Road Ranger Service Patrol
Comment Card Report
Fiscal Year 2010/2011

September 2011

Publication of:

Florida Department of Transportation
Commercial Vehicle Operations and Traffic Incident Management Program
605 Suwannee Street, MS 90
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Table of Contents

Road Ranger Background 1

Comment Card Results 2

Written Comments 6

The Florida Turnpike 7

Conclusion 8

Table of Figures

Figure 1 – Return Rate by Fiscal Year 1
Figure 2 - Response Rate by District 2
Figure 3 - Time of Assistance 3
Figure 4 - Type of Service 4
Figure 5- Courteous and Helpful 4
Figure 6 - Satisfaction 5
Figure 7- Road Ranger Arrival Time 6

Road Ranger Background

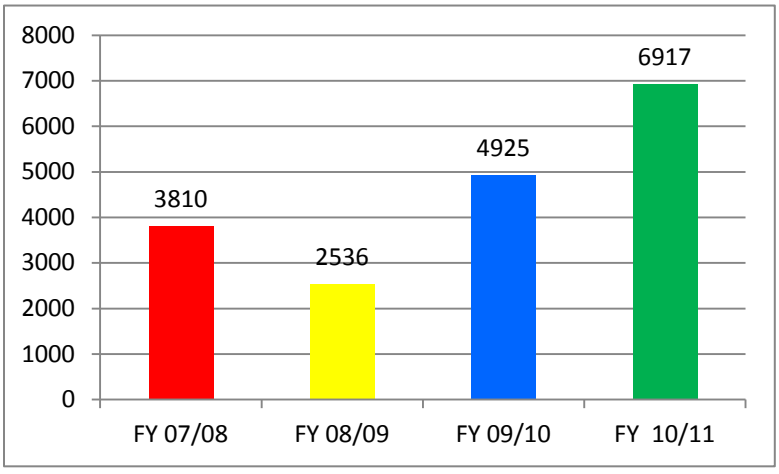
Florida's Road Ranger service patrol program is a free service offered by the Florida Department of Transportation (Department) and other transportation agency partners. Initially used to manage vehicle incidents in construction zones, this program has since expanded to all types of incident responses, becoming one of the most effective elements of the Department's Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Program. Road Ranger service patrols (Road Rangers) provide a direct service to motorists by quickly clearing minor incidents from travel lanes in close coordination with the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) and other law enforcement agencies. They also assist disabled motorists with basic services, such as furnishing a limited amount of fuel, assisting with tire changes, and helping with other types of minor vehicle repairs. Road Rangers typically patrol Florida's interstates, other major freeways, and construction zones on these facilities.

The Department began funding this statewide program in December 1999. Documented program benefits are:

- Decrease in accidents
- Decrease in incident durations
- Assistance to disabled or stranded motorists
- Removal of road debris
- Decrease in air pollutants related to congestion
- Increase in safety at incident scenes

The program is managed at the local District level as a contracted service provided by private vendors. The Department's Central Office TIM personnel facilitate program issues of statewide interest. Since the program's inception, the Road Rangers have made over 3.1 million service assists with more occurring daily.

Figure 1 – Return Rate by Fiscal Year



FY 07/08	FY 08/09	FY 09/10	FY 10/11
3810	2536	4925	6917

The Department has been tracking comment card return rates for several years and the return rates continue to

improve each year. The decrease in the 2008/2009 year can be attributed to the decline in available Road Ranger services due to a reduction in program funding for that year.

