Road Ranger Service Patrol
Comment Card Report
Fiscal Year 2013/2014

August 2014

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 5

The Florida's Turnpike 7

Conclusion 7

Table of Figures

Figure 1 - Return Rate by Fiscal Year 1

Figure 2 - Responses by District 2

Figure 3 - Time of Assistance 3

Figure 4 - Type of Service 3

Figure 5 - Courteous and Helpful 4

Figure 6 - Satisfaction 4

Figure 7 - Road Ranger Arrival Time 5

Road Ranger Background

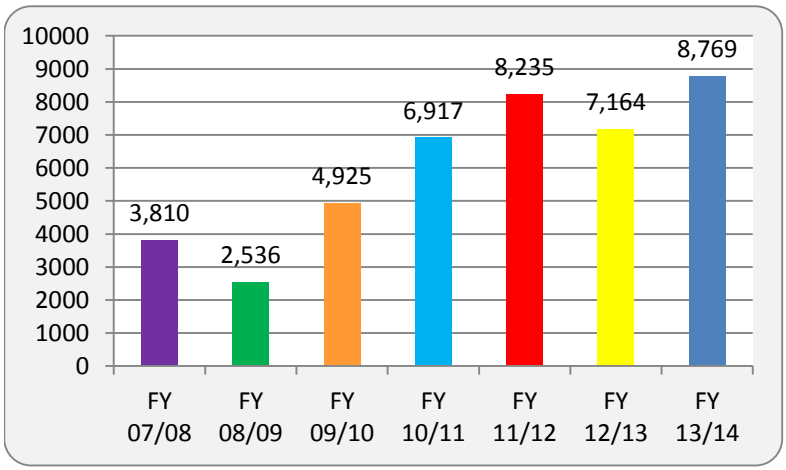
Florida's Road Ranger service patrol program is a free service offered by the Florida Department of Transportation (Department) and other transportation agency partners. Initially used to manage vehicle incidents in construction zones, this program has since expanded to all types of incident responses, 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. Road Rangers also assist stranded 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 crashes
- 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, Road Rangers have made over 3.9 million service assists with more occurring daily.

Figure 1 – Return Rate by Fiscal Year



The Department has been tracking comment card return rates for several years and the return rates continue to improve each year. The decrease in 2008/2009 can be attributed to the decline in available Road Ranger services due to a reduction in program funding that year.

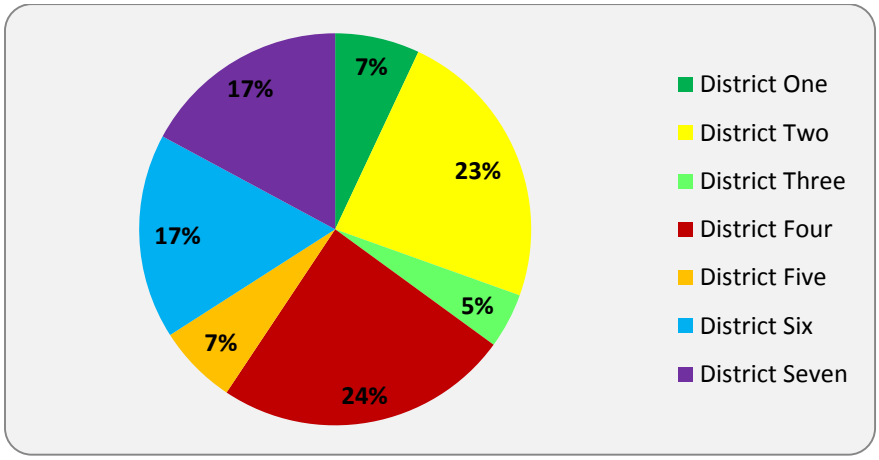
Comment Card Results

Receiving feedback from the public helps determine that the Department's Road Ranger 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 2013/2014 (July 2013 to June 2014), the Department received 8,769 comment cards from motorists who received assistance from Road Rangers. (Note: This does not include customer comments for the Florida's Turnpike Enterprise, Orlando Orange County Expressway Authority 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 Ranger 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.

