier cases, the initial role is to set up traffic controls and a cone closure. The advanced warning signs for the incident should be set up by the second Safety Patrol unit or other responder approximately one mile upstream from the end of the queue. The warning devices may need to be relocated further upstream or closer to the incident as the queue changes in size. These signs and the cone closure are only short term and normally would be upgraded or replaced by MOT provided by the Emergency Response Contractor or the RISC contractor if they are called out to respond. The transfer of the scene traffic controls at an incident needs to be discussed and coordinated with the trooper, Turnpike Roadway personnel and the TMC.

If there is spilled cargo or vehicle fluids like diesel fuel, quick action by the Safety Patrol operator to contain or absorb the spilled fuel is essential. Relocating some of a spilled cargo may be enough to open an additional lane and should be an early consideration.

When additional resources arrive, assist in any way possible to expedite the reopening of travel lanes. This may mean working with the heavy duty tow operators or modifying and upgrading the cone closure. Remember that all responders are a team and depend on each other for assistance. Safety Patrol operators should continue to maintain a sense of urgency in getting the incident resolved and frequently communicate with the TMC with status reports from the scene. (15-Minute Rule)

#### **Guidance:**

- Under no circumstances are you to merely sit in your truck while an incident with lane blockage is underway. Sweep debris, manually direct traffic, or assist with the clearance of the wreckage.
- If there is nothing for you to do, speak with the trooper, call the TMC and resume your patrol functions. Remember to turn around at your first safe opportunity and look for any stalled vehicles or secondary crashes in the traffic queue upstream of the crash site.

## 5.5 Incidents Involving Hazardous Materials

Traffic incidents are one of the most dangerous tasks responders are asked to handle. What makes an incident even more perilous is one that involves hazardous material cargo.

While the Safety Patrol operator is encouraged to mitigate non-cargo spills as discussed in Sections 5.4.6, and 6.3, hazardous material spills are to be handled differently and with extreme caution.

Each Safety Patrol operator should be familiar with the material identification placards required for all vehicles transporting hazardous material, so that when arriving at the scene quick identification can be made and a call to the TMC can be made for assistance. Never approach a vehicle spilling or leaking an unidentifiable cargo, especially if it is a placarded load.

When a vehicle carrying a placarded load (hazardous material) overturns and spills the load a wide range of responder decisions that can impact the proper handling of the incident are as follows:

- Identify the cargo from the placard
- Notify the TMC immediately
- Check the driver and assist, **ONLY IF IT IS SAFE**
- Protect the scene and set up MOT
- Assist the Hazmat responders and others as needed

### **Guidance:**

- Be familiar with placards in the Emergency Response Guidebook
- Know the contact numbers for the TMC, State Warning Point, FHP, others
- Use extreme caution when arriving on scene
- Never approach an unidentifiable cargo spill

## **5.6 Vehicle Fires**

When a vehicle fire is encountered, the Safety Patrol operator should immediately notify the TMC for assistance. Provide assistance to the occupants of the vehicle and relocate them to a safe area on the shoulder of the roadway or in an area protected by the Safety Patrol vehicle.

Extinguish the fire if it is safe to do so; however, do not approach the vehicle if it is completely involved. There is risk of the fuel tank exploding.

Secure the scene as much as possible and set up MOT in order to keep the traffic moving on the roadway.

### **Guidance:**

- Notify the TMC upon arrival
- Assist the occupants and relocate to safe area
- Extinguish fire if safe to do so
- Secure scene and
- Set up MOT

## **5.7 Removing Debris**

### **5.7.1 Debris on the Shoulder**

Debris of any kind is a major concern to both the FHP and the Turnpike Enterprise. Debris on the shoulder may, at first glance, appear to be innocent since it is not in the roadway. However, the potential for it to become a safety concern is increased because it can be hidden by the high grass that surrounds it and makes it invisible to the driver of the vehicle that pulls off the roadway. It can also be partially buried in the soil and shaken loose by the vehicle or mowing machines. Not only can it damage the vehicle that pulls off the roadway but it can be hurled into moving traffic by the mowing machine. Debris on the shoulder may also be blown back into the travel lanes becoming a serious hazard.