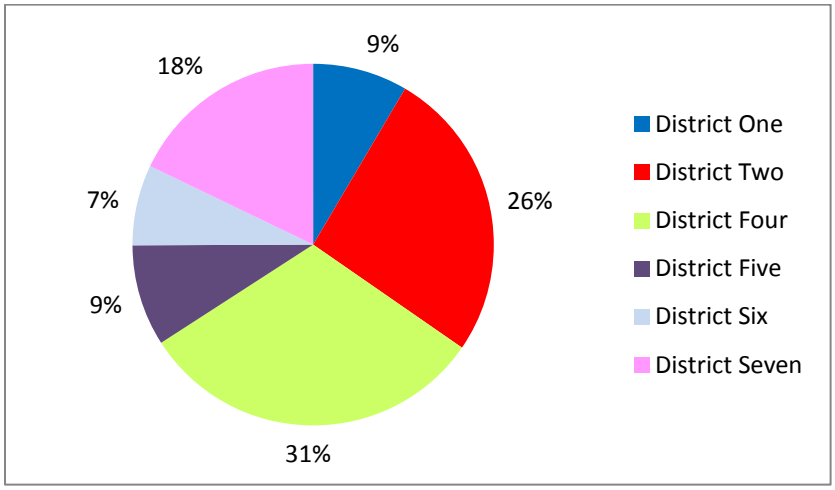
Comment Card Results

Receiving feedback from the public helps determine that the Department's Road Rangers program is performing at a high level of customer satisfaction. The Road Rangers and their shift supervisors often distribute postage-paid comment cards to customers, recognizing that providing comment cards may be precluded by more important considerations—safety, prompt restoration of traffic flow, or respect for individuals in stressful situations. Additionally, some duties performed by Road Rangers do not directly involve assisting a customer, such as providing maintenance of traffic devices at an incident scene, removing roadway debris, tagging an abandoned vehicle, or notifying other agencies that assistance is needed.

For fiscal year 2010/11 (July 2010 to June 2011), the Department received 6,917 comment cards from motorists who received assistance from Road Rangers. (Note: This does not include customer comments for the Florida's Turnpike Enterprise or the District Four I-595 Road Rangers; there are separate processes in place to collect information for these roadways.) Each card is scanned, processed, and compiled to create Road Rangers Comment Card Summaries, which are provided quarterly to each District TIM Program Manager.

The comment cards all have a unique bar code, which allows the Department to analyze data to determine where the motorist received assistance. Figure 2 below shows the response rate by District, in general most District comment card response rates increased this year.

Figure 2 - Response Rate by District

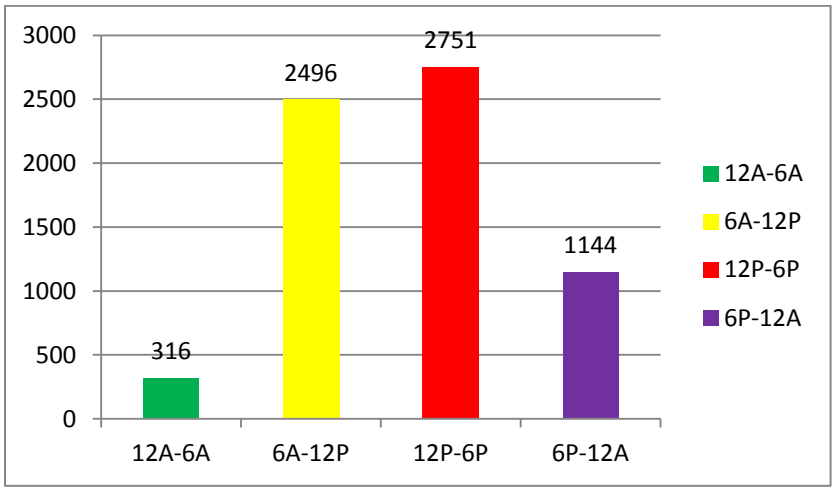


District One	District Two	District Four	District Five	District Six	District Seven	TOTAL
587	1809	2161	627	498	1235	6917

Question 1 – When did you receive help from the Road Rangers?

Responses to this question allow the Department to determine if there are variances in the responses attributable to time-of-day. Forty percent of respondents received assistance between the hours of 12pm and 6pm; a nearly equal percentage of 36 percent of respondents received assistance between the hours of 6am and 12pm. Figure 3 shows the responses.