Figure 2 - Responses by District

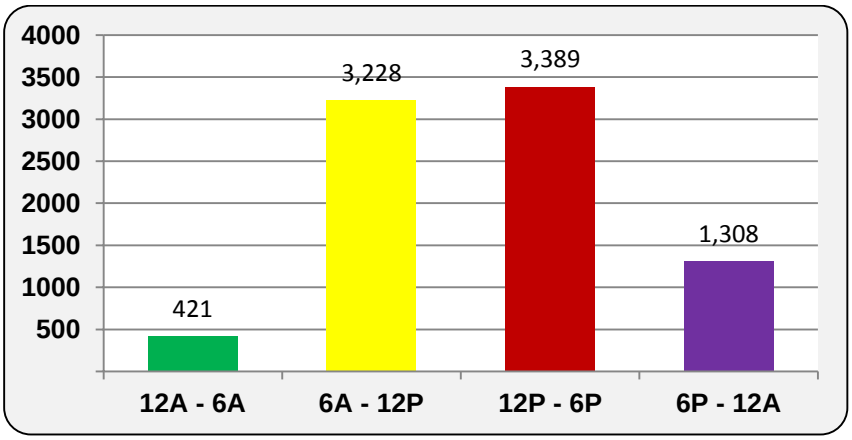


Responses by District	
District One	612
District Two	2,060
District Three	399
District Four	2,133
District Five	578
District Six	1,484
District Seven	1,503
TOTAL	**8,769**

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. Thirty-eight percent of the respondents received assistance between the hours of 12 p.m. and 6 p.m. and thirty-seven percent of respondents received assistance between the hours of 6 a.m. and 12 p.m. Figure 3 illustrates these responses.

Figure 3 - Time of Assistance

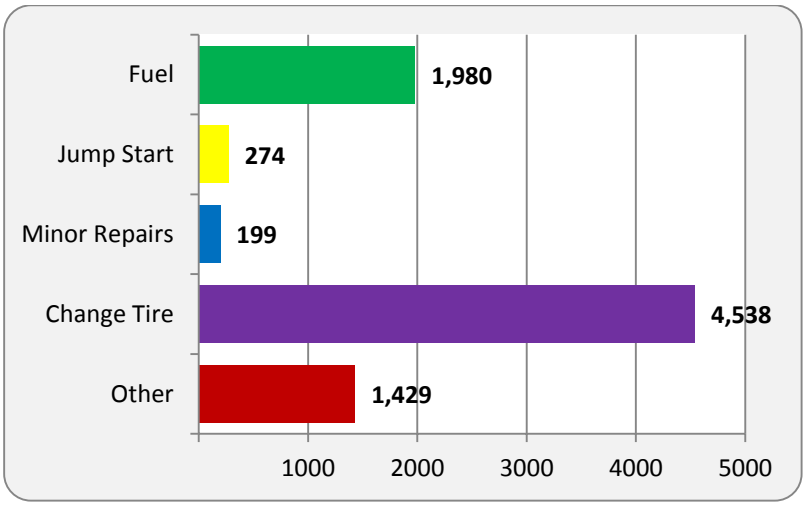


Time of Assistance	
12AM – 6AM	5%
6AM – 12PM	37%
12PM – 6PM	38%
6PM – 12AM	15%
No Response	5%

Question 2 – Type of service performed?