While Roadway Maintenance crews are primarily responsible for looking for and removing debris, as an authorized agent of the Turnpike Enterprise the Safety Patrol operator is also responsible for detection and removal of shoulder debris. Debris should be moved well off the roadway and, if possible, placed behind guardrail for removal by maintenance forces. If the debris is unmanageable, call the TMC for assistance.

#### **Guidance:**

- Pull well off the roadway and correctly position the vehicle
- Notify the TMC with location and general description
- Use appropriate emergency lighting
- Keep personal safety a top priority
- If the debris cannot be removed, relocate it well off the roadway, behind guardrail if possible
- Call for assistance if needed
- Do not leave debris on the shoulder

### **5.7.2 Debris in a Travel Lane**

When on patrol it is the responsibility of each Safety Patrol operator to understand the importance of debris removal, as well as how to perform the task safely. There is no set way to remove debris from the travel lane, since traffic volume and time day can play a part of how the debris will be removed.

Debris presents a real threat to the motoring public. Accidents frequently occur when vehicles either stop suddenly or make abrupt lane changes to avoid striking debris in the travel lanes. Removing debris from the travel lanes is a potentially dangerous activity and every precaution should be taken.

#### **Guidance:**

- When objects/debris are discovered in the travel lanes, notify the TMC providing the exact location, which lane(s) are affected, and whether or not you can remove the debris unassisted or if back up will be required.
- Under no circumstances shall a Safety Patrol operator report the debris and continue patrolling without taking action to remove the debris.
- Always park upstream from debris. This practice will keep the debris from being struck and deflected into you or the Safety Patrol vehicle.
- If it is impossible to **safely** remove the debris, contact the TMC and request assistance from another Safety Patrol unit, Law Enforcement, and/or Turnpike Enterprise Roadway personnel and together remove the hazard/debris.
- If possible remove the debris completely from the roadway system. If it cannot be removed, it should be placed well off the travel lanes to be picked up by the maintenance contractor at a later time. Alert the TMC for follow-up.
- Valuable items found on the interstate system should be turned into the Safety Patrol Manager, where the item will be tagged with date, and location found to be retained for 30 days. If not claimed within that time period, the article will be disposed of or turned over to FHP through established Turnpike Enterprise procedures.
- If while patrolling, an operator sees a truck spilling its load on the travel lanes, the operator should use the PA system to inform the offending driver that his load is being spilled and for him to pull over to the shoulder. If the driver refuses to stop, contact the TMC and give the location, type of material being spilled, direction of travel, license number, company name, etc. This information will be forwarded to law enforcement. Note: The Safety Patrol operator has no authority to make the truck pull over. In no case is the Safety Patrol operator to be involved in a pursuit.
- If a spilled load is a hazard to traffic, stop and begin clean up procedures. If the location is unsafe or the amount of debris too great, request assistance from other Safety Patrol units, law enforcement, and/ or Turnpike roadway personnel through the TMC.

## **6 State of Florida Laws and Administrative Policies or Agreements for Traffic Incident Management Guiding Safety Patrol Operations**

### **6.1 Florida's "Move It Law" Section 316**

Crashed or disabled vehicles, when allowed to remain in the roadway, are a potential hazard to the traveling public as well as the occupants and responder. The secondary crash that can and does occur is usually more devastating than the first incident.

Florida's Move-It-Law, F.S. 316.061(2), states that if a damaged vehicle is obstructing traffic, the responsible party should move it or seek assistance to move it so as not to block the regular flow of traffic. This statute is not without consequence. A nonmoving violation citation can be issued if the vehicle is not moved when it can be. (A copy of this statute is found in Appendix A, Exhibit C.)

Ask the motorist to relocate the vehicle if it can be safely driven or offer assistance to relocate it to a safe location. If the vehicle is moved using the Safety Patrol vehicle, follow the guidelines for proper use of push bumpers or tow straps.

If safe relocation is not possible, contact the TMC and set up traffic controls.

#### **Guidance:**

- First check for injuries and handle accordingly.
- Inform the motorist of Florida's Move-It-Law and the possibility that a citation can be issued.
- Hand out the informational card with the statute information.
- Encourage the motorist to relocate the vehicle or offer assistance to do so if the vehicle cannot be moved under its own power.
- Set up temporary traffic control if the vehicle cannot be relocated.

### **6.2 Florida's "Open Roads" Policy**

This policy agreement by FHP and FDOT clearly states the urgency given to clearing traffic incidents from Florida highways.