Figure 3 - Time of Assistance

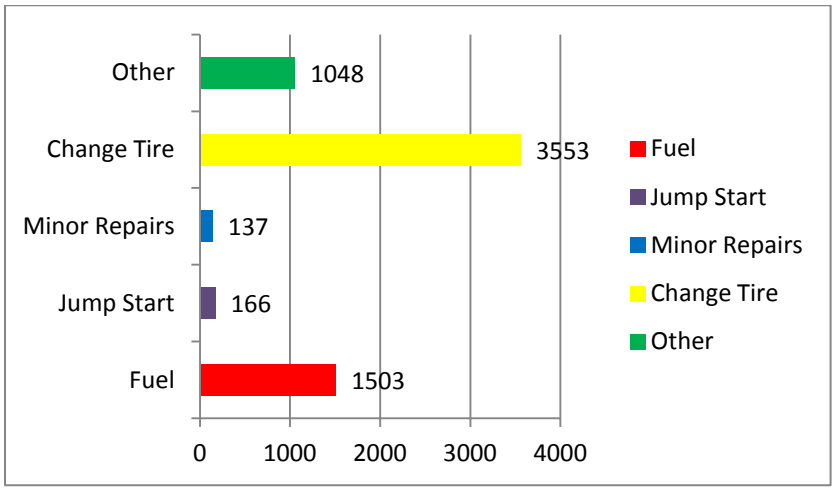


12AM – 6AM	6AM – 12PM	12PM – 6PM	6PM – 12AM	No Response
5%	36%	40%	16%	3%

Question 2 – Type of service performed?

From the responses received, it was determined that 51 percent of the respondents received tire change services. Determining what service the customer is utilizing allows for analysis of customer satisfaction in each of the listed service types.

Figure 4 - Type of Service

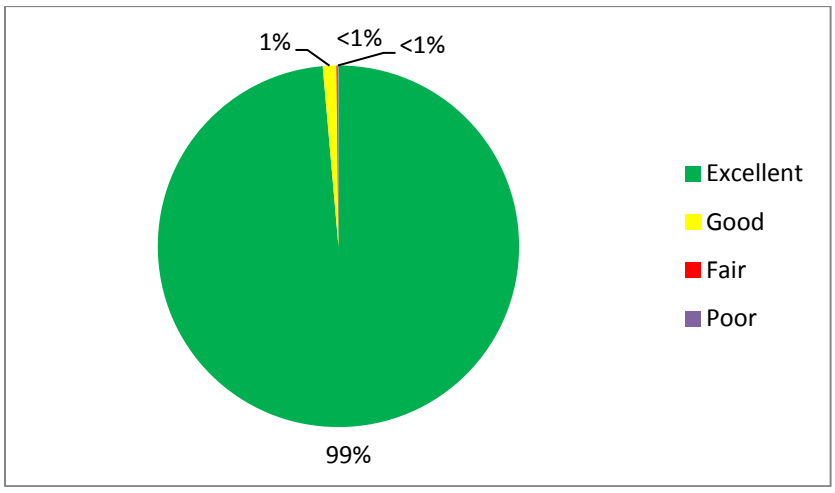


Fuel	Jump Start	Minor Repairs	Change Tire	Other	No Response
22%	3%	2%	51%	15%	7%

Question 3 – Operator was courteous and helpful?

Of the respondents expressing an opinion, more than 99 percent rated the operators as excellent or good when it comes to being courteous and helpful. It should be noted that only seven respondents assessed the operators as fair and there were five responses for poor.