From the responses received, it was determined that fifty-three 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

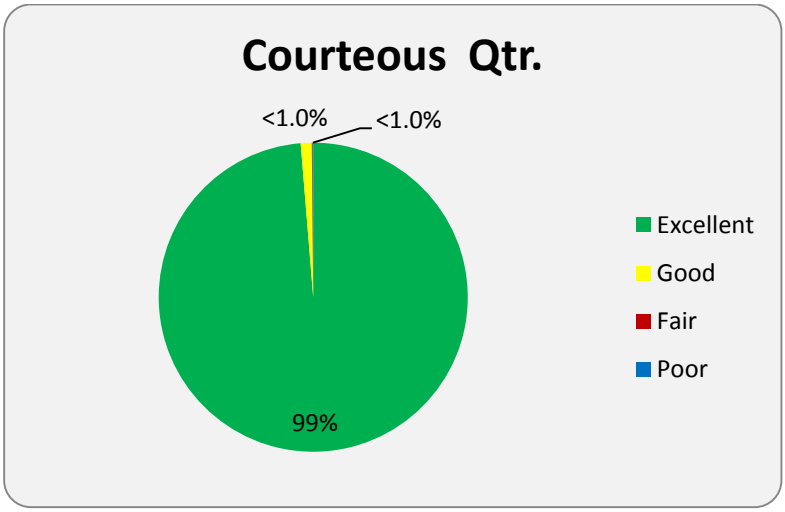


Type of Service	
Fuel	23%
Jump Start	3%
Minor Repairs	2%
Change Tire	53%
Other	17%
No Response	2%

Question 3 – Operator was courteous and helpful?

Of the respondents expressing an opinion, more than ninety-nine percent rated the operators as excellent or good when it comes to being courteous and helpful. It should be noted in Figure 5 below that only thirteen respondents assessed the operators as fair or poor.

Figure 5 - Courteous and Helpful

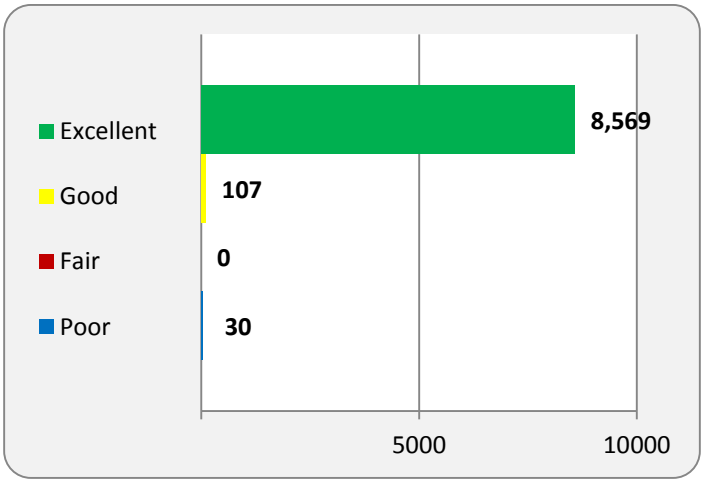


Courteous and Helpful	
Excellent	8,595
Good	100
Fair	7
Poor	6

Question 4 – Satisfaction with services provided?

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

Figure 6 – Satisfaction

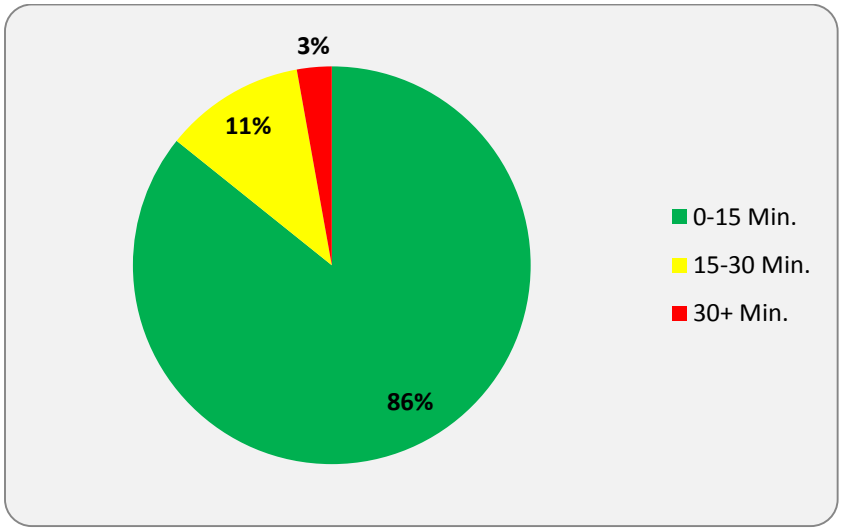


Satisfaction	
Excellent	97%
Good	>1%
Fair	0%
Poor	>1%

Question 5 – Road Rangers arrival time?