The Road Ranger and Safety Patrol programs operated by FDOT around the State of Florida are all committed to this policy and are becoming a major contributor to meeting the 'Open Roads' goals. A copy of the Open Roads policy can be found in Appendix A, Exhibit A.

All Safety Patrol personnel need to become totally familiar with and utilize this policy and its guiding principals.

### **6.3 Vehicle Fluid Spill Guidelines**

Incidents occur where vehicle fluids are spilled from ruptured fuel tanks or the vehicle's engine. The Guidelines for the Mitigation of Accidental Discharges of Motor Vehicle Fluids (Non-Cargo) document covers just such spills. (A copy is found in Appendix A, Exhibit B). The guidelines cover spilled motor vehicle fluids such as engine oil, radiator fluid, hydraulic fluids, brake fluid and diesel or gas from the ruptured fuel tank.

The guidelines do not cover the cargo being carried by the vehicle.

These guidelines allow for the mitigation of the non-cargo fuel spill without waiting for Fire-Rescue, Department of Environmental Management or any licensed clean-up agency.

Once the spill is identified as a vehicle fluid, it can be contained from spreading. Safety Patrol vehicles carry the necessary equipment to mitigate these spills and clean up the roadway.

#### **Guidance:**

- Notify the TMC of the number of gallons spilled (See Guidelines). The TMC will make proper notification to FHP and Roadway Maintenance.
- Identify the spill as vehicle fluid.
- Contain and limit the spill from spreading.
- Apply available absorbents.
- Pick up, bag and containerize for removal.
- Clean pavement.
- If at anytime you do not feel safe in this process, seek assistance from the Fire-Rescue or other qualified personnel at the scene.

### **6.4 Liability Exemption for Safety Patrol Operators**

Liability has long been an issue among all responders. The thought of being sued for damages has hindered some responders from moving the damaged or disabled vehicles from the roadway. This act can lead to more serious consequences than any thought of liability actions. Besides the congestion caused, the secondary incident that can occur can be devastating.

Florida now supports the responder in this area with Florida Statute 316.061(3). This statute has identified you, the Safety Patrol operator, as an "authorized agent of the department" and as such you are allowed to remove the damaged or disabled vehicle from the roadway without being "considered at fault for any additional damage" that occurs to the vehicle. A copy of the statute is provided in Appendix A, Exhibit C.

It is your duty as a Safety Patrol operator and authorized agent of the Department to relocate these vehicles in the interest of public safety.

## 6.5 Roadway Incident Scene Clearance (RISC) Program

The Turnpike Enterprise has developed a program to help FHP speed the process of clearing major incidents, most frequently large truck crashes. The RISC contractor is required to respond with a support truck in addition to two super heavy duty wreckers. This support truck has MUTCD required traffic control devices and should be used to upgrade the MOT set up by the Safety Patrol.

It is desirable for the Safety Patrol unit to leave the incident scene after additional or supplemental traffic controls are in place to patrol the queued traffic for possible secondary crashes or disabled vehicles. In some cases the Safety Patrol operator may leave his signs and cones in place and pick them up after the major incident is cleared.

In any case the Safety Patrol operator, the RISC personnel, the Emergency Response contractor and the Turnpike Roadway staff all are part of a team and should work together, in some cases sharing responsibility as well as supplies.

Here is a summary of the RISC program:

This innovative program was developed to help the Turnpike reduce the impact of major traffic incidents and help meet the Florida's Open Roads Policy goals of clearing the roadway in 90 minutes. The RISC plan is part of an overall program of Traffic Incident Management Enhancements (TIME) implemented by the Turnpike in 2003.

The major components of the RISC program are summarized below:

- It assures prompt, predictable response and 24/7 equipment availability
- The plan contains detailed specifications for 35- and 50-ton recovery wreckers with full sets of tools
- It requires a support vehicle with an extensive equipment array and full traffic control and vehicle fluid spill mitigation capability
- The agreement also requires other specialized heavy equipment like loaders, bobcats, tractors and trailers
- The operators must be fully trained and certified in heavy towing and recovery as well as MUTCD requirements
- The plan provides compensation for the following:
  - Emergency mobilization, arrival of three trucks and full team in 60 minutes 24/7
  - Clearing travel lanes in 90 minutes from 'notice to proceed'
  - Additional payment for specialized heavy equipment
- By meeting the quick clearance goals the company will be paid a \$2500 incentive. An additional \$1000 is paid if other approved heavy equipment is utilized. There are also provisions for liquidated damages for poor performance, delay or failing to meet the 90

minute goal. The company is responsible for billing the owner of the wreckage for all towing and potential storage fees.