Figure 5- Courteous and Helpful

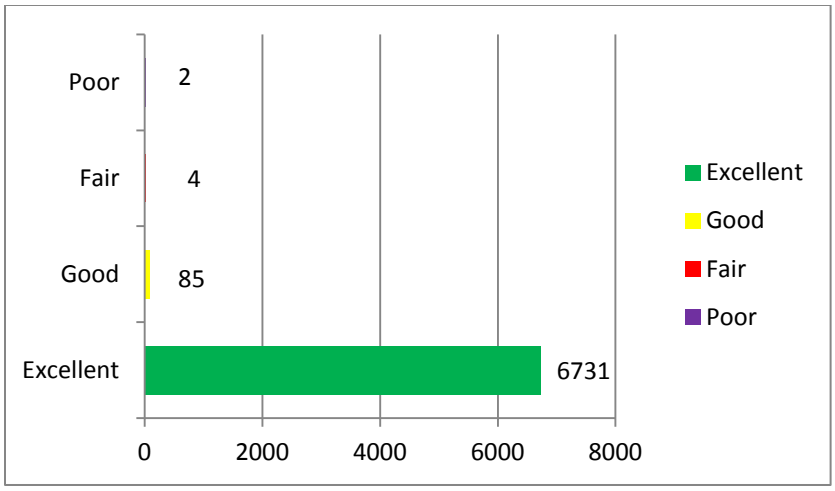


Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
6757	83	7	5

Question 4 – Satisfaction with services provided?

In the area of services provided, more than 99 percent of the respondents rated the program excellent to good. This shows a high level of satisfaction with the assistance received.

Figure 6 - Satisfaction

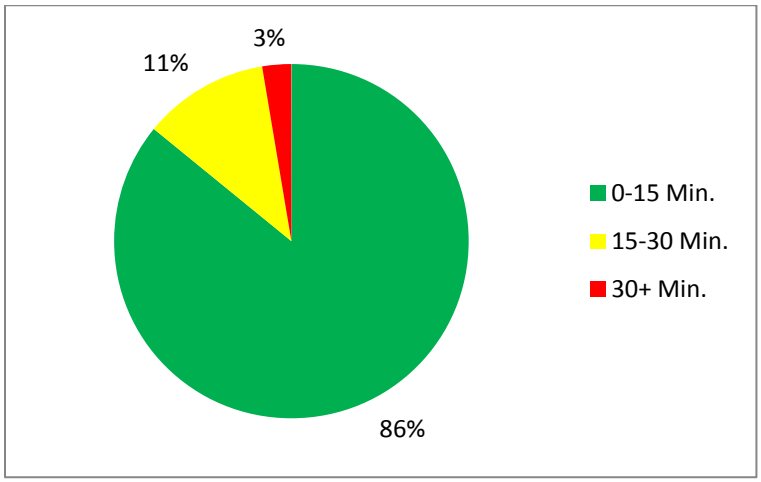


Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
6731	85	4	2

Question 5 – Road Rangers arrival time?

Generally, Road Rangers proactively patrol their coverage areas looking for stranded motorists. They are also dispatched by operators in the transportation management centers who observe incidents using closed-circuit television cameras and/or automated detection software to determine where an incident has occurred. This allows for rapid detection and response to incidents. Several factors affect the response time, such as time of day, availability and location of the Road Ranger, etc. Eighty-six percent of respondents stated that Road Rangers were on-scene within 15 minutes.

Figure 7- Road Ranger Arrival Time



Written Comments

The Road Rangers Comment Card includes a space for the respondent to add written comments if they choose. The following excerpts include representative comments from each of the Districts represented in this report.

The Department also receives customer feedback through e-mails, letters, phone calls, and personal conversations with citizens, law enforcement officers, fire and emergency medical services personnel, tow truck operators, and local transportation officials. During this fiscal year, the Department received a few negative comments, mostly from motorists who had to wait longer than they expected or thought that the Road Ranger was not sufficiently helpful. A few respondents reported actions that they perceived as unsafe or unnecessarily disruptive to traffic flow; Road Rangers Program Managers addressed these complaints promptly and thoroughly. Overall, the comments from all sources during this fiscal year were positive.

Comment	District
Lewis is an asset to the Road Ranger service. My daughter's vehicle broke down on I-75 at mile marker 199 at 8AM. Lewis stayed with her until I arrived. I can't say enough, but thank you Lewis.	1
My car broke down on the left shoulder of I-75. This man parked behind me where I waited for the tow truck and was incredibly patient, kind and understanding, importantly, he kept me safe in a dangerous place.	1
We had stopped between call boxes. Operator was alerted because our situation was picked up on a camera. Congratulations to FDOT on a very efficient system. My wife says she would give the operator a 20 on a scale of 10!	1
I love that Florida has this service. I'm from Chicago Il. And this type of service is not available.	2