Generally, Road Rangers proactively patrol their coverage areas looking for stranded motorists. Road Rangers are also dispatched by operators in the transportation management centers who observe incidents using closed-circuit television cameras and/or automated detection software. 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



Arrival Time	
0-15 Minutes	7,448
15-30 Minutes	992
30+ Minutes	245

Written Comments

The comment card includes a space for the respondent to provide written comments if they choose. The following excerpts include representative comments from each of the Districts represented in this report.

The Department also receives 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. Road Ranger Program Managers addressed these complaints promptly and thoroughly. Overall, the comments from all sources during this fiscal year were positive.

Comment	District
Very courteous – provided cold water for myself and dog – Good Guy.	1
Super job! Very hot day and my cell phone wasn't working. 3 kids in the car with me….saved my day.	1
This is by far the best roadside assistance I have received. This man was awesome! I didn't even have time to get out of my car and he was here!	2
Was so helpful and kind. He even explained how he helps. Service was quick so I got to work on time!	2
This is a great service that saved me a lot of time and difficulty changing the tire alone. The man helping me was very nice and quick.	3
Absolutely fabulous. Very helpful and courteous! Great help!	3
With my whole family in the car with no tire wrench, this could have been a disaster. Instead, it was a minor incident. Thanks to FDOT Road Ranger service.	4
Thank you for saving me. I honestly didn't have anyone to call. I would have been stranded.	4
Extremely nice man….All smiles and made me feel comfortable even though I felt silly for running out of gas. I hope they are all as great as he is.	5
Ranger did an excellent job – we could not have changed our camper tire without him – extremely professional – great employee.	5
I had a blowout in an unsafe area of I-95. The Ranger did all he could do and took me and my family out of harm's way before changing the tire.	6
I was really in a bad spot on the highway and they were quick to respond and communicated with me along the way. They are heroes to me.	6
Ranger stopped to assist me with a traffic crash investigation on I-275/Busch Blvd when no trooper was available. Ranger did excellent work and provided valuable scene safety and vehicle service.	7
The gentleman was extremely helpful and nice. He got me out of the unsafe intersection where I was stuck and into a safe parking lot.	7
My family and I were on our way to a function when the tire on our Expedition blew out. Lucky for us, within 5 minutes of being stranded on the road, the Road Ranger came to our rescue. I am forever thankful and he was definitely our road angel.	FTE
The driver was great! He changed the tire, and knew what to do, fast!	FTE

Florida's Turnpike

In this fiscal year, 13,280 comment cards were returned by motorists assisted by the Florida's Turnpike Road Rangers, which is slightly less than last year's total of 15,372. In addition to the Turnpike mainline program, Florida's Turnpike Enterprise also receives comment cards from

motorists who received assistance while traveling on the Turnpike's shared Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority roadways and on the Veterans Expressway in the Tampa area.

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 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.

Florida's Turnpike comment cards received from customers often relay positive comments regarding the service received and compliments regarding the individual Road Ranger service patrol operator that worked with them, citing "above and beyond" service and attention to the customers' safety and well-being. Florida's Turnpike Road Rangers play an invaluable service to increasing safety on the Turnpike for customers and emergency responders.

Conclusion

The Road Ranger comment cards continue to serve as a valuable tool for the Department and its contractors for receiving 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 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 temporary traffic control devices at an incident scene, removing roadway debris, tagging abandoned vehicles, or notifying other agencies that assistance is needed.

The Department continues to see the need to have Road Ranger vehicles properly equipped to handle tire changes, vehicles out of fuel, minor repairs, jump starts and other services. Road Ranger vehicles, equipped with emergency lighting, arrow/message boards, traffic cones and other traffic control devices, help 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.