- The company forfeits any incentive payment after ninety minutes. If travel lanes are not open in three hours, damages are assessed at a rate of \$10 per minute until all lanes are open.
- There is an open ended invitation to participate. When the inspection and performance qualifications are met the Turnpike and the company negotiate the geographic zones they will cover. The program operates with joint participation of the Turnpike Enterprise and FHP Troop K.

## 6.6 Traffic Incident Levels

The Traffic Incident Management Teams in Florida and the Federal Highway Administration's Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (FHWA MUTCD) have defined levels of traffic incidents based on the impact to traffic. This three level system is used to describe incidents on the Turnpike.

Many times a Safety Patrol unit is the first to respond to an incident. The prompt and accurate assessment of the scene is a critical function. Referring to **Traffic Incident Levels** will help the TMC staff make proper agency notifications and motorist information alerts.

Remember, this is an early assessment of the scene based on your experience and best judgment.

### Traffic Incident Levels

Criteria for establishing Freeway Incident Levels Based on Traffic Impact

#### **Level 1 (Minor)**

Impact to the traveled roadway is estimated to be less than 30 minutes with no lane blockage or impact to the traveled roadway is estimated to be less than 30 minutes with minor lane blockage.

#### **Level 2 (Intermediate)**

Impact to the traveled roadway is estimated to be 30 minutes to 2 hours with lane blockages, but not a full closure of the roadway.

#### **Level 3 (Major)**

Impact to the traveled roadway is estimated to be more than 2 hours or the roadway is fully closed in any single direction. Significant area-wide congestion is expected.

## 6.7 Lane Numbering Convention

The travel lanes on the Turnpike are referred to by number. The farthest lane to the left or the lane nearest the median is Lane 1. (The break down lanes or shoulders are not considered a travel lane). The second lane from the left is Lane 2. The third lane from the left is Lane 3 and so on.

### EXAMPLES:

Mainline Lanes:

Median | Left Shoulder | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Right Shoulder

Mainline Lanes:

Barrier wall | 1 | 2 | 3 | Right Shoulder

Ramp Lanes:

Barrier wall | 1 | 2 | 3 | Barrier wall

**Table 1 Safety Patrol Multilingual Assistance Sheet**

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>FREE SERVICE</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;">ENGLISH</p> <p>Dear Fellow Driver:</p> <p>It appears that you are having difficulty with your automobile and although I do not speak (Spanish) (Italian) (French) (German) (Portuguese) or (Creole) I would like to offer my assistance. Please check the appropriate sentence below, so I will know how I may assist you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (1) I am out of gas</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (2) I have a flat tire and I do not have a spare</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (3) My engine stopped and I do not know the cause</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (4) I need a tow truck</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (5) I need police assistance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (6) I need an ambulance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (7) I am without any difficulty</li> </ul> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SERVICE LIBRE</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;">FRENCH (Français)</p> <p>Cher camarade de route,</p> <p>Vous semblez avoir des d difficultés avec votre voiture. Bien que je ne parle pas français, j'aurais bien voulu vous aider. Veuillez-vous attenter l'attention sur la liste ci-dessous et identifier l'article que vous convient.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (1) Je n'ai plus d'essence.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (2) J'ai un pneu plat et je n'ai pas des pièces de rechange.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (3) Mon moteur est arrêté et j'ignore pourquoi.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (4) J'ai besoin d'un camion de remorquage</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (5) J'ai besoin de l'aide de police</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (6) J'ai besoin d'une ambulance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (7) Je n'ai pas des difficulté</li> </ul>            |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SERVICIO GRATIS</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;">SPANISH (Español)</p> <p>Estimado(a) conductor(a):</p> <p>Me parece que tiene problema con su carro, pero yo no hablo español. Por favor señale lo que necesite para poder ayudarle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (1) Se me acabo el combustible</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (2) Se me poncho la llanta, y no tengo repuesto</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (3) Se paro el motor de mi carro y no se que tiene</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (4) Necesito un camion del remolque</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (5) Necesito ayuda de la policia</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (6) Necesito una ambulancia</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (7) No tengo ninguna dificultad</li> </ul>                                                                                                  | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>FREIER SERVICE</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;">GERMAN (Deutsch)</p> <p>Es erscheint, dass Sie Schwierigkeit mit Ihrem Automobil haben, und, obwohl ich Deutsch nicht spreche, das ich meiner Hilfe anbieten möchte. Prüfen Sie bitte den passenden Satz unten, deshalb werde ich wissen, wie ich Ihnen helfen kann.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (1) Ich bin aus Gas</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (2) Ich habe einen flachen Reifen und ich habe keinen Ersatzteil</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (3) Meine Maschine hat aufgehalten und ich weiss die Ursache nicht</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (4) Ich brauche einen Abschleppen Lastwagen</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (5) Ich muss Hilfe reglementieren</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (6) Ich brauche einen Krankenwagen</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (7) Ich bin ohne irgendeine Schwierigkeit</li> </ul> |