Comment	District
Operator did outstanding job of helping change tire on my camper while on Fuller Warren Bridge.	2
I was unaware of this service – you saved me and my daughter a very long walk. THANK YOU!!!	2
Tim was excellent. Not only did he help my 16 year old daughter, but he put her at ease. That by itself is extremely important. The Road Ranger service is greatly appreciated by this father.	4
Ranger was an outstanding individual. He offered my wife (80 years) a seat in his A/C cab. 111 degrees in our car. He was very concerned about our health. He refused to take a tip. He let us use his cell phone 3 times and was a gentleman.	4
He was a life saver! Thanks so much! I made it to the airport in time to catch my flight!	4
Armando was my hero that day! I don't know what I would have done! The highway was dangerously busy and I was afraid of strangers helping. Please keep this service going!	5
I pulled off of I-4 to make a phone call. John stopped to determine if I was ok. I was, but very much appreciate what he did.	5
He was really respectful which I appreciated as a senior lady alone and broken down on the side of the road on a hot, hot, day!	5
Excellent customer service, really friendly and helpful. Calmed me down after my accident and made it less stressful for me. A#1	6
Two operators responded to vehicle crash, both were very professional and courteous and should be commended for their service.	6
It was rush hour on I-95 and did a terrific job under the conditions. Safety was # concern, they flatbed the car to a safer area in order to change the tire. Thanks a lot to all of them.	6
I was driving alone and was involved in a terrifying accident on I-75. Mike was the first to the scene and helped in every way. I appreciate this service.	7
While driving on I-75 N, we hit an object on the road and blew out the front tire. Michael helped us immediately. This is an awesome program, please keep it going.	7
This service was a life saver for us because my husband's sugar was low and we needed to get home a.s.a.p. The service was prompt and Carlton was very helpful and even made sure we were able to drive. Thank you. God Bless.	7
You Rock! Excellent! Saved my wedding day!	TPE
The gentleman was very nice, respectful, and polite. Thanks a lot!	TPE
Friendly, helpful, and did absolutely everything to help us. He was very concerned and helpful. Thank you!	TPE

The Florida Turnpike

In this fiscal year, over 9,500 comment cards were returned by motorists assisted by the Turnpike's Road Rangers, which was a significant increase over the previous fiscal year when approximately 2,100 were received. A majority of the comment cards are filled out by motorists on site of the assist and returned back to the Road Ranger operator directly. A small percentage is received through the postage-paid direct mail. The comment card is provided to motorists as a "tear-off" card from a brochure that promotes the State Farm Safety Patrol Program, provides roadway safety information as well as explains the services the Road Ranger program offers.

Nearly every comment card includes positive input from motorists, citing their gratitude and appreciation for the service received and/or referencing the program as a necessary service. A small percentage of non-positive comments typically reference a long wait for a Road Ranger's arrival, the need for more patrols and additional patrol hours, or that the Road Rangers should be allowed to complete u-turns on the Turnpike for a faster response.

Conclusion

The Road Ranger comment cards continue to serve as a valuable tool for the Department and its contractors to receive feedback from customers. Even though the cards take just a few moments to complete, the fact that so many people do is a credit to the operators.

Although the comment cards only cover a limited amount of the services the Road Rangers provide it is important to realize that the operators do much more to ensure the safety of the roadways. These activities include, but are not limited to, providing maintenance of traffic devices at an incident scene, removing roadway debris, tagging an abandoned vehicle, or notifying other agencies that assistance is needed.

We continue to see the need to have Road Rangers vehicles properly equipped to handle tire changes, vehicles out of fuel, minor repairs, jump starts and other services. Road Ranger vehicles and the cones they carry create a safety zone for both the Road Ranger and the motorist receiving assistance. We often see additional comments on the cards relating to "feeling safer once the Road Ranger arrives."

FDOT will continue to monitor the performance of the Road Ranger program from the customer comment cards that are returned to the Department and other measures that are in place. The number of emails and phone calls the Department receives is another reminder of how this program directly impacts the traveling public, including tourists visiting our state. The Road Ranger program directly supports the Department's mission of providing a safe transportation system.