**Table 1 (Continued)**

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SERVIZIO LIBERO</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;">ITALIAN (Italiano)</p> <p>Caro Autista:</p> <p>Sembra che stiate avendo difficoltà con la vostra automobile. Non parlo italiano ma vorrei offrire la mia assistenza. Controlli prego la frase adatta qui sotto, in modo da saprò posso aiutarlo.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ (1) Sono da benzina</li> <li>___ (2) Ho una gomma piana e non ho parti di recambio</li> <li>___ (3) Il mio motore bloccato ed io non conosco la causa</li> <li>___ (4) Ho bisogno di un camion di rimorchio</li> <li>___ (5) Ho bisogno dell'assistenza della polizia</li> <li>___ (6) Ho bisogno di un'ambulanza</li> <li>___ (7) Sono senza alcuna difficoltà</li> </ul> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SERVIÇO LIVRE</b></p>   <p style="text-align: center;">PORTUGUESE (Portuguese)</p> <p>Caro Motorista:</p> <p>Parece que você está tendo a dificuldade com seu automóvel. Eu não falo o português mas gostaria de ajudá-lo. Por favor, leia as sentenças abaixo e indique qual é a mais propria para o seu caso, para que eu possa saber como ajudá-lo.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ (1) Eu estou sem gasolina</li> <li>___ (2) Meu pneu está furado e eu não tenho sobressalentes</li> <li>___ (3) Meu motor parou e eu não sei porque</li> <li>___ (4) Eu preciso de um caminhão do reboque</li> <li>___ (5) Eu preciso de ajuda da policia</li> <li>___ (6) Eu preciso de uma ambulância</li> <li>___ (7) Eu não preciso de ajuda</li> </ul> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SERVICE LIBRE</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Créole/Kreyol</p> <p>Chè Chofè</p> <p>Ou gen problem avek machine-la? Malgré mwen pa palé kréyol, mwen ta renmen édé-ou. Sou plé, gadé lis amba-a é chwazi ki problem ou genyen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___(1) Mwen pa gen gaz</li> <li>___(2) Karochou machin-n la plat é mwen pa gen déréchanj</li> <li>___(3) Motè machin-n la kampé é mwen pa konnen pou ki sa</li> <li>___(4) Mwen bezwen yon gwo kamyon pou alé-m</li> <li>___(5) Mwen bezwen èd polis</li> <li>___(6) Mwen bezwen yon anbilans</li> <li>___(7) Mwen pa gen anken-n problem</li> </ul>                                                                                           | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>ADDITIONAL LANGUAGES<br/>AS NEEDED</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

## **Appendix A - Administrative Policies and Florida State Statutes**

|                  |                                                              |             |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Exhibit A</b> | <b>Florida “Open Roads Policy” .....</b>                     | <b>A-1</b>  |
| <b>Exhibit B</b> | <b>FDOT Vehicle Fluid Spill Guidelines .....</b>             | <b>A-4</b>  |
| <b>Exhibit C</b> | <b>Florida’s “Move It Law” Section 316 .....</b>             | <b>A-10</b> |
| <b>Exhibit D</b> | <b>Liability Exemption for Safety Patrol Operators .....</b> | <b>A-11</b> |